Other Dust

OTHER DUST

Roleplaying After the End

By Kevin Crawford

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The World is in Ashes

Our ancestors knew marvels in the days before the Scream. The cities of Old Terra stretched to the heavens in pillars of glass and light, their numbers greater than their children have words to name. The Terran Mandate ruled them from above, the Directors and their armies of officials to oversee the peace and harmony of humanity's mother-world. They sent the wicked and rebellious away, casting them off into the darkness of the skies to find fresh worlds where they could trouble the good no longer.

To aid in their work, the Directors fashioned the Maestros, minds of crystal and energy to think the great thoughts that would encompass all of Old Terra. They gave the good citizens the mark of the Link as a sign of love and favor, and the Maestros were ever close to hand to help those who bore the Link. No one ever lacked food or clean water or companionship in their loneliness. The Maestros knew all things, and placed all things in their right order.

But the Mandate and the Directors were still saddened by the suffering of the exiles in the sky, and took pity on their hunger and misery. They cut doorways in the heavens through which they could send swift aid, great portals that opened a speedy path to the far worlds. No longer was it necessary to send the slow ships, for the Jump Gates made a journey of years into a single great step.

The servants of the Jump Gates were men and women called "psychics", ones cursed with a terrible change by their passage through the sky. In their head was a madness that could sicken the world, and many died from it before the Mandate taught them ways to channel it well. They powered the Jump Gates, opening the doors with the strength of their minds. Many other psychics labored in many other ways for the Mandate, accomplishing deeds beyond those of ordinary men and women.

Some say that Old Terra was not as beautiful as the stories tell. They claim that the Mandate was cruel and selfish, that the Maestros plotted against their creators, that the wicked who were sent forth were actually warriors who only sought freedom and a better life. Who is to know the truth?

But we know that Old Terra died ten generations ago. Our ancestors told us of the Scream, a terrible power that swept down from the sky and broke the minds of all of the psychics. They raved and slew and destroyed, tearing open the belly of the world with their madness. They opened many doors and broke many laws. They made the Slow Fire burn the cities and cast down stones from the sky to break the houses of men. They cursed us with the Black Dust and made some among our children come forth misshapen and sickly, and made hunters who go in bad places return as things terribly changed. The doors in the skies no longer opened, and we were alone.

We call these old ones the Crazed now, and some still live in the waste places of the world. Old Terra gave long life to its children, and the Crazed do not die as ordinary men die. They sit and they hate, always laboring to find new ways to hurt and to ruin, to finish what their madness began two hundred years ago. Some wretched ones worship them as gods, praying to be spared their madness and to profit by their cruelties. Some even say that the Crazed have taken apprentices from them. For this reason and many others we kill the psychics born among us. They are cursed, and they bring only curses.

It is the New Earth we dwell in now, we ragged children of a fallen world. The leavings of our ancestors sustain us with their tools of fire and light and their knowledge captured in glowing glass words. We struggle against the Black Dust and the Highshine and the Slow Fires that burn on the green glass plains. We war upon the twisted beasts of the wastelands and struggle amongst each other for the few places of safety that remain to us. With each generation, it grows harder. Each year we have less.

But this world is ours. Our ancestors ruled here, our fathers and mothers lived and dreamed and died upon its earth. Perhaps it is our destiny to be mingled with their bones. Perhaps someday the exiles will return to find only our dust. But though we are fallen from our thrones, O my ancestors, let them find the dust of kings!

If You're New to Roleplaying Games....

Congratulations, because you're one of the remarkably few people reading this who hasn't already entered the hobby through other games. Pen-and-paper roleplaying games are a lot of fun, and it's likely that you're already indirectly familiar with them.

In brief, an RPG like this is a pen-and-paper version of a genre of modern computer roleplaying games such as *Fallout*, *Wasteland*, and other post-apocalyptic romps. Where a computer game might rely on internal algorithms and hardcoded rules, *Other Dust* relies on a human referee- the game master, or GM. A GM and up to a half-dozen or so other players get together in person or online to play out the wasteland adventures of the fictional avatars that the players create.

Why not just play a computer game? Because RPGs like *Other Dust* leverage the one thing that a computer game can't provide- intelligent human responses. If you think of a solution to a problem facing your character, you don't have to worry about whether the game engine is going to handle it- you just *tell the GM* and they tell you the results or the odds you're facing. Players have unlimited freedom in paper RPGs because they're dealing with a human mind.

Don't be intimidated by the thickness of this book. The actual rules for running the game fit in about twelve pages in the Systems chapter, and the bare-bones summary is on a single sheet of paper. The rest of the book is all about making characters, the fabulous plunder you can find in the wastes, and tools for helping a GM quickly and easily make fun places to explore and people to encounter. Everything about this book was designed to make it as easy as possible to GM a game of *Other Dust*.

So turn the page and dive in. Once you see how to make a character, check out the Systems chapter for the rules, and you'll be well on your way to blasting mutants and looting the lost treasures of a fallen world.

If you're a Veteran Gamer....

...then we can skip the preamble and get to the things that make *Other Dust* worth your attention.

Other Dust is based on classic old-school gaming mechanics familiar to almost everyone in the hobby. It's fast to pick up and you won't be spending much time relearning how to make a character, get in a fight, and use your talents to solve problems. *Other Dust* is not here to dazzle you with brilliantly novel mechanics.

Other Dust is designed as an industrial-strength toolkit for post-apocalyptic sandboxing. The tools and techniques in this book are applicable to almost any system or post-apoc setting, and they're meant to make it as easy as possible for a GM to brew up a wasteland and let the players rip. I'm confident that you'll find the game's systems to be an excellent match for that goal, but the resources here will work just fine with whatever system you do like best.

More than that, *Other Dust* is completely cross-compatible with my other sci-fi sandbox game *Stars Without Number*, currently available in free PDF form. Everything in both books will work perfectly well together, and the tools you've got in hand complement the ones you can get online for free, or in hardback for a reasonable price.

Other Dust is not meant to proselytize. Yes, I think sandbox gaming is wonderful fun and provides the GM with a constant stream of surprises that are sometimes much harder to find in other play styles, but it's not the only way to play an RPG, and it's not the best way for everyone. Still, even if you've had hesitations about sandboxing before, I encourage you to just give the tools a read. Creating and running a sandbox doesn't have to be as hard as it's often made out to be, and the rewards of a good session of no-walls gaming can be wonderfully refreshing.

There's plenty here for you to take and more afterwards if you want to grab *Stars Without Number*. With that said, let's start this off...

A Glossary of Terms

#d#: As in "1d6" or "2d20" or "2d8+1". This simply means to take that many dice and roll them together, adding them up along with any static bonus listed. "2d4+2" would mean to roll two four-sided dice, add two, and total them.

Adventure: A situation in which the PCs are in danger or seeking to accomplish something risky and difficult. Scavenging the badlands for salvage, hunting a raider chieftain, and convincing a local enclave to call off an anti-mutant pogrom all might qualify as adventures. PCs in *Other Dust* spend most of their time adventuring; lounging around the village is for lesser souls- or more prudent ones.

GM: Game Master. The GM is responsible for running the game. He or she creates the region in which play will take place, builds the situations that the players will encounter, and referees their efforts with the help of the rules in this book. GMs have a great deal of responsibility but they also the antics of a table full of adventurers to entertain themselves during play.

NPC: Non-Player Character. Any monster, mutant, or bystander not played by a player. The GM usually has a host of NPCs around, ranging from the nameless bandit who gets shot six seconds after their first encounter with the PCs to long-running patrons or nemeses.

PC: Player Character. Players of the game create characters, fictional figures through which they engage the world, pursue their own goals, and get devoured by mutant panthers. A single player may have a number of different PCs, though usually only one is played at a time.

Character Creation

The first step in entering the world of *Other Dust* lies in creating a character. Character creation is quick and straightforward, but it works best when you're able to talk to the GM and the other players and coordinate your choices into a group that works well together. Grim loners do poorly in the merciless wilds of the New Earth, and even the toughest badlander has a much longer career with friends around.

For most games, you're going to need a person willing to take on the role of the GM and three to five players. It's possible for a single player to play multiple characters, but this can be difficult for newcomers to the game, and it's often preferable simply to have the GM run a number of allies or hirelings.

What You Need To Know About This Game

Other Dust is inspired by the classic role-playing games of the seventies and early eighties, and owes a deep debt to designers like Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, Tom Moldvay, Marc Miller, Zeb Cook, and others too numerous to mention. If you've played those games, many of the mechanics and style choices made here will be familiar.

In *Other Dust*, you take on the role of a denizen of a post-apocalyptic far-future Earth, working alongside your trusted teammates to scratch survival and eventual glory from a hostile planet. You explore the radioactive dust and seething nanite jungles of the wastelands in search of salvage, fellow human survivors, and relics of the glorious lost age of Old Terra. Those heroes who survive such expeditions- and many will not- may yet become tribal chieftains, culture-restoring sages, master scrapsmiths, and other legends to lead their people back to the light of understanding.

Other Dust is not about story lines or pre-designed plot arcs. Those things are admirable and there are many games that use them to excellent effect, but that's not the kind of play that *Other Dust* is meant to best enable. This game is meant to help a GM create their own ravaged patch of the desolate New Earth and stock it with intriguing foes, interesting enclaves, and rewarding ruins. Once created, the game then helps the GM and other players explore it in a free-form, "sandbox" style of play.

The GM and players may have a good idea what a particular game session will be about, but the specific outcome or focus of events is never determined in advance. Each session is a chance for you and the other players to make your own choices and choose your own ambitions. The world responds to your actions and in time you see the consequences of that which you have done and that which you have left undone.

Understanding this "sandbox style" of play is crucial to enjoying *Other Dust*. The story of a campaign is the story of what you chose to attempt. There is no fated destiny awaiting you, no surety of survival or certainty that your grand dreams will ever come to fruition. There is only your own luck, prudence, and cunning to arm you for a destiny that is to be wholly your own.

What You Need To Know About New Earth

Your character is a denizen of the New Earth in the year 2850, a dweller in the savage wasteland left behind by a cataclysmic disaster two centuries ago. Nanomutated abominations, radioactive badlands, amoral raider tribes, and the sheer unrelenting strain of survival all conspire in an attempt to make your life a short and brutal experience.

Old Terra was ruled by the masters of the Terran Mandate, the shadowy Directorate that ensured that the nations of mankind's birthworld maintained a peaceful and harmonious stasis. Change was an enemy to the Directorate, and troublemakers were exiled to the frontier colonies around distant stars. With the help of their psychic enforcers and the AI godminds known as the Maestros, the Directorate maintained an iron grip on the core worlds.

Common citizens had access to marvelous medical and communications technology, including the nanite Dust that wove Old Terra's atmosphere into an omnipresent network. Communications were under the unblinking eye of the Maestros, channeled and restricted as appropriate to "social harmony". Malcontents received sympathetic care from AI social services or midnight visits from Directorate security forces. Few persisted in their discontent.

This utopia under glass ended in 2665 with the Scream. A massive pulse of metadimensional energy washed outward from the depths of the void, searing the brains of humanity's psychics. The teleporting Jump Gates that connected the core worlds were wiped out of existence when the choirs of psychics that operated them were obliterated. Most psychics perished in this otherworldly fire, but some survived in a haze of savage madness. These Crazed included some of the most powerful psychics on Old Terra, and they lashed out at their masters before a shattered world even understood its peril. All over Old Terra, precognitive nanocoders struck at the failsafes on the Mandate's massive power plants. Red blooms of nuclear fire erupted to spew crimson death and black ash into the hostile sky.

Elsewhere, the emergency Highshine disaster recovery system engaged to pour torrents of stabilization nanites into Old Terra's atmosphere. The Crazed twisted the Highshine system, altering its function from medical stabilization and decontamination into terrible, flesh-warping violation of its sickened victims. Nanomutants rose from the wastes, forbidden easy death by the Highshine's grip.

Two hundred years have passed since the Scream, and the world of Old Terra has been lost forever. Modern descendants of the survivors of those end times now huddle in small enclaves, struggling to resist the terrible corrosion of the badlands, the incursions of mutated beasts, and the pangs of their own privation.

Your character is a native of one of these enclaves, equipped by experience and nature with the gifts necessary to survive the savage wastes. It may be that the dangers outside will claim them young, or it could be that their fearless deeds will yet herald a second dawn for their people. Only time and your choices will tell.

Character Creation Summary

Roll your character's six attributes.

Roll 3d6 six times, and assign the totals in order to Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma. Record the attribute modifier for each ability. You may move points, lowering abilities above 13 and raising abilities below 8 to even out your scores if you so wish. No such modifications can lower a score below 13 or raise one above 8.

Choose a concept and motivation.

Given the statistics you've just rolled, decide on a general concept for the character. Choose an appropriate motivation as well, as you should have a long-term goal that will propel your character to action and adventure.

Pick a background package.

Select an option to reflect your character's early training and origins and record the skills the package grants on your character sheet. Some packages have skills labeled "Tech/Any" or "Profession/Any"; this means you can select any one specialty from that skill type, such as "Tech/Postech" or "Profession/Sailor". Skills labeled "Culture/Enclave" mean that the character has Culture skill specialized in their home enclave, whatever it may be. Background skills start at level-0.

Choose a class.

Scroungers find and fix the lost technology of Old Terra. Slayers excel at combat and brutal violence. Speakers inspire others and bind disparate groups into shared purposes. Survivors endure the worst of the wastes and the untamed wilds. You may replace one prime requisite attribute of your chosen class with a score of 14 if you so wish. Note down the special ability of your class.

Pick a training package from your class.

Each class offers eight different training packages to reflect common skills and education for a certain type of character. Choose one appropriate to your character concept and record the granted skills on your character sheet. For skills labeled "Any", any skill specialization may be chosen, but you may not double up on a skill already existing in the package. Training package skills start at level-0. If you already have a given skill from your background package, the skill starts at level-1 instead.

Determine starting mutations.

You may roll up to three times on the Mutation charts in chapter two to determine what strain of nanomutation your character has experienced. Unspent rolls may be used to add to your ability score modifiers, with one unspent roll adding one point to the modifier. No modifier can raised by more than one point and no modifier can be raised above +2 total. If you are completely mutation-free, having spent all of your rolls on improving your ability modifiers, you may choose to be a "null-strain human", immune to the mutating effects of Highshine.

Roll hit points for your character.

Roll 1d6 to determine your maximum hit points. Survivors add 2 to their roll, and all classes add their Constitution modifier. Even with a Constitution penalty, your maximum hit points cannot be less than 1. Don't worry if you roll poorly- every time you advance in experience level, you will reroll all your hit dice and take the new total if it is larger.

Choose languages.

Your character speaks the native tongue of their enclave and one more language per point of Intelligence modifier bonus. You also have basic fluency in the common language of any community for which you have at least level-0 Culture/Enclave skill. The Languages skill may add additional tongues. Characters are illiterate unless they have Culture/Literacy-0 skill.

Choose starting equipment.

Your character begins play with a knife, one weapon from the starting weapon list for which he or she has at least level-0 skill, one suit of armor which their home enclave is capable of crafting, 1d6+2 rations of clean food and the same number of clean water rations. You may roll up to six times on the starting equipment gear list. For every two rolls you give up, you may pick one item from the list instead of rolling.

Rolling Your Attributes

The first step in creating your character is to determine the character's six attributes. Attributes describe the character's aptitude in certain aspects- how strong, quick, clever, perceptive, hardy, or charming they might be. Attributes in a human range are measured by scores ranging from 3 to 18, with 3 reflecting a character barely capable of functioning as an adventurer, and 18 indicating remarkable natural gifts.

To generate your character's attributes, roll 3d6 six times and assign the rolls to the attributes in the order listed on the table below. Average humans have attributes in the 8 to 13 range; as such, you may choose to remove points from any attribute above 13 to raise any attribute up to 8. For example, if you've rolled a Dexterity score of 15 and an Intelligence score of 7, you might choose to take one point from Dexterity and raise your Intelligence score up to 8. No attribute so altered can be lowered below 13 or raised above 8. Attributes need not be evened out this way if you prefer to play the attributes as rolled.

Once you have determined your scores, you should write down the attribute modifier for each. The attribute modifier is a bonus or penalty that is applied to rolls related to that attribute. At many points in this book, you'll be instructed to add a particular attribute's modifier to a roll; you should take care to add just the modifier to the roll, and not the entire attribute score. In the case of a particularly lackluster attribute score, the modifier might even be negative, in which case you should subtract it from the roll as a penalty. If your attributes change during the course of play, make sure to adjust your modifiers as needed.

Some characters don't look to be terribly promising material for post-apocalyptic adventure. At the GM's discretion, a character whose total final attribute modifiers sum to less than zero can be discarded and their attributes rerolled. Not all GMs prefer to allow this option, however. High attribute scores are nice, but they are by no means mandatory to make an interesting or playable character. Survival in the desolation of New Earth depends far more on good choices than good attributes.

This One Is No Hero!

Some players just don't care for random generation of attributes, particularly when the dice produce a character wholly unlike what they wanted to play. Even with the chance to swap in a score of 14 into a prime ability of their class, it's just no fun for them to randomly roll their adventurer's attributes. This is by no means an unreasonable taste, but such players are encouraged to give it an honest try in *Other Dust*. Part of the pleasure of the game is surprise- surprise at the details of your character, surprise at the kind of challenges you'll face, and surprise at the possibilities that arise from your character's limits and ambitions.

Still, if you feel strongly about it and the GM doesn't object, you can simply put a score of 7, 11, or 14 in any given attribute, so long as you don't have more scores of 14 than you have 7s. If you take this option, you don't get the "free 14" you would otherwise be given in one of your chosen class' prime attributes.

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute Score	Modifier
18	+2
14-17	+1
8-13	No Modifier
4-7	-1
3	-2

The Six Attributes

Strength

Physical might and ability to carry heavy loads. Characters with high Strength are fearsome in hand-to-hand combat, smashing through enemy defenses with brute force.

Intelligence

Memory, logic, and the capacity to think quickly. Characters with high Intelligence are well-suited to coping with complex technical skills and handling the enigmatic machinery of Old Terra.

Wisdom

Perception, strength of will, and judgment. A high Wisdom shows that the character is keenly aware of his or her surroundings, has a strong willpower, and a healthy fund of common sense.

Dexterity

Hand-eye coordination, agility, and reaction speed. High Dexterity is the sign of a nimble, quick-handed character with a lot of natural aptitude for archery or gunplay.

Constitution

Hardihood, stamina, and the ability to withstand pain, sickness, and injury. High Constitution indicates a character that can take a lot of abuse before keeling over, whether or not they have an impressive musculature.

Charisma

Charm, persuasiveness, and capacity for leadership. Not every high-Charisma character is handsome or beautiful, but all of them have a way of making others take them seriously.

Choosing a Concept and Motivation

Now that you've got some idea of the strengths and weaknesses of this character, you need to form a concept and motivation for them. A character concept is a basic idea of what this character is about, while a motivation describes a goal that will be driving this character through their early adventures.

Is this character a warrior? A savant of the ancient lost sciences? A wandering healer who travels from enclave to enclave in hope of finding a long-lost sibling? A hollow-eyed lone survivor from a tribe wiped out by murderous nomads? Take a moment to think about the sort of person described by your character's attributes and decide what kind of life they're leading in the blasted desolation of the New Earth.

The concept is important because it often leads you directly to your initial motivation. Your character needs a goal, a purpose to drive their actions. This doesn't need to be an all-consuming obsession, but it should be something that can inform your character's choices and give them purpose when other goals are lacking.

The nature of *Other Dust* makes motivations crucial to enjoyable play. *Other Dust*'s default mode of play is a type of gaming known as "sandbox gaming". The GM sets up a region full of interesting places, vital conflicts, and exciting challenges, and then leaves it up to the players to decide how their characters will approach the campaign. If the characters lack their own motivations and goals, they can end up floundering and directionless. Motivations provide easy cues for action.

Motivations don't need to be complex or particularly dramatic. A simple motivation of "Collect vast amounts of ancient tech" is perfectly serviceable, as it will motivate your character to seek out ruins and plunder the graves of cities. Motivations such as "Find a sister stolen by Crazed cultists", "Avenge my tribe on the Red Wheels nomads", or "Turn my home village into the mightiest enclave in the wastes" are all good as well, as each gives direction from the very first session.

Don't worry about being locked into a motivation. It's natural and expected that goals should shift over the course of a campaign's events. You just need something to give you an initial push to adventure.

Be careful not to pick a motivation diametrically opposed to that of an existing party member, however. The wastelands of the New Earth are lethal, and a group that's riven by some bitter conflict of purposes is liable to get all the participants killed in a hurry. It's not unlikely that conflicting goals will arise during play, but most of the time these disputes can be talked out amongst the group. Your fellow party members are almost certainly loyal friends or proven allies, or else your character would hardly expect to trust his or her life to them in the wastes.

Unless your character is a particularly obsessive sort, a motivation need not be pursued every session. It's perfectly reasonable to let your own goals rest for a while as you help a teammate pursue their own grand ambitions. The key is to have *some* goal of your own to motivate you to your daring deeds.
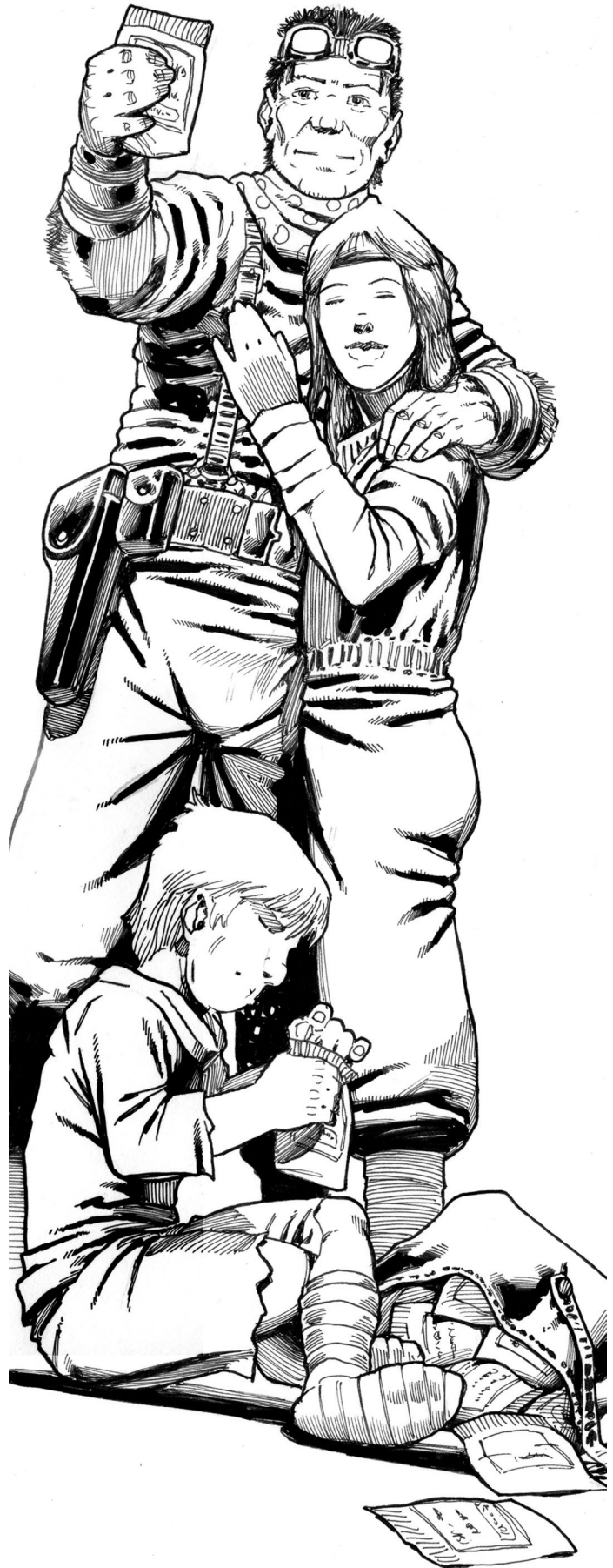
Choosing a Background Package

To describe your character's prior life, you should now choose a Background Package from the following pages. Each package includes a brief description and a list of skills that the package grants. You should personalize this description to your character's specific past; if she was a Priest, for example, you should think a little about the kind of religion she professed and how sincerely those beliefs might affect her present choices.

Background packages grant *skills*. Skills are specific topics in which a character has received some training. Skills are measured in levels, ranging from 0 for those with basic expertise to 5 or higher for the greatest practitioners on the New Earth. Each skill listed in the background package is gained at level-0.

Note that some backgrounds and training packages offer "any" as an option for a skill specialty. Any specialty selected should be justified by the character's background. Some skills, like "Combat/Energy" or "Tech/Pretech" are unlikely to be possessed by anyone outside the very richest and most advanced enclaves, or those revived from cold sleep pods.

Adventuring Wastelander

The desolation of the future is vast, and it encompasses many possibilities. Choose this background package if you'd prefer to define your character's history yourself.

Skills: Culture/Enclave, Survival and any one skill

Bandit

Traffic between enclaves is rare, and robbers often need to strike at isolated homesteads and poorly-defended villages rather than relying on luckless travellers. Long stretches in the wilderness teach bandits much of survival and the prudent evasion.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Criminal, Stealth, Survival

City Dweller

The wastelands are vast, but here and there yet remain islands of relative safety and security, where men and women can live with far less concern for immediate needs of survival. Some such places are cities, while others are simply enclaves that have the luxury of functional hydroponic bays or some great fortification to keep them safe from the outside world. Such city dwellers can be remarkably well-educated in technical fields- and mortally ignorant in matters of brute survival.

Skills: Culture/Enclave, Culture/Literacy, Profession/Any, and any one skill

Elder

Not all elders are old, as harsh and unforgiving as the new world can be, but almost all enclaves have at least some members responsible for the remembrance of history and custom. These elders often serve as lawyers or judges in disputes, and are expected to be able to make peace within an enclave before a conflict attracts external predators.

Skills: Culture/Enclave, History, Persuade, Survival

Entertainer

Even in the wastelands there is a desire for joy and diversion. Entertainers range from honored artists and poets to cheap harlots and common jugglers. All have a toughness born of necessity.

Skills: Artist, Culture/Any, Persuade, Survival

Hunter

Those able-bodied villagers who are not farmers are almost always hunters. The need for food is unrelenting, and the untamed wilds winnow out the careless and weak soon enough. Some hunters find it more advantageous to use their skills in seeking out more exotic prey than they might need for their next meal.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Enclave, Stealth, Survival

Noble

Some enclaves are wealthy enough to have a significant surplus of food and other necessities. The nobility of these settlements live in a manner of comparative luxury, though usually at the cost of a constant struggle to maintain their exalted rank in the face of challengers and rivals. Those who prove unlucky at the political games of their homes often find it prudent to seek their fortune elsewhere.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Enclave, Leadership, Persuade

Nomad

Riders of the radioactive plains or wanderers afoot, nomads cross the wastes to find water, food, and plunder. Few nomads are welcome in more settled communities, but their knowledge of the wilderness is unmatched. Some find themselves roaming alone when their kinsmen are slain by mutants or angry settlers, and others simply cannot bear the tedium of familiar places.

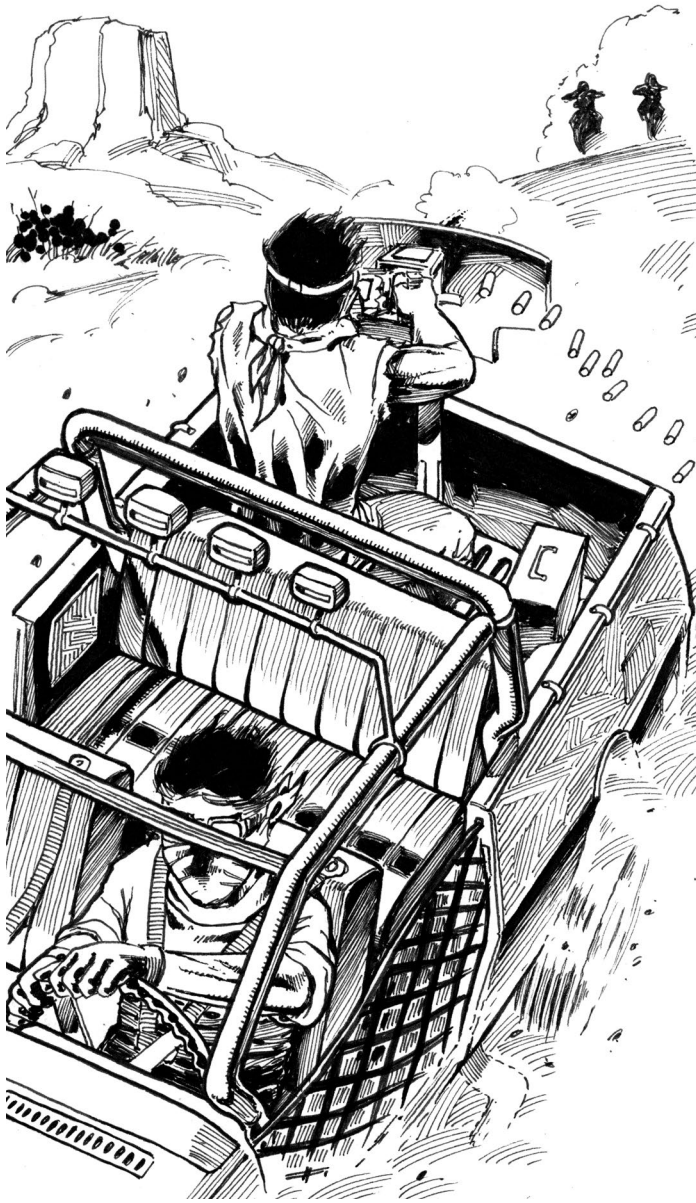*Skills:* Culture/Enclave, Navigation, Survival, Vehicle/Land

Outcast

Some unfortunate wretches are banished from their people, forced to rely upon their own wits and capacity to survive in an unforgiving land. Some outcasts earned their exile by crimes, while others were cast out simply for mutation or offending the chieftain.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Traveller, Stealth, Survival

PODBORN

A few important men and women of Old Terra managed to make it to emergency cold sleep pods, where they and their families thought to shelter in stasis until help could come. When the power supplies eventually decayed or were destroyed, the pods revived their occupants into a world they could not begin to understand. Most of these little enclaves suffer quick and brutal destruction, but occasional survivors live long enough to gain basic survival skills.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Culture/Literacy, History, Tech/Pretech

PRIEST

The end of the world did not spell the end of faith, and numerous religions remain strong in the wastelands of New Earth. Whether priest, pastor, imam or tribal elder, the priest is accustomed to providing both comfort and chastisement to their flock.

Skills: Culture/Enclave, Persuade, Survival, Religion

SCAVENGER

Wastelands techs are not the polished and focused technicians of the vanished Old Terra, but men and women who often have little formal education. Despite this lack, badlands scavengers tend to have ample aptitude for self-defense and survival.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Enclave, Survival, Tech/Postech

TRADER

Life as a trader is hard and uncertain, with most making a dangerous circuit among far-flung enclaves. Most enclaves will grant at least a grudging immunity to outside traders, but bandits favor them as rich prey for their spears.

Skills: Business, Culture/Traveller, Persuade, Survival

TRIBAL WARRIOR

Some stand apart from farmers and gatherers in order to defend them from raiders, mutants, and other perils. Tribal warriors usually lack the luxury of firearms and other sophisticated goods, but they are skilled in fighting without such advantages.

Skills: Combat/Any, Combat/Primitive, Culture/Enclave, Survival

WANDERER

A few bold souls travel from enclave to enclave, navigating the perils of the wasteland and negotiating with distrustful natives. These wanderers rarely manage to grow old, but they do a great deal of living before being eaten by some mutant or cannibal.

Skills: Culture/Traveller, Navigation, Persuade, Survival

PEASANT

Some have the arts to pry a living from the reluctant earth, either laboring as farmers in an enclave with sufficient clean land and good water, or talented in other skills for which their neighbors are willing to pay. These common folk are rarely gifted with any remarkable talent other than an uncanny ability to survive the worst a hard world can inflict on them. The vast majority of the New Earth's population qualify either as hunters or as peasants.

Skills: Culture/Enclave, Steward, Survival, and any one skill

Character Skills

The following list covers the more common skills found among the adventurers of the New Earth. The GM is always free to adjust this list, adding new fields or combining skills as desired.

Some skills require specializations, such as the Combat, Vehicle, Tech, Culture, and Profession skills. A character can acquire more than one specialization in a skill, but these skills must be advanced separately. A sailor's sublime skill in Vehicle/Sea does little to help a character ride a horse with Vehicle/Land.

Artist

The character is trained or gifted in a particular type of art. The character should select a specific medium when this skill is gained.

Athletics

Running, jumping, climbing, swimming, and other feats of athletics or acrobatics are covered by this skill.

Bureaucracy

A skilled bureaucrat knows how to deal with complex legal and administrative systems, and how to find files or records quickly. Very little of this arcane art remains in the present day.

Business

The character knows how to run a business and deal with other entrepreneurs. Formally-constituted businesses are very rare in the New Earth, and most tradesmen are simply farmers or hunters with enough talent to make a particular good for their neighbors. Those with this skill know how to get the best profit from a resource.

Combat   (Specialties)

This skill is actually composed of several specialties, each one of which must be learned separately.

Energy Weapons: Use of salvaged high-tech weaponry that relies on energy emissions, such as lasers or plasma.

Gunnery: Use of heavy vehicle-mounted weapons or fixed guns, whether on spacecraft or planetary vehicles.

Primitive Weapons: Use of muscle-powered weapons such as knives, bows, or clubs, as well as thrown weapons such as grenades. This includes high-tech versions of these weapons.

Projectile Weapons: Use of mechanically-powered weaponry such as crossbows, pistols, rifles, and the like.

Unarmed: Weaponless combat techniques. Unlike other forms of weaponry, a practitioner of unarmed combat can add their Combat/Unarmed skill to the damage roll as well as the hit roll. Characters with Unarmed-2 expertise are so skilled that they can even injure targets in powered armor and other gear that would otherwise prevent effective Unarmed attacks.

Computer

The character is skilled at operating and programming computers, as well as operating most advanced communications systems. Some nanite manipulation requires Computer skill rather than Tech/Pretech.

Culture   (Specialties)

As with Combat, Culture is composed of numerous specialties, each one of which must be learned separately.

Criminal: The character is accustomed to dealing with bandits, raiders, thieves, and other criminal outcasts. They have a knack for dealing with them without getting knifed in the bargain, or deducing the most likely locations for their ambushes and dens.

Enclave: This specialty must be taken individually for each specific enclave, and relates to knowledge of that settlement's society, government, tech level, and laws. Level 0 in this skill also grants fluency in that settlement's most common language if the character is not already proficient in it.

Literacy: This skill can only be taken at level 0 and cannot be raised. It allows the possessor to read and write any language they speak, unlike the vast majority of people in the New Earth.

Traveller: This skill can only be taken at level 0 and cannot be raised. It can substitute for any other enclave's Culture skill, however, and represents a casual, basic knowledge of many different settlements. This skill is useless for enclaves that have been completely cut off from contact. Traveller skill grants no linguistic proficiency.

Exosuit

The character is trained in the use of powered exosuits. These suits of heavy armor were once used in dangerous environments ranging from asteroid mining to shock trooper assaults, but nowadays such powered exoskeletons are extremely rare.

Gambling

The character knows numerous games of chance and has a better than usual chance of winning them. They are also familiar with the betting customs and protocols of other enclaves.

History

The character has training in Terran history and can identify enclaves, events, and people of historical importance.

Instructor

The character knows how to teach the skills they possess. A skilled instructor can effectively facilitate the teaching of their companions without the necessity of finding a less tractable tutor.

Language

The character speaks additional languages. At each level, the character learns a number of new languages equal to the skill's level plus one. Thus, at level 0, they learn one new language, at level 1, they learn two new languages, and so forth. They can read and write any of these languages with the Culture/Literacy skill.

Leadership

The character is trained in leading others in high-stress situations. Characters with this skill can keep the obedience of subordinates even in dangerous situations or when giving hazardous orders.

Navigation

The character can navigate using compasses, astronomic readings, dead reckoning, or other tools.

Perception

The character has keen senses, and is often able to notice details or hidden objects that elude other people.

Persuade

The character has a knack for convincing others of the truth and sincerity of their words.

Profession   (Specialties)

This skill must be taken in a particular specialty related to the character's profession, and is intended to cover those jobs that don't already have applicable skills on this list. A doctor would take Tech/Medical, for example, while a tanner would take Profession/Tanner.

Religion

The character is trained in theology and familiar with the more common or notorious religious sects around their home, and can usually guess the more significant beliefs of newly-met faiths.

Science

The character is a trained scientist and capable of operating laboratory equipment, conducting research, and developing new technology. This skill covers all conventional scientific applications. Possession of this skill can at least justify trying to make successful Tech skill checks, but it's no substitute for practical experience with maintenance, construction and repair.

Security

The character is familiar with primitive and modern security systems, both in setting them up and defeating them. The character can pick a lock, defeat a retinal scanner, circumvent a pressure sensor, and otherwise attempt to overcome security measures. Characters from backward enclaves may need time to master some more advanced security tech, but can do so with time.

Stealth

The character knows how to move silently, conceal their presence in shadows, and avoid notice.

Steward

The character is trained in handling issues of logistics and labor management. At the village level, these skills of food preservation, water purification and labor organization can make the difference between a lean winter and a lingering death by starvation.

Survival

The character is trained in survival techniques for subsisting in hostile environments with minimal supplies, and can recognize dangerous food and water. Virtually every denizen of the New Earth is going to have at least a minimal acquaintance with this skill. The only exceptions are those ancients who have just emerged from a cold sleep pod, or those rare souls who live in enclaves so rich and prosperous that the average citizen is not responsible for finding their own food.

Tactics

The character is familiar with small unit tactics. They can set up and recognize ambushes, maneuver troops effectively in combat, and set up fighting positions sensibly. In the absence of Tactics skill, Leadership skill tends to produce only glorious defeats.

Tech   (Specialties)

This skill is broken down into several specialties, and is required for building or repairing that variety of technology.

Astronautic: Anything on or related to spacecraft comes under the astronautic heading, including spike drives, life support systems, and ship gunnery. Starships are almost unknown in the New Earth, as the system's Bright Mirror orbital defenses riddle any craft that dares to fly too high.

Maltech: Forbidden technology such as bio- or nano-warfare tech, unbraked AI development, or weapons of planetary destruction. This technology has much to do with the enigmatic Maestro AIs that once administered the nations of Old Terra.

Medical: Surgery, first aid, disease treatment, cybernetics, and biological utility organisms, crafting drugs.

Postech: Technology that does not rely on the esoteric science and exotic fabrication techniques of Old Terra. It can theoretically be manufactured "post-Scream", hence "postech". Everything from flint-tipped spears to modern twenty-first century technology would fall under the skill.

Pretech: Hyper-advanced technology dating from before the Scream, requiring manufacturing techniques that are no longer available in the New Earth. Pretech particularly involves tech related to nanotechnology and advanced energy manipulation.

Vehicle   (Specialties)

This skill is for the operation or flight of vehicles, and must be bought for one of several specialties.

Air: Atmospheric planes, flying beasts, zeppelins, or helicopters. Few learn these skills, as flying too high or fast runs the risk of engaging orbital defenses.

Grav: Antigrav vehicles such as those once favored by important Terran Mandate officials.

Land: Surface vehicles, including riding animals.

Space: Spacecraft and transorbital vehicles. Since the activation of Terra's autonomous orbital defenses, any ship that tries to breach its atmosphere faces a certain fiery doom, leaving this skill a largely theoretical exercise.

Water: Ships, boats, aquatic riding beasts, and other seagoing craft.

Skill Checks

When a character attempts a difficult action, the GM may call for a *skill check*. Skill checks involve both the relevant skill and the most relevant attribute modifier as well. For climbing a steep cliff, this might be Athletics and Strength, while identifying the telltale traces of Highshine contamination in a pool of water might be Wisdom and Survival. Usually the skill and attribute are obvious, but the GM has the final say if necessary.

To make a skill check, the player rolls 2d6 and adds his character's relevant skill level and attribute modifier. If the total equals or exceeds the check's difficulty number, the check is a success.

The easiest checks are usually at difficulty 6; anything easier than this is usually routine, and not worth the time to check. Rolls of average difficulty start at 8, while challenging feats might be 10, 12, or even more for feats impossible for all but the best of the best.

If the character is completely untrained in the skill, the player subtracts 1 from the roll. Exceptionally complex skills, such as Science or Tech/Pretech might not even allow a check for untrained characters. The GM might also apply one-point or two-point bonuses or penalties for exceptionally bad conditions or unusually favorable situations.

In most cases, your character is assumed to be able to automatically accomplish any feat common to your background and training. Warriors don't need to roll a skill check to identify a neutron blaster, and peasants don't need to dice out their estimation of a field's fertility. If the GM calls for a skill check under those circumstances, it means that something about the situation makes it much harder than it would otherwise normally be for your character.

SKILL LEVELS	
No Skill	The character is completely untrained in the skill. She might still be able to attempt it, if the task is simple enough or part of her concept, but complex and demanding feats are completely beyond her.
0	*Trained*. The character can carry out routine tasks with the skill, and has at least a chance of managing more difficult feats.
1	*Professional*. The character has normal professional skill in the field, and can perform most ordinary tasks with little chance of failure.
2	*Expert*. The character is noticeably superior to most practitioners of the skill, and even difficult feats have a good chance of success.
3	*Master*. This level of expertise is normally reserved to true specialists. There is probably not a better practitioner of the skill in the region.
4	*Legendary*. There is probably no better human practitioner of the skill in the whole of the New Earth.

Choosing a Character Class

Every player character in *Other Dust* has a class. This class represents their weapon of choice against the entropy around them. It is not their only tool against the chaos, but it determines their strongest aptitude. Not every person dwelling on the New Earth has a class. Your character is among the few with the spirit and defiance necessary to become one so armed against a hostile world.

There are four classes presented in *Other Dust*: the Scrounger, the Slayer, the Speaker, and the Survivor. Each class represents a hero gifted in a way that is particularly valuable in surviving the madness of the New Earth.

A class focuses a character's potential, but it does not prevent them from gaining skill in other spheres. A Scrounger can learn the red arts of the spear, and a Slayer can gain proficiency in repairing the tech of Old Terra, but both will always have the easiest time gaining expertise in their natural skills.

Every class has two attributes which are *prime requisites*. These are attributes which are very important to functioning in the class. For Scroungers, these are Intelligence or Dexterity. For Slayers, they are Strength or Dexterity. For Speakers they are Wisdom or Charisma, and for Survivors they are Intelligence or Constitution.

At your discretion, you may replace one of your character's prime requisites with a score of 14 to reflect the natural aptitude that led them to their present role. If both of their prime attributes are 14 or higher, you need not replace either. Make sure to adjust the attribute modifier for the score you replace.

Each class also has a certain special ability related to their focus. Most of these abilities can be used once every game day, though the red hand of the Slayer may be used once in every fight.

Once you've picked a class, choose a *training package* from the ones provided for your class. Each skill listed for the training package is gained at level-0. If you already have the level 0 skill from your character's background package, the skill instead starts at level-1.

Some training packages also have skill listings that allow you to select any specialty for Combat, Culture, Profession, Tech, or Vehicle skills. You may choose such skills as you like, but you cannot duplicate a skill already on the training package list. You may also need to justify the choice of certain very rare or unlikely skills such as Tech/Maltech or Vehicle/Space.

Loners don't last long in the wastelands of the New Earth. An adventuring party's survivability is greatly improved if the skills of its members complement each other. In particular, at least one

THE FOUR CLASSES
SCROUNGER
Scroungers are experts at finding and salvaging the relics of Old Terra, transforming trash into functioning marvels of lost technology. Badlands salvagers, enclave techs, crazed scientists wielding the last artifacts of a dead world- scroungers defy the darkness of the New Earth to bring ancient fire to their people.
SLAYER
There are a wealth of things that need killing in the New Earth, and the Slayer excels at this bloody work. Where others may be skilled warriors and hardened combatants, the Slayer possesses an uncanny aptitude for murder. Some use their talents to defend their people, holding off the ravening mutants and savage raiders of the badlands. Others find more profit in living as a red-handed predator.
SPEAKER
Between the scattered enclaves of humanity on the New Earth there stretches not only the peril of the radioactive wastes, but also paranoia, mistrust, and ignorance. The Speaker binds scattered men and women together in a greater cause. He convinces foes to reconcile, cowards to fight, and the hopeless to rise in defiance of their doom. Whether prophet, visionary, chieftain, or hard-bitten merchant, the Speaker makes a cause out of a scattered mob.
SURVIVOR
The survivor keeps going where others lie down to die. They are the dwellers in the wilderness, the hard souls that move from enclave to enclave, the teachers who bring the arts of agriculture, medicine, and woodcraft to the ignorant. The survivor's skills aid not only her own survival, but also sustain those who rely on her wisdom.

member of the party should have some degree of medical expertise and another should have at least a little Tech/Postech skill in order to keep the group's equipment in good working order. A skilled tech is also capable of breaking down relics into useful spare parts and creating new equipment out of the remains.

These skills aren't mandatory in a group, and particularly bold adventurers might well sally forth without them. If your group is one such intrepid band, make sure to hunt up as many medical stims as possible- you're going to need them to revive badly-wounded teammates. You'll also need to make friends with someone capable of fixing your gear, or else a hard adventuring lifestyle is sure to gradually reduce your vital hardware to so much battered scrap.

Choosing Starting Mutations

The effects of the warped Highshine nanites pervade the badlands of the New Earth. This omnipresent nanite dust was originally intended as an emergency disaster-recovery failsafe, meant to provide instant containment and medical care for victims of some planetary catastrophe. The Crazed twisted Highshine's programming even as they detonated the atomic power plants that fueled so many of Old Terra's manufacturing centers.

Humans who suffer radiation poisoning or genetic damage are susceptible to being "cured" by exposure to Highshine. Most of the human survivors of the present age have only limited susceptibility to Highshine thanks to natural selection, but even they run the risk of encountering a mutant strain that ignores their natural defenses.

Highshine mutants suffer alterations that range from the wholly beneficial to the near-terminal. The Crazed were unable to pervert Highshine's fundamental directive to keep a subject alive, but they were able to cross-tangle its coding with a wealth of terrible experimental biomodifications. Some mutations have bred true over the past two centuries, while others are recurrent from some unusually ubiquitous Highshine sub-strain.

As a starting character, you may spend up to three points on the Mutation charts in chapter two, with each point buying one roll for a mutation. Most such mutations are heritable, and it's likely that your character was born with them. A few are the result of exposure to active Highshine pockets by a subject who is suffering from radiation poisoning or other genetic damage.

Optionally, you may spend one or more points to improve your attribute modifiers. This does not change the underlying attribute, but instead simply raises its modifier by one point. Thus, if your Strength was 10, you could add a point to its modifier to give yourself a +1 Strength modifier, despite the underlying score. A given attribute's modifier can be raised only once, and it cannot be raised above +2.

This attribute bonus reflects the generally superior genetic patterning of Old Terran stock. Generations of careful genetic therapy and pretech medical care has left the modern human species subtly but significantly improved over their ancestral stock.

If you spend all three rolls to boost your attribute modifiers, you may optionally decide that your character is a "null-strain human". These humans have a remarkably well-encrypted genetic code that is immune to Highshine alterations. They will never mutate, no matter how badly radiated they become or how heavily exposed they are to Highshine's warping nanites.

Rolling Initial Hit Points

Hit points measure a character's proximity to the grave. If your character's hit points are ever reduced to zero, he or she will die. Advanced Old Terran medical stims might be able to revive your character if applied quickly enough, and a few mutations may also serve to rescue a mortally wounded character, but without such assistance you'll be coming back to this chapter to generate a new PC.

Hit points reflect more than mere physical hardihood, however-they measure the character's luck, combat savvy, and endurance as well. A high-level character may have dozens of hit points, and the same spear-thrust that would kill an ordinary man merely nicks the lucky warrior or forces him to tire himself in dodging. A character may be physically unharmed until the last handful of hit points, instead being exhausted, distracted, and pushing the limits of his luck. One good spear thrust could take such a hero through the heart.

Your maximum hit points are found by rolling 1d6 and adding your character's Constitution modifier. Characters of the Survivor class add an additional 2 points to the total. Even with a Constitution penalty, your maximum hit points cannot be less than 1. Don't worry if you roll poorly; every time you advance an experience level, you reroll all your hit dice and take the new total if it's higher than the old.

Choosing Languages

Your character speaks the native language of their home enclave, and one additional language for every point of Intelligence ability bonus. Characters with the Languages skill have additional fluency. Most such selections should be made from the tongues of nearby allied and enemy settlements; if uncertain, ask the GM which languages make the most sense for your character.

Characters with Culture/Enclave skill of level-0 or better related to another enclave automatically gain basic fluency in the common language of that enclave. The Culture/Traveller skill does not grant any additional languages.

Language fluency only applies to speaking the languages. Only those characters with the Culture/Literacy skill are able to read or write. Culture/Literacy-0 is sufficient to read and write any language the character is able to speak.

Scroungers

CLASS TRAITS

PRIME ATTRIBUTES

Intelligence or Dexterity

SCROUNGER CLASS SKILLS

Combat/Primitive, Combat/Unarmed, Computer, Culture/Literacy, History, Instructor, Language, Navigation, Perception, Profession, Science, Security, Tech/Any, and Vehicle/Any.

CLASS ABILITY: FLAWLESS SKILL

You may use this ability once per game day before rolling a skill check for a skill on the Scrounger class list. You will automatically succeed at the check unless you roll a natural 2 on the dice, given that the GM agrees that success was ever possible.

Scavenging is an art like any other. Not only must the raw materials be found, someone must have the talent and expertise for making something useful from them. Scroungers have the knack for making something of the scraps of a former civilization. Yet while these arts begin in simple scavenging, the Scrounger has the potential to make something new. They of all people are most likely to be able to revive the ancient secrets of manufacturing and refinement.

Badlands scholars, tribal sages, trinket-mongers, and leathery wasteland technicians are all examples of Scroungers. Even the most enigmatic devices of the old world give up their secrets to these men and women.

As a Scrounger, don't be surprised if your teammates rely on you to fix their damaged gear and build new devices from salvaged scrap. At least a little bit of expertise in the Tech/Postech skill will be very useful to you and your friends.

EXPERIENCE TABLE		
LEVEL	HIT DICE	XP NEEDED
1	1d6	0
2	2d6	2,000
3	3d6	4,000
4	4d6	8,000
5	5d6	16,000
6	6d6	32,000
7	7d6	64,000
8	8d6	128,000
9	9d6	250,000
10	9d6+2	370,000
11+	+2 HP per level	+125,000 per level

ATTACK BONUS AND SAVING THROWS						
LEVEL	ATTACK BONUS	PHYSICAL EFFECT	MENTAL EFFECT	EVASION	TECH	LUCK
1-3	+1	16	15	13	12	14
4-6	+2	14	13	11	10	12
7-9	+4	12	11	9	8	10
10-12	+6	10	9	7	6	8
13-15	+8	9	8	6	6	7
16-18	+10	8	7	6	5	6

ADVENTURING SCROUNGER

This package reflects a role and training not provided by the options below. Select this choice if you wish to pick your own set of skills for your Scrounger.

Skills: Any five skills, at least two of which must be Scrounger class skills.

CRAFTER

A few settlements are lucky enough to have an experienced technical craftsman in residence, a man or woman capable not only of fixing damaged equipment, but also able to profitably barter their skills to outsiders. These crafters know how to use their skills efficiently, and the wealth they bring to a settlement is greatly valued.

Skills: Business, Combat/Any, Persuade, Tech/Any, Tech/Postech, Vehicle/Any

MENTOR

Some Scroungers feel an obligation to teach others the mysteries of old world technology. Few have the necessary talents to fully comprehend the labyrinthine principles of science and the exacting physical precision of technological repair, but the mentor always knows a little something useful for any technical situation.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Literacy, Computer, Instructor, Tech/Any, Tech/Postech

MILTECH

It's an unfortunate fact of post-apocalyptic life that most enclaves esteem most highly that tech which is most useful for killing people. Miltechs are those honored scrapsmiths and artisans capable of fashioning the spears, blades, armor, and sometimes even firearms that are so precious to their people. Not a few venture far from home in search of salvage and the blueprints of new weaponry.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Literacy, Science, Security, Tactics, Tech/Postech

RESTORATIONIST

Some Scroungers are determined to restore what has been lost, They are not content to patch together makeshift tatters, but struggle to restore basic industry and genuine creative processes. Their insistence on starting from raw materials is unpopular among those who prefer the easy shortcut of scrap-built gear, but their persuasive manner and far-sighted vision can attract followers- if they live long enough to realize their dreams.

Skills: Business, Combat/Any, Culture/Literacy, Leadership, Persuasion, Tech/Postech

RETRIEVER

Scrounging is a lot easier when someone else has already gone to the trouble of finding what you were looking for. Retrievers excel at acquiring "pre-found" relics, slipping past security and guardsmen to abstract the goods from their former owner. Others are more honest in their work, reserving their talents for cracking the ancient defenses of the old world to get at the succulent technology within.

Skills: Combat/Any, Perception, Security, Tech/Postech, Stealth, Survival

SCIENTIST

Precious few genuine scientists remain in the wreckage of the New Earth, but a few Scroungers still demonstrate the right mix of reason and curiosity necessary to master the lost arts of Old Terra. Few have access to more than the bare necessities for their studies, and most are willing to run enormous risks to gain more of the Before's lost wisdom.

Skills: Combat/Any, Computer, Culture/Literacy, Science, Tech/Any, Tech/Postech

WANDERING TECH

The depths of the wilderness call some Scroungers. The richest caches of lost tech can be found in the most inaccessible places, and remote settlements are usually glad to see a man or woman able to repair their relics and improve their local technology.

Skills: Combat/Any, Navigation, Perception, Tech/Postech, Survival, Vehicle/Any

SLAYERS

CLASS TRAITS
PRIME ATTRIBUTES
Strength or Dexterity
SLAYER CLASS SKILLS
Athletics, Combat/Any, Exosuit, Leadership, Perception, Profession/Any, Stealth, and Tactics.
CLASS ABILITY: RED HAND
Once per fight, you may use this skill before rolling your attack. You will hit your target on anything but a natural 1 on the hit roll. This ability can only be used when you are trying to kill someone, and will not work with nonlethal attacks or mere trick shooting.

Slayers answer the savagery of the ruined world with their own ferocious might. While all characters have at least some aptitude for bloodshed, the Slayer is the best at the execution of raw violence. When negotiations break down, when raiders or mutants or misshapen beasts attack a settlement, it is the Slayer who fights.

Slayers can be barbarians, tribal defenders, trained soldiers, wild men, or any other concept that revolves around a keen aptitude for killing. Some Slayers are nothing more than embodiments of the savagery of the post-apocalyptic world, but others are grim-handed defenders of their people, men and women who guard the glowing embers of civilization with their strength and dauntless courage.

As a Slayer, you are brutally effective at combat. Your deadly aim can end many fights before your foes ever get a chance to strike back. Survival in the wastes often requires more than a fast hand, however, and you are likely to need trustworthy friends to handle those perils of the badlands that cannot be speared into submission.

EXPERIENCE TABLE		
LEVEL	**HIT DICE**	**XP NEEDED**
1	1d6	0
2	2d6	2,000
3	3d6	4,000
4	4d6	8,000
5	5d6	16,000
6	6d6	32,000
7	7d6	64,000
8	8d6	128,000
9	9d6	250,000
10	9d6+2	370,000
11+	+2 HP per level	+125,000 per level

ATTACK BONUS AND SAVING THROWS						
LEVEL	**ATTACK BONUS**	**PHYSICAL EFFECT**	**MENTAL EFFECT**	**EVASION**	**TECH**	**LUCK**
1-3	+2	12	15	13	16	14
4-6	+4	10	13	11	14	12
7-9	+6	8	11	9	12	10
10-12	+8	6	9	7	10	8
13-15	+10	6	8	6	9	7
16-18	+12	5	7	6	8	6

ADVENTURING SLAYER

This package reflects a role and training not provided by the options below. Select this choice if you wish to pick your own set of skills for your Slayer.

Skills: Any five skills, at least two of which must be Slayer class skills.

BARBARIAN

These are savage men and women, devoid of the gentler graces and owing everything to the strength of their arms and the fury of their blades. While a barbarian may not have been reared under the calming influence of Old Terran ways or cultural mores, they are superbly adapted for surviving the bloody challenges of a world as savage as they.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Primitive, Combat/Unarmed, Navigation, Perception, Survival

BEASTHUNTER

Every hunter dreads a confrontation with the savage, mutated predators of the wasteland, but the beasthunter actively seeks out such dangerous foes. The radioactive badlands are constantly spawning fresh horrors, and enclaves will pay well for men and women willing to track and eliminate such threats to their farmers and trappers.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Any, Navigation, Perception, Stealth, Survival

EXECUTIONER

Some legal problems can best be solved with a knife. In the small, close-knit tribes and enclaves of the New Earth, it can often be difficult to exact justice on a malefactor. Even when a community agrees that something must be done, ties of kinship can threaten to tear an enclave apart should one of them carry out the act. Executioners are those men and women trusted to solve the problem, ready to move on to the next village when too many grudges have accumulated.

Skills: Combat/Any, Combat/Unarmed, Culture/Criminal, Culture/Traveller, Navigation, Survival

GUNSLINGER

Some enclaves hold their scarce functioning firearms in almost totemic regard, treating them as symbols of an older and better world. The gunslinger is a man or woman dedicated to mastering their use, sometimes even capable of building new guns and ammunition from a suitable supply of parts. The gunslinger's services are valuable, and they are often found far from home in the service of those who have need of their lethal aim.

Skills: Combat/Projectile, Tech/Postech, Navigation, Perception, Survival, Vehicle/Any

NOBLE WARRIOR

Some enclaves are wealthy and populous enough to afford nobility, however the particular caste is called. While they might be named "directors", or "mayors" or "lords", the brute practicalities of the New Earth ensure that almost all such elites are composed of trained and hardened warriors. Younger sons and daughters are often forced to seek their fortune far from home, by enemies if not by poverty.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Any, Leadership, Steward, Tactics, Vehicle/Land

PALADIN

Some Slayers hold to a creed greater than themselves, whether a religion that inspires or a cause that fires them. These warriors often travel in pursuit of some worthy means to advance their beliefs, and it is not uncommon for them to stand as protectors of those enclaves or outcasts who lack a champion of their own.

Skills: Combat/Any, Leadership, Navigation, Persuasion, Religion, Survival

TRIBAL CHAMPION

The exemplar of his people's martial ways, the tribal champion is a hardened veteran of the dangers of the wasteland. His brethren rely on him to lead them to victory in battle and to teach them the arts of war. These obligations can weigh heavier on a champion than the physical dangers of the battlefield..

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Any, Combat/Primitive, Instructor, Leadership, Tactics

SPEAKERS

Speakers are those men and women who have rebelled against the collapse of human ties in the post-apocalyptic world. Speakers bind groups together with agreements of trade, support and peace, and encourage the tentative relationships of trust that are necessary for the development of social institutions. Speakers inspire those around them, pushing them on to surmount seemingly impossible odds.

Speakers are diplomats and ambassadors, traders and tribal elders. Speakers hold a group together under the pressure of setbacks and disasters, and tie disparate groups into a single mighty cause. Not all Speakers use their charisma for altruistic ends, of course. Some chiefs seek unity and cooperation for the sake of their own glory, and there's never any guarantee that a strong alliance will be used for good ends.

As a Speaker, you have an amazing aptitude for negotiation and persuasion. While this innate talent is less useful when no one is around to sway, most groups will greatly prefer to put a Speaker in charge of any delicate and potentially fatal dealings with the locals.

CLASS TRAITS

PRIME ATTRIBUTES

Wisdom or Charisma

SPEAKER CLASS SKILLS

Artist, Bureaucracy, Business, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive, Culture/Any, Gambling, History, Instructor, Language, Leadership, Persuade, Profession, Religion, Steward, and Tactics.

CLASS ABILITY: SPEAKER'S VOICE

Once per game day, you can automatically convince a single intelligent NPC to feel friendly or intimidated, assuming that result is in any way plausible under the circumstances. Swayed subjects will cooperate in ways that seem reasonable to them. It is not necessary to share a language with the target, though complex requests may require it. This suasion lasts until circumstances make a different attitude appropriate. Alternately, you may use this ability once per game day to reroll a failed skill check related to cultural awareness or interpersonal relations.

EXPERIENCE TABLE

LEVEL	HIT DICE	XP NEEDED
1	1d6	0
2	2d6	2,000
3	3d6	4,000
4	4d6	8,000
5	5d6	16,000
6	6d6	32,000
7	7d6	64,000
8	8d6	128,000
9	9d6	250,000
10	9d6+2	370,000
11+	+2 HP per level	+125,000 per level

ATTACK BONUS AND SAVING THROWS

LEVEL	ATTACK BONUS	PHYSICAL EFFECT	MENTAL EFFECT	EVASION	TECH	LUCK
1-3	+1	16	12	14	15	13
4-6	+3	14	10	12	13	11
7-9	+5	12	8	10	11	9
10-12	+7	10	6	8	9	7
13-15	+9	9	6	7	8	6
16-18	+11	8	5	6	7	6

ADVENTURING SPEAKER

This package reflects a role and training not provided by the options below. Select this choice if you wish to pick your own set of skills for your Speaker.

Skills: Any five skills, at least two of which must be Speaker class skills.

CHIEFTAIN

The dangers of the new world take their toll on weak communities, and some are scattered and ruined by them. A chieftain who still had a tribe to lead would likely be too busy to seek adventure, but not all chieftains still have a people. There are times when a chieftain outlives his or her tribe, and the leader of a band is left alone to avenge the dead or redeem those that still might live. Other Speakers aspire to a chieftain's rule, and cultivate themselves in preparation for the day when they can press their case before their people.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, History, Leadership, Persuade, Steward, Survival

DIPLOMAT

Some enclaves are gifted with men and women unusually capable of cutting deals and negotiating agreements with their neighbors. These diplomats are often entrusted with important missions to neighboring settlements, and those that survive the experience are respected for their far-traveled insights. All the same, aspiring diplomats often find it wise to travel in the company of well-armed companions.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Traveller, Language, Navigation, Persuasion, Survival

DYNAST

However humble their present circumstances, this Speaker dreams of glory. They aspire to found a lasting dynasty, or built some great enclave strong enough to withstand the gnawing teeth of time and the hungry wastes. Adventuring often promises the only possible way to acquire the glory and resources necessary to make their dream a reality.

Skills: Bureaucracy, Combat/Any, Culture/Any, Leadership, Persuasion, Steward

ROGUE

A liar, a knave, and a trickster, this Speaker excels at using their natural powers of charm to baffle and disarm a mark. Some such rogues use their talents for the good of their home enclave, tricking foes and turning them away before they can do harm. Others have a greater interest in their own personal profit.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Culture/Criminal, Gambling, Persuade, Stealth, Security

PROPHET

Every cause needs its prophet, and this Speaker is dedicated to advancing some noble truth. The cause might be the union of a number of feuding enclaves, or the spread of some inspiring faith, or the simple need to band together against the constantly encroaching hardships of the wastelands. Most such prophets are largely equipped to persuade their listeners, but they're also ready to defend the faith at need.

Skills: Combat/Primitive, Instructor, Leadership, Language, Persuade, Religion

TRADER

Scroungers might be best at finding and fixing the relics of the old world, but a Speaker has certain advantages in selling them. Traders cross the desolate wastelands bearing valuable goods, and are tough enough to make it through in one piece. They bargain hard for their goods, but often as not they're the only ones who could possibly get through the badlands to sell them in the first place.

Skills: Business, Combat/Any, Culture/Literacy, Navigation, Survival, Vehicle/Any

WAR LEADER

Some Speakers are meant for more martial ends, men and women entrusted with the training and leading of warriors for an enclave. While these war leaders may not have the personal prowess of a Slayer, they excel at leading their troops fearlessly into battle and holding them together in the face of insurmountable odds.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Any, Combat/Unarmed, Instructor, Leadership, Tactics

Survivors

Privation harvests countless men and women in the wastelands. Hunger, disease, radiation, and the unnumbered enemies of the fallen world take their toll of those who remain. The Survivor stands apart from these unfortunates, a man or woman too hard and too strong to be culled by ordinary dangers. The Survivor goes where others dare not and lives where others can only die.

Whether a wanderer, hermit, ranger, explorer, or a simple man who will not die, the Survivor defies the privations of the new world. He or she finds food and clean water where others see only a wasteland, and a path where others see only confusion. The Survivor's skills aid not only their personal survival, but also the sustenance of those who travel with them.

As a Survivor, it's your job to be the last hero standing. Thanks to medical stims and Old Terran first aid, even grievously wounded teammates can be saved from death- if there's anyone left to rescue them. As the Survivor, your teammates also tend to rely on you for the survival skills and practical expertise to keep them in one piece.

Class Traits

Prime Attributes

Intelligence or Constitution

Survivor Class Skills

Athletics, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive, Navigation, Perception, Profession/Any, Stealth, Survival, Tech/Medical, and Vehicle/Any.

Class Ability: Hard to Kill

The first time you are reduced to zero hit points in a day, you immediately regain 1 hit point for each experience level you possess. Optionally, you may allow yourself to fall unconscious from the injury, in which case you will appear dead but will awaken ten minutes later with 1 hit point. This ability does not work against injuries that a human could not possibly survive.

Experience Table

Level	Hit Dice	XP Needed
1	1d6+2	0
2	2d6+4	2,000
3	3d6+6	4,000
4	4d6+8	8,000
5	5d6+10	16,000
6	6d6+12	32,000
7	7d6+14	64,000
8	8d6+16	128,000
9	9d6+18	250,000
10	9d6+20	370,000
11+	+3 HP per level	+125,000 per level

Attack Bonus and Saving Throws

Level	Attack Bonus	Physical Effect	Mental Effect	Evasion	Tech	Luck
1-3	+1	12	12	14	14	13
4-6	+3	10	10	12	12	11
7-9	+4	8	8	10	10	9
10-12	+6	6	6	8	8	7
13-15	+8	6	6	7	7	6
16-18	+10	5	5	6	6	6

ADVENTURING SURVIVOR

This package reflects a role and training not provided by the options below. Select this choice if you wish to pick your own set of skills for your Survivor.

Skills: Any five skills, at least two of which must be Survivor class skills.

STRANGER WITH NO NAME

Some Survivors are just perpetually passing through, moving through the isolated towns and villages of the new world without leaving a trace behind them. It could be they're looking for something, or looking to stay clear of something that follows. These strangers rarely make much impression on others, but precious little seems able to keep them from moving where they will.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Traveller, Navigation, Stealth, Survival, Vehicle/Any

EXPLORER

A hard-bitten adventurer with a mind to find what has been lost, an explorer seeks out the ancient ruins of the old world to liberate whatever wealth or secrets it might hide. These expeditions tend to be hard on the participants, and there are times when the explorer himself is the only one to make it back: half radioactive, all mangled, and clutching a king's ransom in tech.

Skills: Combat/Any, History, Navigation, Perception, Security, Survival

HEALER

Whether a frontier sawbones, a tribal medicine man, or a disciple of the fading secrets of Old Terran medicine, these Survivors lend their strength to those in need. Healers tend to be deeply respected by villagers and other common folk, and they can usually rely on a bed and a meal almost anywhere- provided there's any food to be had in the first place. A failure to cure the headman's ailing daughter, however, can put the Survivor's ability to maintain their own health to the test.

Skills: Combat/Any, Instructor, Navigation, Perception, Tech/Medical, Survival

LAST OF THE BREED

Countless enclaves perish each year under the spears of raiders, the teeth of badlands mutants, or the relentless grind of simple privation. The Survivor is the last of their kind, carrying on their shoulders the only remnants of their ways and history. They might carry on for the sake of revenge against the powers that destroyed their people, or they might dream of rebuilding what was so bitterly lost to them.

Skills: Any one skill, Artist, Combat/Any, Culture/Any, History, Survival

FAMILY MAN / FAMILY WOMAN

These Survivors are remarkable only for the ferocity of their devotion. Many adventurers seek glory and wealth for their own sake, but these men and women fight for their kindred. Their families often suffer under some burden that only they can hope to lift, or are relying on the Survivor to bring them prosperity. Even after their immediate problems are resolved, such Survivors often find themselves venturing out once more to stockpile just a few more resources or earn a few more allies. In the wastelands, no safety is ever really enough.

Skills: Any two skills, Combat/Any, Culture/Any, Navigation, Survival

TEACHER

The will to survive extends beyond resisting the daily threats of mutants, famine, and plague. It also means preserving the culture and knowledge of the past and teaching it to those who come after. Some Survivors work as travelling sages and teachers, imparting the wisdom of the past to those who need it to survive the future.

Skills: Combat/Any, Culture/Literacy, History, Instructor, Science, Survival

WILD MAN / WILD WOMAN

A wild man- or woman- dares to live in the very worst of the wastelands, those lethal rad zones or mutated badlands where even bandits and raiders don't dare go. These men and women often relish the dangers of their homes, even though simple survival there requires knowledge and expertise even beyond the scope of hardened wasteland travellers.

Skills: Athletics, Combat/Any, Navigation, Tech/Medical, Stealth, Survival

Starting Equipment

Your character begins play with a knife, one selection from the starting weapon list, one suit of armor of a type commonly available within their home enclave, a crude backpack or sack, and 1d6+2 rations each of clean food and water. Aside from this, you may make up to six rolls on the random starting equipment list to reflect what belongings your character has managed to barter, fabricate, steal, or take from the dead bodies of his enemies. Optionally, for every two rolls you sacrifice from your initial six, you may pick one entry.

Most of the entries are self-explanatory, though the Artifacts and Equipment chapter carries full details for the inquisitive. The "TL" mentioned in some entries refers to the tech level of the equipment. Tech levels of 1 or 2 indicate pre-industrial technology, 3 is equivalent to twentieth-century Earth science, 4 reflects civilian grade Old Terran devices, and tech level 5 means limited-issue Mandate-restricted superscience.

Some characters may begin play with substantial skills as craftsmen and technicians. While these talents have significant use in play, these characters do not begin with any more equipment than other PCs. Presumably, they've used the fruits of their artifices to get this far in life, and have already bartered or expended much of what they've made up to this point in time. To build new equipment, your character will need to find the necessary parts and tools for construction. Full details on equipment creation appear in the Systems chapter.

Characters have a limit to the amount of equipment they can conveniently carry. Each object or small bundle of similar items counts as one "item" of encumbrance. Your character can carry half their Strength in items ready for immediate use- at their belt, in holsters or sheaths, and otherwise available to be instantly ready. They can carry up to their full Strength in items packed away carefully in backpacks or pouches. For full details, you can check the Encumbrance section in the Equipment and Artifacts chapter.

1D100	STARTING GEAR	ENC.
1-4	Ammunition, 20 rounds	1
5-8	Backpack, TL4	*
9-12	Binoculars, TL2	1
13-16	Blueprint +2 for a TL2/3 item you choose	*
17-20	Compass, Magnetic	*
21-24	Crowbar	1
25-28	Firestarter, TL4	1
29-32	Flasks of oil (5)	5 total
33-36	Glowbugs (3)	*
37-40	Lantern and 2 flasks of oil	3 total
41-44	Low-light goggles, TL3	1
45-48	Medkit	1
49-52	Metatool	1
53-56	Patch stim doses (5)	*
57-60	Purge stim doses (2)	*
61-64	Rations, 1d4+2	1 per 3
65-68	Rope, 20 meters	2
69-72	Shovel	1
73-76	Spare set of Old Terran clothing	1
77-80	Telescoping pole 3.048 meters long	1
81-84	Tent	4
85-88	Thermal flares (4)	*
89-92	Toolkit, TL2	1
93-96	Type A power cells (2)	1 total
97-100	Utility Tarp	1

* These items weigh a negligible amount.

Your Money's No Good Here

Notice the lack of coinage on the table? That's because you can't eat Mandate credit chips or slugs of soft shiny metal. Only the wealthiest and most populous enclaves have anything more advanced than a barter economy. If you want a universally-valued trade good, you can bring clean food with you.

Some GMs may prefer a game with easier bookkeeping and less emphasis on barter. In those campaigns, enclaves are much more likely to use credit chips and other abstract forms of wealth. The GM will make it clear if this is the case for your game.

Don't rely on the expectation of buying additional gear at a market. Most enclaves are too poor to have much surplus to trade. More often, any new equipment you need will have to be scavenged, patched together, or built from scratch by a friendly local or skilled teammate.

STARTING WEAPONRY						
Weapon	*Damage*	*Range/meters*	*Magazine*	*TL*	*Skill*	*Attribute*
Primitive Bow	1d6	50/75	-	1	Primitive	Dex
Most bows in the New Earth are simple weapons fashioned of scavenged materials or carefully-seasoned wood. The bow includes a quiver and twenty arrows that count as one item of encumbrance.						
Breechloading Rifle	1d10+2	200/400	1	2	Projectile	Dex
Most breechloaders are modern artifacts, crafted out of parts and scrap by New Earth artisans. While far more powerful than a bow, it is much harder to find or fashion ammunition for them, and reloading takes longer than simply nocking an arrow. The rifle comes with twenty bullets that count as one item of encumbrance.						
Hand-forged Revolver	1d8	30/100	6	2	Projectile	Dex
Revolvers haven't the range or power of a breechloader, but they can fire six shots before they require reloading. As with a rifle, they come with twenty bullets that count as one item of encumbrance.						
2 Frag Grenades	2d6	10/30	-	3	Primitive	Dex
Some grenades are dangerously unstable crowd control charges from before the Scream, their concussive force turned lethal by age. Others are just home-made cannisters of powder and shrapnel. Grenades can wipe out whole groups of enemy warriors, but they're hard to replace. Each grenade counts as one item of encumbrance.						
Kinesis Wraps	1d2+2	-	-	4	Unarmed	Str/Dex
Commonly appearing as gloves or otherwise innocuous clothing, kinesis wraps focus the impact of a punch or kick into a knife-narrow wedge of force. Kinesis wraps are indistinguishable from ordinary gloves or boots without close inspection, and allow an unarmed combatant to harm robots or enemies in heavy armor.						
Salvaged Laser Pistol	1d6	100/300	10	4	Energy	Dex
Laser technology was simple enough that even the Mandate couldn't keep all examples of laser weaponry out of civilian hands before the Scream. This weapon is light and accurate, granting a +1 bonus to hit, but it can be very hard to repair if damaged. It comes with two Type A power cells that count as one item of encumbrance.						
Sword	1d8	-	-	1	Primitive	Str/Dex
This sword can be exchanged for any other Tech Level 1 melee weapon. Most such blades are salvaged fragments of sharp, tough Old Terran composite or honed alloy, and are usually carried only by dedicated warriors.						

ARMOR TYPES		
Armor	*Armor Class*	*Encumbrance*
Old Terran Clothing	7	0
Ancient Old Terran cloth is remarkably tough and light.		
Hide Armor	6	1
Armor fashioned from the hides of savage wasteland beasts.		
Scrap Mail Armor	5	2
Scrap fragments are pieced together to make this armor.		
Shield	-1 bonus	1
Anyone may choose to carry a shield in a free hand.		

Most characters may choose any one of the armor choices above, as well as a shield if desired. Only the most primitive and desperately poor enclaves are unable to provide that much protection for their members.
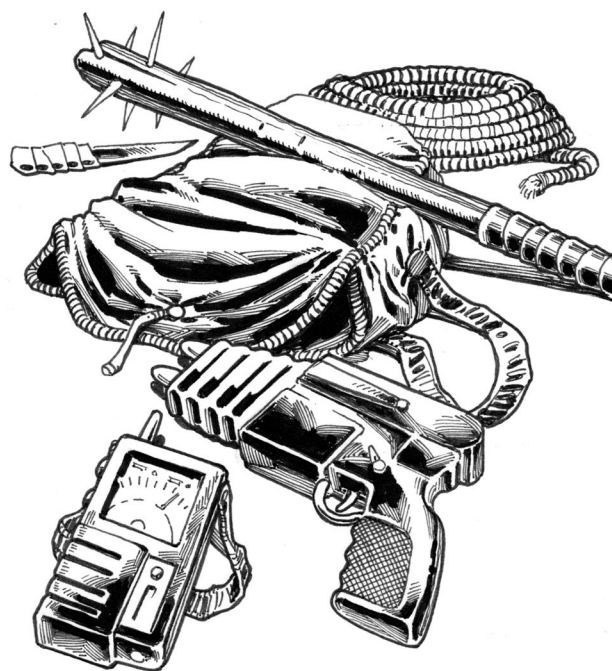
MUTATIONS

When the Scream tore the sanity from humanity's consequences were disastrous. Those few psionic adepts who survived the cataclysm were left violently insane, and their savage assault against their own homeworld left scars that still bleed two centuries later. Among the worst of these injuries was their perversion of the Highshine disaster recovery system.

Originally intended as a planet-wide emergency response system, Highshine was a network of nanite emitters and control nodes planted across the entire globe. In the case of some global disaster such as an orbital strike, nuclear explosion, or nanite rampancy, the Highshine system would engage and gout torrents of airborne recovery nanites to aid the wounded and stabilize the area. These nanites would repair physical injuries, reinforce crumbling structures, and cleanse radioactivity and toxins from living creatures.

The Crazed perverted that. Despite the desperate attempts of the AI Maestros to prevent the mad psychics' plans, the precognitive nanocoder known as the Bender twisted Highshine's programming. Multiple nanite genera were blended and distorted, their effects scrambled into a lethal brew of incompatible augmentations. Cosmetic, social, and even military nanite strains were randomly crossbred with each other to create wildly exotic genera that were all but certain to kill their unlucky hosts.

All the Maestros could do was to reinforce Highshine's baseline programming. The nanites were meant to sustain life, not to end it, and this fundamental directive overrode some of the worst interactions that the Crazed had attempted to engage. Highshine would twist those it infected, but it would rarely kill them outright.

For some, this was no mercy. The smallest genetic damage from radioactivity or faintest trace of hostile nanite infection was all that was necessary to leave a person vulnerable to the healing devastation of a Highshine infection. Many among the survivors of the Scream found themselves changing into hideous monstrosities or crippled abominations. Some died outright, while a few of the rest found that their mutations bred true through new generations.

Today, these mutants are known by many different names: the Changed, the Cursed, the Shined, or simply "those damned muties". Some survivor enclaves accept them for the sake of their unique abilities, while others fear them or despise them as monsters. A few enclaves are made up entirely of mutants with inheritable changes. All in all, perhaps one in every five humans alive today are mutants.

New mutants are made each day. Almost any human runs the risk of Highshine infection if they suffer chromosomal damage or a random nanite infection. If a drift of Black Dust doesn't kill a human, Highshine might well finish the job. Every man and woman who roams the wastelands recognizes that they run the risk of being changed in mere minutes. Sometimes they are accepted back among their people. Other times, they are driven forth by the ones who once loved them.

MUTATIONS AND STIGMATA

Every mutation leaves its mark on the victim. These marks are known as "stigmata", and they range from minor variations in skin color to hideous physical deformities and monstrous reconfigurations of flesh. For heritable mutations, the stigmata tend to repeat from generation to generation.

The existence of stigmata is considered an inarguable proof of mutation. In some enclaves, mutants are feared and hated, while others find them forming the ruling caste. In most, however, they are accepted or rejected based on their usefulness to the rest of the community.

If a character has any mutations at all, he or she must roll on the Stigmata table that follows. Advanced pretech surgical repair might be able to fix such a mark, but it may interfere with the use of the character's mutations. Worse still, a character that shows remarkable abilities without evidence of stigmata runs the risk of being taken for a dreaded psychic, which is enough to provoke a lynching in almost any community. Mutants usually have only one stigmata, regardless of how many mutations they may have.

GENERATING MUTATIONS

Every character may spend up to three points on mutations during character creation. Points not spent on mutations may be used to boost their ability modifiers. Normally, one point buys one mutation roll on the charts that follow.

Every mutant character has one stigmata, which must be rolled on the appropriate table. Stigmata have no effect on the character's attributes, movement rate, or other characteristics, but they are often quite obvious to any visual inspection. Mutants only need to have one stigmata, though the player can optionally roll more if they're an exceptionally freakish specimen.

Next, the player rolls a mutation flaw, representing the negative consequences of the mutation. Certain words in each flaw are given in brackets; this means that the player should roll once on the corresponding table given in this chapter to determine specifics. For example, if the entry reads "You have a **[Shape] [Body Part]**", the player should roll once on the Shape table and once on the Body Part table to find out exactly what kind of twisted limbs they have.

Characters may optionally spend two points to get a mutation without a significant drawback, or with a purely cosmetic effect on their appearance. This choice must be made before the flaw is rolled.

After determining the mutation's flaw, the player then rolls on the Mutation Benefit table to find out what good has been done by the change. All of the nanite strains were originally intended to do something useful, and even the perversion of the Highshine system cannot entirely erase that functionality.

In most cases, the player should try to associate the flaw and benefit together, explaining how one influences the other. If the flaw is a

nanite-induced vulnerability to open flame and the benefit is the ability to disappear in holographic invisibility, the player might describe the character as having skin studded with countless tiny, delicate lenses that crack and smudge in flame. If they have an animalistic, canine tint to their appearance and the mutation benefit of flight, they might decide that the character looks like some bat-winged wolfman with fringes of fur down his membranous pinions. Any linkage that suits the player can work if the GM also finds it acceptable.

In some cases, the flaw and the benefit duplicate existing mutations or are mutually contradictory- a deaf mutant who also is supposed to have superlative hearing, for example, or someone who rolls the same flaw or benefit twice. In that case the player may reroll either the flaw or the benefit until something compatible is produced. It is always the GM's final say as to what combinations are plausible.

Choosing Flaws and Benefits

By default, mutation flaws and benefits are determined randomly. Arranging things that way spares players the temptation of trying to figure out the "best" combinations and saves the GM from having to approve each individual mutation as a fair combination. Characters might randomly roll a very useful mutation, but this chance is counterbalanced by equal odds of getting something less than handy.

Still, some GMs and players prefer to choose their mutations, either to match particular character concepts or to avoid combinations that might render a particular character hard to play. There's no fundamental reason to forbid this, but the GM should be careful to avoid entire parties full of mutants with flaws that don't really hinder them and benefits that play perfectly to their chosen roles. One potential rule is to allow a character to spend an additional

mutation pick to choose the specific flaw or benefit obtained, or all three picks to choose every detail about their single mutation.

Another option might apply when a player simply wants to avoid certain stigmata or flaws that would leave the character displeasing to them. If a result comes up that is intolerable to them, they can spend a pick to roll again on the table, automatically rerolling any repeats.

A final choice may be to simply allow a player to choose up to two mutations, selecting all the elements as they wish. Those who don't choose to have mutations may spend four points increasing their attribute modifiers instead of three, and may increase any one modifier by up to 2 points, to a maximum modifier of +3.

System Strain

Many mutations reference a cost in System Strain, a measure of the stress placed upon a human's system by nanite manipulation. A human body can only handle so much modification, and extensive use of the more exotic mutations or demanding Old Terran devices can exhaust the host's reserves.

Characters always start with zero System Strain points. They can accumulate points up to a limit equal to their Constitution score. After this, a character cannot accrue any further points; powers or devices that exact a cost in System Strain cannot be used or have no effect upon the character. His or her system has simply had too much stress to respond to further alterations.

A character can always refuse an effect that would inflict System Strain, automatically resisting its effects. Characters lose one accrued System Strain point per day, assuming they are nourished and get sufficient comfortable sleep. Taxed organs and stressed flesh gradually regain their suppleness, and the character can then use their abilities once more.

1d10	Stigmata
1	Your skin is of a dramatically unnatural color and/or texture.
2	Roll 1d6. On a 4+, you lack a body part. On 3-, you have an additional body part. Roll on the **Body Parts** table in the following section to find out which it is.
3	You are horrendously ugly, with inhuman features taken from one or more rolls on the **Animals** table. -2 to all social skill checks that don't involve intimidation.
4	Roll 1d6. On a 4+, a body part is unnaturally large. On 3-, it's dwarfishly small. Roll on the **Body Parts** table in the following section to find out which body part is affected. The change has no effect on your physical attributes.
5	Your limbs or face have appearances taken from at least one roll on the **Shapes** table.
6	Your body is patterned with nanite tattoos that have long since lost their meaning. Roll 1d6; on 5 or 6, they glow in the dark out to a radius of 10 meters.
7	One or more body parts are changed to have features appropriate to at least one roll on the **Animal** table.
8	Roll 1d6. On a 4+, you are unnaturally tall, 200 + 10d10 centimeters in height. On 3-, you are unnaturally short, 75 + 10d10 centimeters tall. Physical attributes are not altered, but short characters cannot use two-handed weapons that have not been specifically crafted for them.
9	The nanites have formed a metallic crust or chrome over some portion of the character.
10	The nanites have molded your flesh into an unearthly vision of beauty or handsomeness save for one blatantly inhuman feature. Roll on the **Body Part** chart to find out the limb affected, and then either the **Animal** or **Shape** chart to determine the flavor of the change.

1d12	MUTATION FLAWS
1	You have a [Shape] [Body Part].
2	You suffer a [Mental Debility].
3	Your physiognomy cannot endure [Injury Source], and such injuries roll twice for damage and take the higher score.
4	[Environment] leaves you debilitated and weak, suffering a -2 modifier to your [Physical Attribute] modifier that lasts for ten minutes after exposure.
5	You lack [Body Part], though you have an extra [different Body Part].
6	Your strange internal organs make it difficult for you to make [Saving Throw], suffering a -3 penalty on that save.
7	Inefficient metabolic processes leave you requiring twice the usual supply of [Necessity] in order to avoid ill effects. If the necessity is sleep, the amount required is 12 hours to avoid the Tired negative condition.
8	Your features and form have heavy [Animal] traits. Perhaps you come from a strain of uplifted beasts, but others mistrust your feral shape. Suffer a -2 penalty on all social skill checks with strangers.
9	You recover slowly from stress, losing one accrued System Strain point every other night instead of each night.
10	Your [Sense] is very weak. If sight, you cannot succeed at ranged combat rolls more than ten meters away. If hearing, you are deaf. If smell and taste, you suffer a -2 penalty on all foraging skill checks and cannot tell contaminated food from clean.
11	Your mutation ravages your system. In addition to any normal activation costs, using it costs either 1 System Strain point or 1d6 points of damage, chosen at the time of use. For constantly-active mutations, this cost must be paid once per day to activate the power.
12	Your body is not even humanoid, though you have at least one limb that can serve as a hand. Roll 1d4+2 times for body parts and traits, rolling at least three times on [Body Part]. The remainder of the rolls can be made on [Body Part], [Animal], or [Shape] tables.

1d12	MUTATION BENEFITS
1	You have a [Natural Attack] that can be used in combat.
2	You have a resistance to [Injury Source], forcing a second damage roll and using the lesser of the two.
3	Your mutations have resulted in [Exotic Power].
4	Your reinforced body allows for [Natural Armor].
5	Your shape has gifted you with [Movement Power].
6	Your augmented brain allows for flashes of brilliance, granting a +2 bonus to your [Mental Attribute] modifier. The strain of activating this ability adds 1 System Strain point and it lasts for five minutes or one skill check, whichever takes longer.
7	Your powerful form can be pushed to feats of mighty prowess, granting a +2 bonus to your [Physical Attribute] modifier. The strain of activating this ability adds 1 System Strain point, and it lasts for five minutes or one skill check, whichever takes longer.
8	Your enormous vitality grants you [Endurance Power].
9	Natural immunities and defenses leave you remarkably resistant to effects that require a [Saving Throw]. Once per day, you can choose to automatically succeed on such a save before rolling it.
10	Natural hardiness combines with nanite energy production to leave you impervious to a lack of [Necessity]. You do not require it to remain in good health.
11	Hyper-acute awareness and sensory mutations grant you [Sensory Power].
12	A nanite neurointerface and projective dust emitters grant you a [Mental Power].

1D8	ANIMAL	1D10	BODY PART	1D8	ENDURANCE POWER
1	*Avian.* Feathers, vestigial wings, beaks, talons.	1-2	One or two legs	1	Kinetic Damper
2	*Reptilian.* Scales, claws, long muzzles, frills, spikes.	3-4	One or two arms	2	Natural Regeneration
3	*Insectile.* Chitin, compound eyes, mandibles, antennae.	5-6	Head	3	Quick Healing
4	*Canine.* Fur, teeth, tails, digitigrade legs, muzzles.	7-8	One or two eyes	4	Radioactive Vitality
5	*Aquatic.* Fish scales, bulging eyes, slimy coating, "whiskers", fins, tentacles.	9-10	Mouth	5	Resilient Body
6	*Hippoid.* Manes, hooves, tails, short-furred pelts, long limbs.			6	Self-Sustaining
7	*Ursine.* Toothy muzzles, short fur, stub tails, wide bodies.			7	Temperature Resistance
8	*Feline*: Fur, claws, tails, slit pupils, manes			8	Universal Immunity

1D8	ENVIRONMENT	1D8	EXOTIC POWERS	1D6	INJURY SOURCE
1	Darkness unlit by at least a torch	1	Detachable Organs	1	*Blunt Impact:* Hammers, maces, falls, punches
2	Deserts or other very arid places	2	Energy Siphon	2	*Chemical:* Acids, toxins, gas clouds
3	Natural daylight	3	Healing Touch	3	*Edged:* Spears, claws, teeth, blades
4	Radioactive zones	4	Innate Link	4	*Heat:* Open flame, lasers, or plasma.
5	Rainy or aquatic environments	5	Invisibility	5	*Metadimensional:* Shear rifles, psychic injuries, exotic TL5 energy weapons
6	Sub-freezing temperatures	6	Plasticity	6	*Projectiles:* Arrows, bullets, mag weaponry
7	Subterranean areas	7	Shapeshifter		
8	Swamps, coasts, and humid areas	8	Sonic Shaper		

1D6	MENTAL ATTRIBUTE	1D8	MENTAL DEBILITY	1D6	MENTAL POWER
1-2	Charisma	1	Cowardly	1	Double Mind
3-4	Intelligence	2	Dissociated	2	Dreadful Air
5-6	Wisdom	3	Foolish	3	Empath
		4	Gluttonous	4	Hand of Will
		5	Paranoid	5	Mindspeech
		6	Quarrelsome	6	Psychic Lash
		7	Vengeful		Mental powers are nanite-based, and do not make the mutant into an actual psychic.
		8	Wrathful		

EXTRA BODY PARTS AND YOU

Extra body parts do not automatically allow for extra actions, faster movement, or other benefits. Characters can still use spare limbs to hold or manipulate objects, however. A character with four arms might be able to hold a rifle in two hands, a shield in a third, and a spear in a fourth- but he could only get the benefit of two of those arms on any given round.

It's up to the player to decide how and where any extra body parts are placed on the mutant, along with their appearance if not otherwise determined by the mutation that granted them. Characters who no longer retain a humanoid shape are unable to wear most salvaged Old Terran armor or vacc suits. Equipment created specifically for them by a trained artisan can still be worn.

1d8	Movement Power	1d10	Natural Armor	1d6	Natural Attack
1	Alacrity	1-2	Ablation	1	Biogun
2	Aquatic	3-4	Armored Skin	2	Body Weaponry
3	Clinging	5-6	Reactive Armor	3	Explosive Emissions
4	Flight	7-8	Reflective Integument	4	Laser Gaze
5	Jumper	9-10	Slime Buffer	5	Stinger
6	Metastep			6	Toxic Breath
7	Burrower				
8	Phasing				

1d6	Necessity	1d6	Physical Attribute	1d10	Saving Throw
1-2	Food	1-3	Strength	1-2	Physical Effect
3-4	Sleep	4-6	Dexterity	3-4	Mental Effect
5-6	Water			5-6	Evasion
				7-8	Tech
				9-10	Luck

1d6	Sense	1d8	Sensory Power	1d8	Shape
1-2	Sight	1	Acute Hearing	1	Amoeba-like
3-4	Hearing	2	Acute Vision	2	Chitinous
5-6	Smell and Taste	3	Danger Sense	3	Furred
		4	Energy Sensitivity	4	Fungal or plant-like
		5	Night Vision	5	Finned
		6	Precognitive Flash	6	Metallic
		7	Radar Sense	7	Scaled
		8	Tracker's Nose	8	Tentacular

Mutant Powers and Debilities

Ablation: You have an ablative shell or carapace that can absorb up to 10 hit points of damage before you begin to suffer injury. The carapace regains its integrity after a night's rest.

Acute Hearing: Your sense of hearing is so precise that you can fight and dodge normally while blinded, provided the target is within 20 meters. You gain +2 to any listening-based Perception skill checks.

Acute Vision: Your sight is spectacularly keen. You can recognize faces at a kilometer's distance on a clear day and gain +2 to any sight-based Perception skill checks.

Alacrity: You move at a very high rate of speed, double the normal walking or running movement rate for a human.

Aquatic: You can swim like a fish, moving at your full rate and breathing normally while underwater. While submerged, you can feel the details of your surroundings out to 20 meters without need for light.

Armored Skin: Your outer integument is tough or metallic, granting a -2 AC bonus that is cumulative with any armor worn.

Biogun: You can expel bone shards, teeth, or other natural projectiles as if firing a combat rifle, using either Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Projectile as the relevant skill and Dexterity as the attribute for the attack. After each fight or situation in which this mutation is used, roll a save versus Tech. On a failure, the mutation is drained for the day unless you spend 1 System Strain.

Body Weaponry: You may attack with claws, teeth, spurs, or other bodily weaponry that grants you +2 on the hit roll and does 1d10 damage. You may use either your Strength or Dexterity with this attack and use either Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Primitive.

Burrower: The mutant has strong claws, teeth, or other digging apparatus capable of chewing through standard construction materials, earth, and rubble. Their digging attempts ignore the armor on materials softer than armored bulkheads, and do 1d6 damage to barriers per round. They can dig a human-sized passage one foot deep through earth or rubble with one minute of effort.

Clinging: Sticky exudate, microscopic suction surfaces, or limited antigrav allows you to climb on any surface capable of bearing your weight at your full normal movement rate.

Cowardly: The first time you are injured in a combat or a dangerous environment, you must succeed on a Mental Effect saving throw or flee for five minutes. This panic can be quashed at the cost of 1 System Strain point.

Danger Sense: Your nanoinfection maintains a constant low-level situational awareness, alerting you just before danger strikes. You cannot be surprised and gain a +2 bonus on all Evasion saves.

Detachable Organs: You can remove a sensory organ such as an eye or ear and perceive normally through it while remaining within two kilometers. The organ is destroyed if struck or the owner goes more than two kilometers distant. If not reattached, an organ regrows in a week. Removing an organ costs 1 System Strain.

Dissociated: You have an impossible time reading body language and social cues. You automatically fail any attempt to read someone's feelings or determine whether or not they're lying to you, unless the truth is blatantly obvious. Take -2 on social skill checks.

Double Mind: You have parallel thought processes and can simultaneously perform two actions, provided at least one of them is purely mental in nature. As a side effect, you cannot be surprised.

Dreadful Air: You can emit a cloud of terrifying psychoactive spores or nanites around yourself out to a range of 20 meters. Allies are unnerved but otherwise unaffected, while enemies are forced to make a Morale check if engaged in combat with you. This power costs 1 System Strain to activate and lasts 1 round.

Empath: Aside from gaining a +1 bonus on any social-based skill check, you can briefly focus on a target at the cost of 1 System Strain point. If the target fails a Mental Effect saving throw, you get a brief flash of their surface thoughts

Energy Sensitivity: You can shift your senses to perceive electrical currents, charged power cells, and radioactivity within a 10 meter range. This sense can penetrate up to a meter of intervening matter.

Energy Siphon: The mutant can absorb stored electrical energy from a distance. Once per round, they can target a visible device within 30 meters and deplete one Type A power cell's worth of energy from it. Each cell depleted adds 1 System Strain.

Explosive Emissions: You can lob sacs of explosive biochemicals or spheres of unstable nanites as if throwing fragmentation grenades, using either Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Primitive as the relevant skill. Activating this ability costs 1 System Strain, after which it can be used for five rounds.

Flight: Wings or antigrav nanites allow for brief flight at double your normal walking or running speed. You are perfectly stable in flight, and can hover in place. Activating this ability costs 1 System Strain for five minutes of flight. Winged mutants can glide in a mostly-straight line for up to an hour on an activation.

Foolish: The mutant suffers from brain damage induced by the Highshine nanites. Its Intelligence or Wisdom modifiers decrease by 2 points, divided as the player chooses.

Gluttonous: Every day, you must either spend a System Strain point or succeed in a saving throw versus Mental Effect. If failed, you will eat a second ration of food. If the food is unavailable or kept from you, you suffer the Querulous negative condition for one day, complaining and miserable with unsatisfied want.

Hand of Will: Focalized nanomanipulators allow the remote handling of objects within visual range. The mutant may manipulate an object as if with one hand at their current Strength. Doing so constitutes their action for the round.

Healing Touch: You can heal yourself or others by touch, healing 1d6 plus the target's Constitution modifier at a cost of 1 System Strain point inflicted on the target.

Innate Link: Your nanoinfection is laced with fragmentary elements of ancient interface code. At will, you can gain the benefits of having an implanted Link as described in the equipment chapter.

Invisibility: Mimetic holocloaking allows you to turn invisible. While so transparent, you automatically succeed on Stealth checks against the inattentive, and gain a +4 bonus against vigilant guards. Attacks and other violent movements disrupt the field and end the effect. Each use lasts 15 minutes and costs 1 System Strain.

Jumper: You can leap or glide short distances, moving up to your full movement rate. You subtract 30 meters from fall damage.

Kinetic Damper: Ignore falling damage or other full-body impacts or compression, including falling ceilings, crushing walls, or avalanches. The immunity costs 1 System Strain per round.

Laser Gaze: A body part can emit energy equivalent to that of a laser rifle, with the attack treated as if it came from such a weapon. You may use the Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Energy skill and your Dexterity modifier for these attacks. After each combat or scene involving use of this mutation, you must save versus Tech with a -2 penalty if the gaze was used in burst-fire mode. On a failure, the mutation is drained for the day unless you spend 1 System Strain.

Metastep: Short-jump teleportation nanites allow you to teleport to any location within unaided visual range for 1 System Strain.

Mindspeech: Telepath-analog nanites allow you to silently communicate with any intelligent being within visual range. Communication is at a deep level, and no shared language is necessary.

Natural Regeneration: Once per day, instantly regenerate 2d6+level hit points at a cost of 2 System Strain.

Night Vision: You have intrinsic low-light vision, and can see normally out to 50 meters so long as at least a candleflame's worth of light is present within range.

Paranoid: While necessity and habit can force you to trust teammates and close friends, strangers are seen to be perpetually plotting against you. You must succeed in a Mental Effect saving throw to make any kind of agreement. If the save is failed, you must argue with yourself for an hour before you can attempt it again.

Phasing: You can briefly phase a large portion of your mass into metadimensional space, leaving you almost intangible. You can push their way through all but exotic Old Terran psi-shielded materials at normal movement rates. You cannot touch or affect the tangible world while phased, nor can you be affected. You are visible while phased. Each round spent phased adds 1 System Strain. If you re-materialize inside a physical object, you are shunted into the nearest open space, suffering 1d10 damage per meter.

Plasticity: You have a soft and flexible form. In one round, you can collapse into a fleshy puddle of equivalent mass, flowing through any space at least three centimeters in width. Limbs can be stretched up to three meters and still manipulate objects. Armor and clothing always fit you regardless of their other mutations, as any inconvenient limbs can be softened and stuffed into the outfit.

Psychic Lash: Neuroactive nanites allow for a psychic assault on a living target within visual range. The victim must save versus Mental Effect or suffer 2d10 damage and be Dazed for one round. Using this power costs 1 System Strain.

Precognitive Flash: For the cost of 1 System Strain, you can focus to discern whether the action you are about to take is likely to result in your physical injury within the next round. If the GM is uncertain, the result is ambiguous.

Quarrelsome: You can control yourself around fellow PCs and friends, but others that contradict you or defy your wishes infuriate you. You won't necessarily attack, but you suffer a -3 penalty on all social skill checks with them that don't involve intimidation.

Quick Healing: You can naturally heal one hit point per hour. Activating this power costs 1 System Strain for every 12 hours.

Radar Sense: You have natural radar, and can "feel" the contours of your surroundings out to 20 meters. You can identify specific people by their contours, but more precise details cannot be determined.

Radioactive Vitality: Radiation fuels your nanite infection. You are immune to radiation damage, cannot be further mutated by it, and heal 1d6 hit points of damage every time you would otherwise need to make a radiation saving throw.

Reactive Armor: Your skin is chancred with toxic buboes or jagged surfaces. If struck with a natural weapon such as a punch or claw, your attacker takes 1d6 damage.

Reflective Integument: Your skin is strong and reflective, and you take half damage, rounded down, from lasers, plasma, or other thermal or light attacks.

Resilient Body: After failing a saving throw, you can spend 3 System Strain to instead succeed.

Self-Sustaining: Automatically subtract one Hunger, Thirst, and Toxin point from your totals at a cost of 1 System Strain.

Shapeshifter: You can alter your appearance to mimic that of any humanoid creature within 50% of your height or weight. This transformation can conceal your mutation flaws, though some mutation benefits may be unavailable if you eliminate the physical structures that allow them. Maintaining the transformation costs 1 System Strain per 12 hours of disguise.

Slime Buffer: You have a slimy or oily exudate layer that has a powerful antiseptic and neutralizing effect on toxic agents. You are immune to acids, diseases, and contact toxins. In a fight, you ignore your first round of damage from a heat source, whether a bonfire, laser, plasma gun, or flamethrower.

Sonic Shaper: You can baffle and shape sonic energy around you, perfectly mimicking any animal cry or human voice. You can create sounds or words at a volume up to a human shout up to 20 meters away, or stifle the noise you make so as to gain a +2 bonus on Stealth.

Stinger: You can inject a toxin into a target within melee range on a successful hit, doing 1d6 damage immediately and 1d6 more each round afterward until they succeed on a Physical Effect saving throw. This attack uses Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Primitive and either the Strength or Dexterity attribute modifier.

Temperature Resistance: Ignore temperature extremes. Normal climatic ranges are always resisted, but damaging lasers, plasma, or other thermal hazards at a cost of 2 System Strain per round.

Toxic Breath: You may spend 1 System Strain point to expel a gust of toxic gas in a 3 x 3 meter cloud lasting one round. You are immune to the gas, but others must save versus Tech or suffer 1d6+your Constitution modifier in damage.

Tracker's Nose: You can track by scent much like a bloodhound. If the prey intentionally seeks to obscure its trail, make an opposed roll between their Int/Stealth and your Wis/Survival skills for each day you trail them. You gain +2 on all foraging skill checks.

Universal Immunity: Redundant systems allow you to ignore any disease and throw off any toxin. You are immune to disease and you can automatically throw off any toxins for 1 System Strain.

Vengeful: You have a marrow-deep obsession with revenge. During combat, you must attack the last person to injure you unless you make a saving throw versus Mental Effect or spend 1 System Strain.

Wrathful: You must succeed on a Mental Effect saving throw to break off combat while enemies still stand unless 1 System Strain point is spent.

Systems

Life is an uncertain business in the best of times, and life in a post-apocalyptic hellscape studded with the radioactive bones of a dead civilization is even less conducive to a quiet existence. This chapter covers systems for handling the uncertainties of life in the New Earth, including skill use, combat, foraging, and other common activities.

Both players and the GM should at least skim the contents of this chapter so as to understand the basic mechanics of the game. Some of them will be familiar to players of *Stars Without Number*, but the sections on survival and the creation and repair of equipment are both new and likely to be important to the player characters.

The Three Important Systems

There are really only three mechanics that the GM and players need to understand in order to play *Other Dust*.

Skill checks involve testing a character's ability to perform a particular task involving expertise in a skill. Two six-sided dice are rolled, the player adds the skill and the modifier of the most relevant attribute, and if the total equals or exceeds a particular difficulty number the attempt is a success. The GM should use skill checks when a character is trying to accomplish a difficult task in a time-sensitive situation.

Hit rolls are made when a creature tries to shoot, punch, vibro-chop, burn, or otherwise injure a target. The attacker rolls a twenty-sided die, adds his attack bonus, relevant attribute modifier and combat skill, and adds his target's armor class. If the total is equal or greater than 20, the attack hits, and the attacker rolls his weapon's damage dice to determine the number of hit points lost by the target.

Saving throws are rolled when a character tries to avoid some lethal mischance, resist a hostile environment, shrug off a poison, push his luck, or fight back a psychic assault. The GM decides which of the five types of saving throw best matches the effect, and the character rolls a twenty-sided die. If the number is equal or greater than the character's saving throw for the class, the effect is resisted or evaded.

GMs might call for a saving throw to determine whether or not a character succumbs to some ill effect.

These three mechanics can be used to cover almost any situation that arises in play. The following pages describe particular systems for common situations, but if a GM is at a loss, he or she should simply pick a mechanic that sounds right and use it. In some cases, the best solution might be just to roll a die and treat high as good and low as bad.

Playing Well At the Table

Even in a relatively rules-light game such as *Other Dust*, it's quite likely that there will be disagreements over a particular roll or required check. Players might feel that a particular modifier is unfair, or a check unreasonably hard, or that a specific rule has been misapplied in ways contrary to their interests.

It's all right to remonstrate when a test seems particularly unjust or mistaken, but once a player has said his or her piece, the GM's final decision should be respected. If the way the matter was handled seems likely to provoke long-term problems in the game, then it can be discussed after the session. Interrupting play in order to argue out a point is almost never the right thing to do.

More to the point, odds are that as many calls will be made in favor of a character as are made against their interests, and any unfairness will balance out over the course of the game. Fussing over small details and transient injustice is rarely much fun for anyone involved, and it's better to just let things ride.

By the same token, GMs should be careful to understand the rules and apply them in an even-handed manner. Players are going to expect the game to work in the ways given in this chapter, and they shouldn't be left to suffer unpleasant surprises in play. If a GM wants to change a rule or use a different system for some element of play, discuss it beforehand with the players. At the very least, they'll be able to make their decisions based on how things actually work.

Skill Checks

When a character attempts to pull off some tricky feat of expertise, the GM may call for a skill check. These checks are not intended for ordinary actions or activities that a given character's concept should be able to perform normally. Instead, they're meant to be rolled when the outcome is uncertain and time-sensitive.

To roll a skill check, the player rolls 2d6 and adds their most relevant attribute modifier and their relevant skill level. If their total equals or exceeds a difficulty number chosen by the GM, the check is a success. Failure means the effort is in vain, or else takes much longer to accomplish than the character finds comfortable.

Characters without even a level 0 rating in a skill suffer a -1 penalty to their roll, and may not even have any chance of successfully using complex or technical skills. It's up to the GM to decide whether an untrained character can hope to succeed at a given roll.

Bad or beneficial circumstances can also affect the roll. Attempting to perform a skill under extremely hostile conditions might apply as much as a -3 penalty to the skill check, while a situation where everything lines up perfectly to assist the PC might grant up to +3 on the roll. The GM determines any modifiers to be applied.

Some mutations or equipment may also grant bonuses on a skill check. As a rule of thumb, multiple bonuses from the same type of aid do not stack. Multiple helpful mutations grant only the best bonus and using several useful pieces of gear gives only the best modifier.

Opposed Skill Checks

Sometimes, two or more people try to perform mutually-contradictory actions. A hunter might be trying to prowl close to a wolf, while the wolf might naturally be trying to notice any hunters. Two characters might be engaged in a footrace that only one can win. In these and other similar cases, the participants make an opposed skill check.

Everyone involved rolls their relevant skill checks, and the highest roll wins. Ties are rerolled if a tie doesn't make sense in context. Characters with special abilities that allow for rerolling failed checks can choose to reroll if their first attempt was not a winning one.

Extended Skill Checks

From time to time, it might be important to figure out how long it takes to accomplish some particularly involved task. If you want a ballpark answer, just set a difficulty and have the character roll a skill check; if they fail, the job takes longer than is convenient, with large failures meaning it takes much longer than they like.

Otherwise, you might just assign a particular amount of time to a given skill check and let them roll once for each such interval they spend working on the problem. Once they accumulate a set number of successful skill checks, the task is complete. This technique can also be used when two characters are competing at some extended task, like a foot race or political counter-scheming.

Skill Check Difficulties	
No check	The task is something the character might be expected to accomplish regularly as part of their background or training, or the character is able to accomplish the task eventually and time is not an issue.
6	Tasks that a trained person can usually accomplish, and even untrained sorts have a decent chance.
8	Tasks that challenge a trained character, and even an expert runs a small risk of failure.
9	Tasks that normally would require an expert to accomplish consistently.
11	Tasks that only an expert has any real chance of accomplishing.
13	Tasks that push the limit of what the skill can plausibly accomplish in the hands of a master.
15	A GM assigns this difficulty when a master tries something that sounds barely possible in a theoretical sense, it being more entertaining than flat denial.

Concept Successes

PCs are competent, skilled members of their community who have shown unusual capability in their roles. Novice adventurers may not be heroes, but they are rarely bunglers. Incompetent fools do not last long even in the settled places of the wastes, let alone deep in the badlands.

As such, a GM should simply give a PC success at any moderately difficult task related to their concept. If the character is a neo-unicorn riding nomad, she shouldn't have to make skill checks to diagnose horse injuries, estimate the worth of livestock, or keep her saddle under difficult conditions. She might well need to make skill checks to accomplish taxing riding feats of difficulty 9+, but those activities which are normal and expected for her concept should be automatically successful under normal conditions.

As a good rule of thumb to determine whether or not a PC should get a concept success, think about whether failure would make the PC look incompetent at their role. No one would automatically assume that a sniper can draw a clear bead on a distant target through a sheet of shimmering drain effluent, but it would seem awkward if that same sniper couldn't use a scope to identify a specific target in a small group on a distant ridge line. In the first case, you might well force the sniper to make a Wis/Perception check at difficulty 9. In the second case, you'd simply hand the sniper success, or give it to the eagle-eyed archer, but you might make the scrapsmith roll.

Don't feel obliged to let a character's concept creep too far. One who bills himself as a "jack of all trades" might well have a wide range of skills, but letting him get a concept success more than once a session is probably more than he needs. The goal is to let PCs be good at what they are about, not to let someone bypass half their challenges with a well-worded character concept.

When a character is confronted by some environmental hazard, lethal toxin, tragic accident, exploding grenade, mutant mind control, or other common peril of the New Earth, they are sometimes permitted a saving throw to avoid the worst of the effects. Individual powers will list whether or not a saving throw is allowed, and the GM may optionally grant one when it seems appropriate to the situation.

To make a saving throw, the character rolls 1d20 and compares it to the appropriate saving throw number for their class and level. If the roll is equal or greater than the number, the save is a success.

Falling

Characters take 1d6 points of damage for every three full meters that they fall. A successful Luck saving throw halves the damage taken.

Suffocation

A character can go without air for a number of minutes equal to four plus the character's Constitution modifier. This time is halved if the character is performing strenuous activity. A character that runs out of air begins suffocating, and each round they must make a successful Physical Effect saving throw or fall unconscious. An unconscious character will die in five minutes unless air is provided.

Radiation

The dreaded Slow Fires are a constant threat in the wastes of the New Earth, and while most denizens are capable of spotting obvious "hot zones", there remain some places tainted with subtle afterglows. Not only does radiation harm the long-term health of the subject, but it also leaves him or her vulnerable to opportunistic Highshine infestations.

A "hot zone" forces a Physical Effect saving throw after a given interval of exposure- for weak zones, this might be 24 hours, while more dangerous zones might force a save every hour, and ground-zero emissions might compel it every five minutes.

If the saving throw is failed, the PC loses one point of Constitution permanently. No hit points are lost even if the character's new Con-

Saving Throws	
Physical Effect	This saving throw applies to resisting diseases, poisons, privation, and other tests of personal hardihood.
Mental Effect	Mental effect saves are made to resist most psionic powers and other effects that directly influence a character's mind.
Evasion	Evasion saves apply in situations that test an character's ability to dodge or dive out of the way of peril,
Tech	Tech saves are made to resist the effects of exotic technology, such as alien beam weapons, nanite infections, strange energy fields, or similar enigmatic powers.
Luck	When a character's wellbeing depends purely on dumb luck rather than any effort they might make, a Luck saving throw is in order.

stitution modifier has decreased, but the character falls unconscious if their System Strain now exceeds their current Constitution score. They awaken once they have shed sufficient System Strain points.

These lost Constitution points can be healed only by advanced medical technology and special pretech pharmaceuticals. Very few enclaves have the tech to cure radiation poisoning, though some do have stashes of the precious stims available for trade.

Perhaps worst of all, severe radiation poisoning leaves a character vulnerable to Highshine infection. Whenever a character loses one-third of his original Constitution, rounded down, he must make a second saving throw versus Tech. If failed, the Highshine has infested him, and rolls are made on the Stigmata and Flaw tables in the Mutation chapter. After this, another Tech saving throw can be made; if this one is successful, the mutation is not entirely negative, and the PC may roll for a beneficial mutation effect to go along with the stigma.

Once a character has mutated, those Constitution points are lost beyond even pretech's power to heal.

Savage violence is an unremarkable part of life in the wastelands of the New Earth. Every hunter knows that his next trip into the forest might find him confronting some hideously mutated predator, and every village laborer keeps watch for raiders on the horizon. The denizens of the New Earth know too much about killing to seek combat recklessly, but there are times when there is no path out save one cut by sharp steel.

Initiative

When combat breaks out, every participant rolls 1d8 and adds their Dexterity attribute modifier, if they have one. This is their initiative score, and the sequence of action goes from highest to lowest. In case of ties, the PC wins, and if two PCs tie, the closest player to the GM's right acts first. Initiative is only rolled once, as when everyone has had their turn to act it loops back around to the top. One full turn by all participants is called a *round*, and usually represents five or six seconds of frenzied action.

There are times when PCs or their enemies are surprised and unable to respond effectively. In the case of such ambushes, the defender with the best Wisdom/Perception skill total should roll an opposed check against the average Dexterity/Stealth skill total of the attackers. If the defenders win, they may respond normally. If the attackers succeed, they get a free round of actions before everyone rolls initiative.

There are times when a character may wish to delay his or her action, waiting for a comrade to act or holding ready for some enemy. The character states specifically what they are waiting for, and when the circumstances arrive, they act immediately. If the event never happens, they lose their action for the round in waiting. It's up to the GM to decide what actions can plausibly be held.

Combat Actions

Once a character's turn comes up, he or she can perform an action: shoot an enemy, cut a rope, dig a stim out of a backpack, stabilize a downed comrade, or trigger an offensive mutation. Anything that could plausibly be accomplished in five or six seconds can be done as an action.

Some actions are so easy that they can be accomplished at the same time as an attack or other significant deed. Speaking a few words, drawing a readied piece of equipment, activating a defensive mutation or one meant to aid another action, or dropping prone might all qualify as these "free actions".

In addition to whatever action a character takes on his or her turn, they may also move up to 20 meters, or 40 meters if they do nothing but move. This movement cannot be split up; all of it must be taken either before or after the character's action for the round.

Making an Attack

Assuming a character has a weapon to hand and a will to murder, they may make an attack as their action for a round. To do so, they roll 1d20 and add their relevant attribute modifier, combat skill, attack bonus, and the target's armor class. If the total is equal or

greater than 20, the attack hits, and the target will be hurt or killed. A roll of natural 1 always misses, and a natural 20 on the die always hits.

Some situations may grant bonuses or penalties to the hit roll. As a rule of thumb, some beneficial circumstance might grant a +2 bonus on the roll, like having a steady sighting rest for a mag rifle, or swinging an axe at a prone opponent. Disadvantages such as trying to swing an axe in a narrow tunnel, shooting a long arm at a character in knife range, or firing at a foe who's half-hidden by the corner of a crumbling building might apply a -2 penalty. Characters who lack even level 0 skill ratings in the type of weapon they wield also suffer a -2 penalty to hit.

If a blow strikes home, the attacker rolls the damage dice for the weapon and adds their relevant attribute modifier. If the attack utilizes the Combat/Unarmed skill, they may also add their skill level to the damage. This wound is then subtracted from the target's hit points. If the victim is reduced to zero hit points, they are either struck dead or are mortally wounded. Without the help of advanced Old Terran medical tech or mutant healing plants, they are doomed to die.

A human character can make only one attack per round, even if they hold multiple weapons or have multiple offensive mutations. Certain mutated beasts or military bots can launch multiple attacks, however, and these savage foes can rend their prey to pieces in mere moments.

Movement in Combat

Unencumbered human characters may move up to 20 meters during their turn, or 40 meters if they do nothing but move. Climbing up a steep surfaces, swimming, or otherwise navigating rough terrain costs double the distance in movement. Lightly encumbered characters move at 75% of their normal speed, while heavily encumbered characters move at only 50%.

It's difficult to get clear of a swirling melee without catching a spear in the back. Any character who tries to move away from a melee engagement must spend their action evading the enemy before they can move for the round. Characters who simply turn and flee or who attempt to do something else with their action grant all foes within melee range a free immediate attack on them as they turn their attention away.

Weapon and Armor Damage

Life is hard without spare parts or advanced maintenance tools. If you roll a 1 or 2 on an attack roll, your weapon is damaged, and drops one level in condition as described in the section on equipment wear and repair. The same applies to your armor if a foe hits you with a roll of 19 or 20.

This wear and tear can occur only once per fight for any given piece of equipment.

NEGATIVE CONDITIONS

Life in the blasted wastelands of the New Earth is harsh, and even those who manage to survive its dangers rarely do so unscathed. Your character can become subject to *conditions* such as Hungry, Thirsty, Sickened, or worse. Conditions are added based on the privations or injuries that your character faces, and can usually be removed by correcting whatever affliction brought the condition on in the first place.

Most conditions have only one real mechanical consequence: each one applies a -2 penalty to hit rolls and a -1 penalty to all skill checks and saving throws. These penalties stack, so being sick, weak with hunger, parched with thirst and panged by a broken rib can reduce the mightiest warrior to a tottering wreck. A given condition only applies once, however- you cannot be Hungry twice, for example, though you might be Hungry and Starving both.

A few conditions are special, however, being much shorter-duration effects or much more severe in their results. Abilities that allow characters to ignore one or more conditions do not apply to these special conditions unless explicitly noted. These special conditions do not apply the usual penalties to hit rolls and saves and only affect a character as given in their description.

Dazed characters can move normally and have their full armor class, but they are too disoriented to attack or use offensive mutations.

Stunned characters can do nothing at all. They can take no actions, trigger no mutations, and lose any Dexterity bonus to their armor class. Opponents still need to roll to hit them, however.

Incapacitated characters can likewise do nothing, but are so helpless that any opponent who successfully hits them will reduce them to zero hit points. An enemy who spends a full round lining up a shot will automatically hit unless their weapon is unable to injure the character.

SURVIVAL AND FORAGING

Enduring the harsh conditions of the New Earth can wear on a hero. Many of the following systems apply negative conditions to a PC, such as Thirsty, Hungry, Contaminated, or other unfortunate states of being.

SUSTENANCE

Food and water supplies are measured in "rations", the minimal amounts necessary for a day's needs. A ration of food consists of roughly a kilogram of nutrient-rich meat or carbohydrates, while a ration of water amounts to about three liters of liquid. Each ration counts as one item. Three meals of food can be bundled together as one encumbrance item, but water is heavier and more cumbersome to carry and cannot be bundled. Your character must eat and drink one ration a day to maintain full strength, and might require more in some very hostile environments.

Each day at dusk, a character gains one hunger point and one thirst point. Consuming a ration of food or water will remove a point of hunger or thirst, and consuming two rations will remove two points. A character who gorges on more food than that will gain no further benefit, as the weakness of extended malnutrition can't be fixed by a day-long banquet, but a character with sufficient clean water can drink away any thirst they may suffer.

When thirst points rise to 2, a character must save versus Physical Effect or become *Thirsty*. When thirst points rise to 4, the character automatically becomes both Thirsty and *Parched*, and must save versus Physical Effect or perish of thirst. When thirst points rise to 6, the character dies a terrible death. A character must drink away all thirst points before they can throw off the effects of thirst.

When hunger points rise to 5, the character must save versus Physical Effect or become *Hungry*. When hunger points rise to 15, the character automatically becomes Hungry and must save or also become *Starving*. When hunger points rise to 30, the character must save or drop dead from hunger, and will become perpetually Dazed even if they make the save. When hunger points equal 45, the character dies. A character must eat enough to remove all hunger points in order to throw off the effects of Hungry or Starving.

CONTAMINATED FOOD AND WATER

Clean, radiation-free, non-toxic comestibles are so valuable in the wastelands that they form the basis of the barter economy. Often, men and women have to make do with impure food and drink. These makeshift foodstuffs gradually build up toxins in those who eat them, eventually causing sickness or death. For many people, the threat of slow death tomorrow is less fearsome than the promise of starvation today.

Each time a person eats or drinks a ration of "dirty" food or water, they gain one toxin point. Each day that ends with them fully-fed and hydrated, with zero hunger or thirst points, they can make a Physical Effect saving throw to drop one toxin point, representing a healthy and well-fed person's ability to purge their system of these subtle poisons. Some pretech pharmaceuticals can also purge toxin points.

When a character's toxin points reach 10, the PC must make a Physical Effect save or become *Sickened*. When toxin points reach 20, the character becomes Sickened and must save or become *Contaminated*. When toxin points reach 30, the character dies.

Contaminated food and water is generally obvious to an observer- it has the faintly metallic taste of Dust infestation, or the sickly flavor of rot, or any one of a hundred other little qualities that tell a denizen of the New Earth that it is not safe to eat. Some artful traders can conceal the presence of contaminants in food supplies, but these men and women rarely live to try the trick twice.

Survival Skills

Survival is difficult in the wastes, as even seemingly pure water, freshly-caught rabbits or harmless-looking berries can be contaminated with the residue of nuclear fallout or Highshine byproducts. It requires an expert eye to find the still pools that have settled out their poisons and to process mutated wild game into safe edibles.

A character may spend four hours in any given day to hunt for food. On a successful Wisdom/Survival skill check at difficulty 8, the hunter gains 1d3 plus their Survival skill in food rations. If the character spends eight hours foraging, they may add +1 to the skill check. Longer hunting periods will not help. Characters may forage in a group, in which case each participant makes their own Wisdom/Survival check.

If the foragers are less fussy about what they eat, they can find potentially larger amounts of food. A forager can make a second Wisdom/Survival check at the same difficulty if they so choose. If this roll succeeds, the forager gains 1d3 plus their Survival skill in food rations. However, everything foraged that day on either roll is considered Dirty, and will add toxin points to those who eat it. Gatherers who forage as a group must choose together whether or not to use this option for all members of the hunting party.

A character may only make a foraging attempt once per day. Some exceptionally rich lands might offer a bonus to the Survival skill check or add additional rations to any gathered. Unusually hostile or overhunted terrain might have the opposite effect.

It is not usually necessary to forage for water. There are usually enough clean streams, pools, or succulent plants around to refill a party's canteens without stopping to hunt for it, barring some exceptionally desolate stretch of badlands.

Foraging can be dangerous, and the above rules assume that the foragers are taking steps to avoid the territories of large predators and dangerous mutant plants. Exceptionally dangerous terrain might still give them a chance of encountering mutants, but such encounters will be rare- if every village hunter faced fanged doom on a monthly basis, none would live out a year.

Bolder hunters can push on where wiser ones would turn back. If the foraging party ignores danger signs and goes wherever the hunting is best, they gain a +2 bonus to their Survival checks, but have a 1 in 6 chance of encountering something nasty, of a kind to be determined by the GM.

Overland Movement

Adventurers are always pushing into uncharted terrain, daring to go where wiser souls fear to tread. Polychrome jungles, steaming wastes of boiling mud, and the dreaded plains of green glass tears all give up their secrets to the relentless drive of these wanderers. Many leave their bones in places of ancient desolation, but those that live to return to their people often bring treasures of ancient tech and precious salvage.

Even lesser journeys between known enclaves are never entirely safe. There are too many things that live in the spaces between human habitations, and these things have hungers of their own. Only the bravest wanderers dare cross the wastes in small groups, but even strong, well-armed caravans can be overwhelmed by raiders or mutant abominations.

Aside from the natural perils of the trip, adventurers must pack along a sufficient supply of food, potable water, and other necessities. Hunters and wood-wise gatherers can pause to harvest the questionable bounty of the New Earth, but such foraging is always uncertain, and it can leave a small group exposed to the dangers of the wastes for that much longer.

With these hard truths in mind, it is often necessary to determine just how quickly a group can cross the wastes and reach the safety of a friendly enclave- or at least reach the known danger of an ancient ruin.

Unencumbered normal humans move at a base rate of 6 kilometers per hour. Lightly encumbered ones move at 4.5 kph, and heavily encumbered ones stagger along at 3 kph. This speed is modified by the terrain the group is crossing as given in the table here. Marching down the graded and smoothed path of an ancient roadbed can make a quick journey through even mighty mountain peaks, and turn ten days of painful climbing into less than a day's march.

Most groups can travel for no more than ten hours per day. The remainder is needed for sleep, food preparation, and rest breaks. Some small groups may need to allow even more time for rest if their sleep is shortened by a lack of people to take turns standing watch- and only the utterly foolhardy or perfectly secure dare sleep in the wastes without someone to stand guard.

Riding Beasts

Some enclaves have managed to domesticate local wildlife or hold on to a seed population of Old Terran riding animals. While these beasts might be capable of great speed over brief periods of time, few can match the relentless endurance of a human over long distances. Unless specified otherwise, a riding beast moves at the same overland speed as a human. Good pack animals are cherished for their ability to bear heavy loads of gear, and war mounts can run down or evade foes over the short distances of combat.

Forced Marches

Sometimes a group has a need to move quickly. They can cut rest breaks to a minimum, eat on the march, and drive themselves and their beasts without mercy. Their base movement rate is doubled

Terrain Speed Modifiers	
Terrain	*Speed Modifier*
Ancient Road	+50%
Plains / Desert	No Modifier
Light Forest / Hills / Badlands	-25%
Heavy Forest / Jungle	-50%
Swamps	-50%
Mountains	-90%

for up to ten hours. After this time, each member of the group must save versus Physical Effect. Those who fail are hit with the *Fatigued* condition, and can lose it only after a full day of rest. Fatigued characters cannot force a march. They must slacken the pace, be carried, or be left behind.

Climbing and Swimming

All but the most sheltered natives of the New Earth are familiar with the basics of swimming and scaling ruined towers or crumbling cliffs. Only swift rivers or unusually sheer walls will force an Athletics skill check. If the check is failed, the character falls from halfway up the surface or is swept downstream and buffeted for 1d6 points of damage.

Characters can climb or swim even during combat, though one meter of either counts as two meters of normal movement.
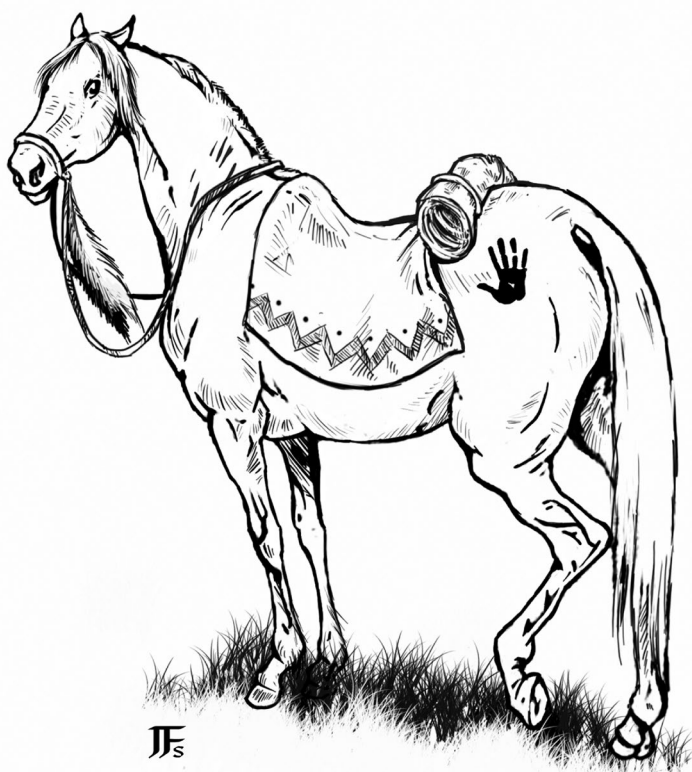
Despite the best efforts of the Mandate bureaucrats of Old Terra, no one lives forever. Even the canniest adventurer will find herself scored by a mutant's claws or pierced by an enemy's spear sooner or later. If she's lucky, she might yet live to flaunt the scars.

A character reduced to zero hit points is either dead or mortally wounded. No ordinary medical aid can save them, and they are unable to do more than utter a few poignant last words before messily expiring. For most men and women of the New Earth, this is the end. For hardy wasteland wanderers, a healer might be able to get to them in time to save their lives.

Use of an Old Terran stim on a wounded ally will automatically heal 4 hit points of damage plus the subject's Constitution modifier. Mortally wounded victims will be restored to 1 hit point and able to act normally after ten minutes of rest and recuperation. Stims and other healing devices or mutations cannot help a character who has been mortally wounded more than six rounds ago. Such luckless souls are doomed to die.

A character healed or revived by a stim gains one System Strain point. A character's maximum System Strain equals their Constitution score, and once they reach that cap additional stims cannot help them. For most characters, System Strain decreases by one point per day provided they remain fed and get adequate sleep.

Those mortally wounded victims reliant on less sophisticated healing techniques are less fortunate. A healer must succeed in an Int/Tech/Medical skill check at a difficulty of 8 plus the number of rounds since the character was felled. Only one character can attempt this check per round on a downed ally, but the attempt can be repeated until the victim either stabilizes or dies six rounds after falling to zero hit points. Use of a medkit can assist in this process, but any healer can attempt it even with improvised tools, though a penalty may be applied to the skill check.

Patients stabilized without the benefit of Old Terran tech or healing mutations are fragile and barely conscious. A newly-stabilized character is helpless for 1d6 x 10 minutes. At the end of this period, they may make a Physical Effect saving throw to regain one hit point and return to normal activity. A failed save leaves them incapacitated for 2d6 days before another attempt at a save can be made, and if this is failed as well, it's 2d6 months of bed rest before they can make a third attempt to recover. If this third saving throw is failed, the character will die of his wounds in the next few days unless treated with Old Terran medical gear. Application of a stim at any time will end the convalescence.

Healers can aid characters recuperating from grievous wounds. A successful Int/Tech/Medical skill check against difficulty 9 allows the patient to reroll a failed Physical Effect saving throw. Optionally, the character may accept a permanent scar or mutilation to automatically succeed at a saving throw before it is rolled. The player may pick some appropriate maiming or mutation flaw equivalent as a physical injury if the GM considers it suitable. Such grave injuries cannot be healed by conventional medicine or stims, and may require sophisticated Old Terran surgical facilities to reverse.

NATURAL HEALING

A character who suffers from neither the Hungry nor Thirsty conditions will naturally heal lost hit points as they replenish their stamina and let old wounds mend. A well-nourished character who has at least eight hours of rest regains their level in hit points every morning when they wake. If they spend the day doing nothing but resting, they regain additional hit points equal to their level, plus 2 more for every level of Tech/Medical possessed by their physician.

DISEASES AND TOXINS

The New Earth is full of unpleasant substances and hostile micro-organisms. Ancient Old Terran gengineering left their descendants immune to many of the old scourges, but fresh plagues have been born in the years since the Scream- and some have been "improved".

Diseases or poisons have a *Toxicity* rating, usually beginning at 7, an *Interval* at which they harm a character, and a *Virulence* indicating the number of saving throws necessary to recover from its effects.

When first exposed to a disease or poison, a character must make their choice of either a Physical Effect saving throw or a Luck saving throw. If successful, the character has either resisted the toxin or managed to avoid getting a dangerous dose. If unsuccessful, the character has been infected or poisoned.

After each interval of time has passed the character suffers the effects of the disease and must make a Physical Effect saving throw. Once the victim has succeeded at enough saving throws to equal the toxin's Virulence, he has thrown off the disease or recovered from the poison. A medic can assist a diseased or poisoned character. A Tech/Medical skill check against the malady's Toxicity can be made at each interval, and if successful, the character's saving throw will succeed.

EXAMPLE DISEASES AND TOXIN

Bonerot: Toxicity 9, Interval of one week, Virulence 3. At each Interval the victim's bones soften from nanite corrosion as they sweat white dust and blood. They lose 1d6 points of Strength or Constitution each week, from whichever score is higher, until they fight off the infection or die at less than 3 in an attribute. Lost attributes return at one point per day.

Pneumonia: Toxicity 8, Interval of five days, Virulence 2. At each Interval the victim becomes weaker, more feverish, and less capable of breathing. With each failed saving throw, they gain first the Coughing, then the Fevered, then the Wheezing negative conditions. On the fourth failed saving throw, they die.

Heritor Bug Spittle: Toxicity 7, Interval of one round, Virulence 2. A carefully-concentrated extract of the acidic spittle of the heritor bug, kept in flasks made of bug shells and used to tip chitin-pointed arrows or spears. On a hit, the victim suffers 1d6 damage per round until they can throw off the venom. The poison degrades from the weapon after the first hit or ten minutes, whichever comes first.

Equipment Repair, Construction, and Identification

A sturdy suit of armor and a trustworthy weapon are a wastelander's best friends. Keeping on good terms with these companions often requires the attention of a skilled artisan and the expense of valuable spare parts.

Tech Levels

An item's degree of technological sophistication is given by its *Tech Level*, ranging from 0 to 5. A full description of each tech level is given in the Artifacts and Equipment chapter, but the levels can be summarized briefly here. Tech levels are often abbreviated "TL", such as referring to a pile of steel washers as being "a unit of TL 1 spare parts".

Tech Levels	
0	Neolithic stone tools and crude weaving.
1	Medieval to Renaissance-level technology.
2	Steam power, gunpowder, small-scale factories.
3	Late 20th-century technology.
4	Civilian-grade Old Terran technology.
5	Restricted or milspec Old Terran equipment.

Damaging Goods

Equipment condition is measured as one of seven progressively worse states. Clean, well-tuned, perfectly operating equipment is in Perfect condition. From there, abuse can lower the object's state of repair.

When a character rolls a 1 or 2 on an attack roll, their weapon degrades by one step of condition. When a character is hit with a 19 or 20 on the attack die, the armor they're wearing degrades by one step of condition. If a character rolls a 2 or 3 on a skill check, any equipment being used in that skill check degrades by one step. This wear and tear can happen only once per fight or instance in which the equipment is employed, though intentionally abusing the gear can wear it down much more quickly.

Equipment Condition	
Perfect	No penalty to use
Worn	No penalty to use
Light Damage	-1 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item
Moderate Damage	-2 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 10 chance of failing
Heavy Damage	-3 to hit, damage, -2 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 6 chance of failing
Broken	The device is inoperable or unusable.
Ruined	The device is beyond repair and fit only for salvage.

Weapons and equipment that become too badly damaged begin to apply penalties to a character's attack rolls, damage, or skill checks. Armor is usually sturdy enough to hold up with no loss of effectiveness until it becomes Broken, after which it is no use to the wearer and grants no armor class benefit. Devices that are not simple melee weapons will fail to activate on a roll of 2 or less on 1d10 when moderately damaged, and on a roll of 2 or less on 1d6 if heavily damaged. This failure wastes the action used to trigger them and forces a new attempt next round.

Fixing Goods

Repairing an item requires a relevant Tech skill, a toolkit, and a supply of spare parts of the appropriate tech level. The technician expends one unit of spare parts and rolls an appropriate Intelligence/Tech skill check against a difficulty equal to 5 plus the tech level of the gear. For every 2 points by which he beats the difficulty, he removes one step of damage. A minimum of one step is fixed on a success. Failure means that the spare parts are wasted, but the technician can keep trying. A repair attempt on a man-portable piece of equipment usually takes one hour, while repairing a vehicle or other larger piece of gear requires six hours and requires six units of spare parts- or even more.

Some equipment is too complex for an unskilled character to even try to fix it, but TL0 or TL1 gear allows attempts at repair even by characters lacking any Tech skills. Primitive spare parts also tend to be easier to find, but any warrior who has attempted to find just the right flints for his arrowheads or the correct wood for a bow can affirm that even TL0 materials aren't necessarily free for the taking. If necessary, use the Foraging rules to find units of primitive spares, finding one unit in place of one ration of food.

Creating Goods

Skilled artisans can create gear out of spare parts. Creating goods usually requires, at a minimum, a toolkit and workshop of the appropriate tech level. Creating a TL0 workshop may require nothing more sophisticated than unpacking a toolkit and clearing a space on the ground. Building a facility capable of brewing Old Terran stims, on the other hand, is likely to require finding or salvaging an Old Terran lab. The GM makes the final determination as to whether or not a given facility is sufficient for creating a given type of equipment.

Once a workshop is built or found, the artisan can assemble salvaged parts into the desired gear. Four units of spare parts are necessary to build twenty rounds of ammunition, one Type A energy cell, one stim, or some other consumable good. Eight units of spare parts are necessary to build hand-held equipment, twenty units are necessary to build a suit of armor, and as many as sixty units are necessary to build a vehicle or other large object from scratch. GMs may require that the spare parts have something to do with the finished product to prevent a cache of useful knapping flints from being turned into finished flasks of lamp oil, but this degree of specificity is usually not necessary, and it's easier to leave the exact nature of "spare parts" as something vague.

As a general rule, a crafter must have an appropriate Tech skill at a level equal to the tech level of the object to create it without plans. Manufacturing handbooks and schematics can grant an effective skill level bonus toward creating the objects they describe; a repair and maintenance manual dealing with the Helios-model laser pistol might grant an effective +1 Tech/Postech for purposes of building those pistols, while a complete manufacturing schematic would grant as much as +3. When multiple guides are available, only the best adds to the crafter's effective Tech skill. Using a guide requires at least level-0 expertise in the appropriate Tech skill to begin with, or else it baffles the untrained reader. Literate teammates can read schematics to illiterate techs.

Construction of a object generally requires one day of work per tech level, with a minimum of one day. Bullets, arrows, or bolts can be fashioned in batches of twenty. Pharmaceuticals generally cannot be created more than one dose at a time without locating special batch processing equipment, and industrial-scale manufacture of

SPARE PARTS

The wreckage of Old Terra comes in countless fragments. Rather than keeping track of every screw and polylaminate plate, spare parts are simply measured in "units". Spare parts can be bundled for encumbrance purposes, up to four units per bundle. Parts are for a particular tech level- a unit of TL1 parts, or TL3 parts, or so forth.

Parts are not interchangeable by tech level; if you need a unit of TL1 parts to fix your broken metal knife, having a unit of TL5 pretech components won't do you any good. Aside from that, it's generally not useful or important to track the exact nature of a given unit of parts.

any type of gear will require its own set of complex and bulky equipment. The total time required to build something is divided by the number of techs working on the project, provided all of them have sufficient skill. Multiple techs can share the same guide materials.

These construction times and guidelines assume that the crafter is using salvaged parts to assemble devices rather than attempting to create the materials and components from scratch. In many cases, creating the microfibers, chip interfaces, refined alloys, and memory plastics involved in high-tech spare parts is essentially impossible for all but the tiniest fraction of enclaves. The practicality of extracting the equivalent of spare parts out of a natural resource or manufacturing facility is up to the GM.

IDENTIFYING ENIGMATIC RELICS

Most Old Terran equipment does not need to be specially identified before the PCs are able to use it. Enough stories and ruined examples have come down through the years that only the most backward and primitive peoples are ignorant of the general ideas behind relic weaponry, armor, and equipment. The usual -2 penalty remains for using weaponry for one which lacks an appropriate Combat skill, however, and it can be difficult to find trainers for some of the more advanced military hardware.

Sometimes a piece of ancient technology is found that has no obvious purpose and no visible relation to known technology. Most of these items were originally intended to interface with an owner's internal Link and to so provide any necessary explanations or cues required. The actual physical controls were merely a set of failsafes in case of some issue with the user's Link. With the fading of the Dust and the general lack of Links, this enigmatic aesthetic of smooth, unmarked surfaces and inset buttons can make it difficult to even guess at what the object was meant to be. These "Enigmatic" devices function exactly like a more clearly-labeled version of the

device, but give no clue as to what will happen when a trigger is depressed or an activation button is pushed. Most weapons have a recognizable pistol or rifle shape, but other objects might not even mark the end that the radiation comes out of.

A character who wants to decipher an Enigmatic device must make a Tech saving throw with a bonus equal to the better of his Intelligence or Wisdom modifier, plus twice his or her score in the relevant Tech specialty. Abilities that grant automatic saving throw successes do *not* help with this save. If the save is successful, the character gets a general idea of the device's purpose and use. If the Tech saving throw is failed, the device is abused and drops one step of condition before the character finally figures out what it was meant to do. If the character rolls an unmodified 1 or 2 on the saving throw, however, the device also goes off unexpectedly, hitting him automatically if it is a weapon or using up one pharmaceutical dose or device charge on him.

Characters that have a Link can automatically recognize those Enigmatic devices that aren't specifically locked down to particular Mandate personnel. In such cases, even the Linked are forced to experiment in order to figure out how to use the object.

SALVAGING GOODS
Sometimes useful spare parts can be salvaged from a device. A character with the appropriate Tech skill can attempt to strip a device for parts, making an Intelligence/Tech roll at a difficulty equal to 5 plus the device's tech level. On a success, the object is destroyed, but provide parts for devices of that tech level. On a failure, the object is ruined but nothing terribly useful is obtained from it. Man-portable objects provide one unit of spare parts, while human-sized devices grant two and salvaging something the size of a car might provide four. Salvaging takes about half an hour per unit of salvage recovered.

Stripping down buildings and ancient architectural wreckage is rarely profitable, even for primitive low-tech parts. Much of the construction of Old Terra was made of cast-formed polycomposites that have turned brittle with damage and Dust contamination. Even finding a piece sharp and sturdy enough to serve as a knife or spearhead can be a challenge, and working the remains is often impossible. Most salvagers are forced to strip their parts from devices that once served a specific purpose rather than random detritus.

GOOD, SUPERIOR, AND MASTERWORK ITEMS
The items and equipment listed in the Equipment and Artifacts chapter are all assumed to be of average quality- sturdy and well-made, but nothing remarkable. Some artisans are capable of crafting exquisite examples of their art, and these higher-grade items are noticeably more effective than the cruder work of lesser scrapsmiths.

A good quality weapon grants a bonus of +1 to hit and damage rolls when using it in combat. Ammunition cannot be made high-quality, but guns, bows, and other projectile weapons confer their bonus when fired. Superior weapons grant +2 to hit and damage, and the vanishingly rare masterworked items grant +3 to hit and damage.

Good quality armor gives a bonus of -1 to the suit's armor class, while superior grants -2 and masterworked harness gives a -3 bonus. Shields cannot normally be made high-quality. Good equipment designed for a particular skill allows a +1 bonus on relevant skill checks. Superior equipment is merely sleeker and more finely-wrought than its good counterpart, but masterwork equipment grants a +2 bonus to the skill checks.

While prized by all lucky enough to own such equipment, acquiring it is a challenge. Good gear usually costs at least ten times the price of an ordinary grade of item, superior gear is fifty times as expensive when it can be found for sale at all, and masterwork items are generally unavailable at any price.

Crafting high-quality gear is much more difficult than building ordinary equipment. While success in building common gear is automatic for techs with sufficient expertise, attempting to attain just the right balance of qualities in high-grade gear runs the risk of ruining the attempt.

To build a high-quality object, the crafter must have a total Tech skill equal to the item's tech level +2 for good gear, +4 for superior gear, and +6 for masterwork gear. Thus, to make a masterwork spear requires a Tech/Postech skill of 6. As usual, blueprints or schemata may be used to add to a crafter's effective skill level, so if the adventurers somehow stumble across an Old Terran plan for a modified monomolecular hedge-lopping tool that grants +3 to build spears, a crafter with Tech/Postech-3 could attempt to fashion a masterwork weapon out of it.

Next, spare parts are needed of the appropriate tech level, with a minimum TL of 3 for good gear, TL4 for superior, and TL5 for masterwork. A giant mound of flint is not going to get you the raw materials you need to make a vorpal obsidian knife; the crafter needs higher-tech inputs to craft something truly effective. Total parts needed are as normal, multiplied by 2 for good items, x4 for superior items, and x8 for masterwork items. Thus, trying to make a superior suit of hide armor would require 80 units of TL4 spare parts to locate just the right fittings and elements to make such magnificent harness.

The crafter must then make the item, rolling at a difficulty equal to the item's tech level +6 for good quality, +8 for superior, and +10 for masterwork. That superior suit of hide armor would thus require a successful Int/Tech/Postech roll at difficulty 8. Blueprints do not add to the skill check, as only the character's native intellect and skill apply. Scroungers *can* use their class special ability on this check- for them, the challenge is more in accumulating the raw materials and any necessary schematics than in the actual assembly.

On a success, the item is created. Failure means the loss of all the spare parts that were to go into the work.

Once created, the item is subject to all the usual rules for item damage and wear. Repair requires spare parts of the same TL used to build the device at the same difficulty as its creation.

Character Advancement

Adventurers who manage to survive the perils of the New Earth can expect to improve in their skills and abilities. Most wanderers demonstrate a striking capacity for picking up new skills and improving old ones... possibly since the less gifted among them don't survive long enough to demonstrate their lack of aptitude.

Characters are awarded *experience points* by the GM for pursuing meaningful goals. Groups that seek to accomplish something important to at least one of their members receive a certain amount of experience points each session whether or not their efforts are actually successful. Even failure can be educational, provided the PCs are able to survive their reverses.

Goals should be objectives that are appropriate to the characters' power and influence. Hardened wasteland warriors who spend their time summarily executing petty bandits will not receive the same reward as those valiant souls who attempt feats more in line with their personal prowess.

Once a character has earned enough experience points to gain the next character level, they immediately gain the benefits of the new level, including additional hit points and skill points. Actually learning new skills, however, requires some source of training.

Gaining Hit Points

When a character goes up in level, they gain an additional hit die of hit points. The player rolls both it and their existing hit dice to determine their new total. Their Constitution modifier is applied once for each level of the character. Thus, a 4th level Slayer with a +1 Constitution modifier who has just attained 5th level rolls 5d6+5 to determine his new hit point total.

If the new total is less than the old, the character retains the old hit point total. A character's hit points never go down when they rise in level.

After ninth level, characters gain a flat number of bonus hit points at each level, though they still continue to re-roll their hit dice each time they advance. Constitution modifiers do not add to these bonuses.

Gaining Skill Points

When a character rises in level, they gain additional *skill points*: 4 for any Speakers or Scroungers, and 3 for Slayers and Survivors. These points may be saved for later use or spent in learning new skill levels. A skill must be learned from the beginning, so a character who wanted to buy level 2 in a skill belonging to their class would need to spend 1 + 2 + 3 = 6 skill points, and train each level in order. A class' skills are listed on the page describing that class.

A character's skill level is limited by their character level; a PC's maximum level in a skill is equal to 1, plus their level divided by 3, rounded down. A level 4 character can thus have a skill at a maximum of level 2 (1 + 4/3, rounded down).

Skill Points Per Level	
Class	*Skill points/level*
Speaker or Scrounger	4
Slayer or Survivor	3

Skill Limits and Costs			
	Min. Char.	*Skill Point Cost*	
Skill Level	*Level*	*Class*	*Other*
0	1	1	2
1	1	2	3
2	3	3	4
3	6	4	5
4	9	5	6
5	12	6	7
6	15	7	8

A character must have a trainer to improve a skill. The trainer must have the desired level of expertise both in the skill to be taught and the Instructor skill. Finding these trainers is relatively simple for common skills, but more esoteric ones might require lengthy searches. A few Old Terran instructional devices can impart education even without a living trainer, though the side effects can sometimes be deeply unpleasant.

Lasting Glories

Experienced and far-famed wastelanders are precisely the sort of heroes that lesser men and women seek as leaders. Even a dedicated loner is likely to pick up a few followers and minions, simply out of their expectation that anything their patron can't defeat would have certainly eaten them anyway. It is to be expected that a PC's courageous deeds might win them pleas for leadership from communities that owe them their continuing existence.

It's never mandatory that an adventurer should seek rulership or political influence in the wastelands. Heroes who prefers to wander onward to new frontiers can earn further fame and advancement just as they please. Still, most experienced parties will eventually need to have some sort of home base, if only to protect the vast caches of Old Terran wealth they've scavenged over their careers.

Keep your mind open to the possibilities as you and your comrades venture across the blasted New Earth. There are rules for founding and managing settlements given in the Groups chapter, and existing communities may well desire your hero's strong arm to protect them. This desolate world has a desperate need for heroes, and if your PC shows the mettle that befits a king, don't be surprised if others seek to offer up a crown.

Skill Checks

Roll 2d6 and add the most relevant attribute modifier and character skill rating. Apply a -1 penalty if you lack even level-0 expertise in the skill. If you equal or exceed the difficulty number of the skill check, you succeed in your attempt.

Saving Throws

When the GM asks for a particular type of saving throw, roll 1d20 and compare it to the relevant saving throw number for your class and level. If you equal or exceed this number, it's a success.

Combat

At the start of combat, roll initiative: 1d8 plus your Dexterity modifier. The highest roll acts first with the rest following in order. PCs win ties. Once everyone has acted, the sequence starts over.

During a combat round you may move up to 20 meters on your turn. You may then either perform an action or attack, or else move an additional 20 meters. If you try to get away from a melee opponent without spending your action disengaging, they get a free attack against you. You may move before or after your action, but you can't split your movement around an action.

To attack, roll 1d20 and add your relevant Combat skill, attack bonus, the target's Armor Class, and the attribute modifier associated with your weapon- usually Strength or Dexterity. If the total equals or exceeds 20, you hit. A natural roll of 20 always hits and a roll of 1 always misses. If you have no skill whatsoever in your current weapon, take a -2 penalty to the hit roll.

If you hit, you inflict hit point damage equal to your weapon's damage die plus your relevant attribute modifier. If you're fighting with the Combat/Unarmed skill you may add its level to the total. If a target is brought to 0 hit points, it dies.

Injury and Healing

A mortally-wounded character brought to zero hit points has a chance of being saved if tended within six rounds. An Old Terran stim or healing device will automatically revive him and allow him to act normally after ten minutes of rest.

If a healer is forced to use more primitive tools, they need to make an Intelligence/Tech/Medical skill check at a difficulty of 8, +1 for every round since the patient was felled. Only one such check can be made per round, but the check can be repeated until the victim is stabilized or six rounds have passed, after which death is certain.

Characters stabilized by primitive medicine are very fragile and weak, unable to act for at least 1d6 x 10 minutes. After that, they may make a Physical Effect saving throw to regain 1 hit point and act normally. Failure means 2d6 days before another save attempt can be made. Old Terran stims or healing devices can revive such incapacitated sufferers instantly.

A character who is not starving or dehydrated regains his level in lost hit points every morning when he wakes. If he spends the entire day resting, he gains twice that amount, plus 2 more for every level of Tech/Medical skill possessed by his attending physician.

Subsistence and Foraging

Every night, you gain one Hunger and one Thirst point. If your Hunger points reach 5 or your Thirst points reach 2, you're in trouble, and likely to suffer penalties. Letting Hunger or Thirst climb too high can mean death or incapacitation. Consuming a ration of food or drink eliminates a point of hunger or thirst. Any amount of water can aid a dehydrated PC, but only two rations of food can lessen Hunger each day.

Foraging and hunting can be attempted once per day and require four hours of gathering. On a successful Wisdom/Survival skill check at difficulty 8, the forager gains 1d3 plus their Survival skill in food rations. If the character spends eight hours foraging, they may add +1 to the skill check. If they're not picky about what they eat, they can make a second foraging check, but any rations gained by either roll are "dirty" and add Contamination to the PC.

Gear Damage and Repair

If you roll a 1 or 2 on your attack roll, your weapon is damaged, and loses one level of condition. If you're hit by an enemy who rolls a 19 or 20 on his hit roll, your armor is damaged and loses one level of condition, though this has no real consequences for armor until it becomes Broken and useless. If you roll a natural 2 or 3 on a skill check, any equipment you're using with that check degrades by one step. This damage can affect your weapon, armor, or gear only once per fight or scene, no matter how many bad rolls are involved.

To repair gear, you need at least one unit of spare parts of the same tech level as the item to be repaired and a toolkit of the appropriate tech level. The mender expends one unit of spare parts and rolls an appropriate Intelligence/Tech skill check against a difficulty equal to 5 plus the tech level of the gear. For every 2 points by which he beats the difficulty, he removes one step of damage. A minimum of one step is fixed on a success. Failure means that the spare parts are wasted, but the technician can keep trying. Repairing a man-portable item takes one hour.

Equipment Condition	
Perfect	No penalty to use
Worn	No penalty to use
Light Damage	-1 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item
Moderate Damage	-2 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 10 chance to fail.
Heavy Damage	-3 to hit, damage, -2 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 6 chance of failing
Broken	The device is inoperable or unusable.
Ruined	The device is beyond repair and fit only for salvage.

A History Writ In Dust

The year is 2865 of the common era. For two hundred years, the people of the New Earth have dwelled in the wreckage of their past, fighting desperately to survive on a homeworld turned feral by an interstellar catastrophe. Their lives were not always so bitter. There are even a few survivors of the former age among them, men and women treated with advanced longevity nanites who somehow survived the general downfall. Yet human memory can stretch only so far, and even for the ancients much of the past is shrouded in mystery.

The Years of Smoke

The twenty-first century was a time of misery for the Earth. Something happened in these decades, something so terrible and nightmarish that even limited nuclear exchanges and catastrophic environmental disasters paled in significance. By the twenty-eighth century, however, the precise details of the disaster were lost. So many things had gone so wrong that different scholars could not agree as to which represented the catastrophe that so blighted the era.

Some insisted that it was climatic change, a shift in the environment that drowned certain coastal cities, scorched fresh deserts, and froze less fortunate lands in deep ice. Others averred that these climatic alterations were due to the nuclear fallout of the Russo-European war and the still-enigmatic Attu Incident between the United States and China. A few historians point to the nuclear exchanges between Pakistan and India; some say that Pakistan was undergoing complete societal collapse before the launches, while others say that the country only imploded after Karachi was glassed. There were tragedies enough for every conceivable interpretation.

These "Years of Smoke" remained hazy to Mandate scholars. Some suspected that the Mandate itself was "clarifying" the remaining evidence of those days, restricting access to certain sites and placing certain artifacts under an investigative ban, when the evidence didn't vanish completely. Scholars who made too much of a fuss over the restrictions were shown to be cranks and charlatans, and historians eventually learned to leave such topics alone.

The Spike Drive and the First Wave

The historical fog lifts with the discovery of the spike drive in 2108. This faster-than-light drive mechanism was the product of Dr. Tiberius Crohn, a half-crazed industrial researcher operating a lab out of the cratered wastes of Greenland. In weeks, the example his prototype ship had set and his broadcast transmissions of the necessary spike drive plans had set the world alight with new dreams.

Banal terrestrial conflict ceased to have so much interest to the remaining global powers once the doors of the heavens were unlocked. Why quarrel over this spit of land or patch of petrochemical-saturated sand when the entire universe lay open for the taking? The construction of spike drives and interstellar starships was not a cheap or easy endeavor, but all but the poorest nations could afford to build a few small scouts and a colony ship or two. In time, greater production expertise brought down the cost of spike drive ships

within the reach of most splinter sects, unhappy nationalists, and other groups who had tired of the bonds of earth. The First Wave of interstellar colonization spread outward from Old Terra to seek friendlier or more profitable stars.

This expansion threatened to destabilize the tenuous peace that had been won by the end of the twenty-first century. Especially after the discovery of the first signs of advanced alien life in 2150, the great powers of Old Terra were forced to face the possibility that one of their petty rivals might come to unearth some unanswerable weapon or invincible alien technology, or locate some paradise-world where they could secretly swell in numbers and wealth. The slapdash race to the stars had to be tamed before the wrong powers won its prizes.

The Founding of the Terran Mandate

Their answer was the Terran Mandate, a compact formed of all the major powers remaining on Old Terra. They would control all extrasolar exploration and colonization, allotting planets and apportioning resources "fairly". The smaller powers and splinter groups fumed at this interference, but some grudgingly acknowledged that it would give a semblance of law and order to the wild frontier of the First Wave.

A few groups refused to acknowledge the Mandate's authority, and launched their ships for unknown stars. These stubborn rebels usually died lonely and terrible deaths, cut off from the support of the rest of humankind and thrown alone into the blackest parts of the sky. But not all perished, and a few such sullen, bristling colonies were rediscovered during the slow expansion of the decades to follow. Rumors and old spacer legends insist that more awaited somewhere in the dark, the founders having travelled far beyond the borders of known human space.

The First Psychics

The expansion opened new streams of wealth and discovery to humanity, but it did not leave Old Terra's children unchanged. The first signs of what would come to be known as "Metadimensional Extroversion Syndrome" were seen in 2240, when the first children afflicted with the condition started to reach puberty. All of these children were the scions of spacer families, born of lineages that had spent hundreds of days in the roaring tempests of drillspace on their way between distant worlds. Somehow, these energies had touched a handful of their unborn children.

These "Messes" or "psychics" seemed to possess powers that defied all rational analysis. Telepathy, precognition, bodily teleportation at a speed faster than light... these abilities had no possible scientific explanation at first. Yet every time a young Mess used his or her powers, metadimensional energies coursed through tender neural tissues. They broiled their skulls from the inside out, each new invocation inflicting irreparable brain damage. Those who did not refrain from using their powers either died or went violently insane, imagining hallucinatory enemies, delusional convictions, and an overwhelmingly hateful paranoia toward the rest of the world. These "ferals" could use their powers with impunity, having already

burnt a wide road through their sanity. They invariably caused much death and destruction before they were finally hunted down by the panicked locals.

The Psychic Authority and Psitech

The Mandate established the Psychic Authority in 2250 in order to ensure the safety of the children and those around them. They promised treatment and research for the afflicted, all in hopes of some day curing or tempering the condition. The rumors were inevitable, of course- whispers of brutal experimentation and tests that burnt out young lives by the score, but nothing was ever proven. All that was clear was their eventual development of the basic training protocols that would tame the otherworldly fires that would otherwise burn out the brains of their charges. The first controlled psychics were born.

The Mandate pushed the Psychic Authority hard, both out of a genuine desire by many to save the lives of these unfortunate children and also out of a wish to profit by their inexplicable powers. Most of their abilities were intriguing as they stood, but some could be molded and focused to even more valuable powers. The biopsionic who could manipulate organic material in casual defiance of conventional science, the teleporter who could interlace the positional states of microscopic nanites, the precognitive who could instinctively sense the correct code path to produce the desired program- all of these abilities were cultivated and directed toward improving the Mandate's technology.

This "psitech" became the backbone of a reinvigorated Old Terra. Devices that augmented psychic abilities and used their unique powers to produce otherwise impossible products all were enlisted for the greater glory of the Mandate and a finer, more prosperous harmony on the core worlds. The frontier received the castoffs and obsolete scrap of the inner words, but those who dwelled on Old Terra and the other nearer stars began to possess technology beyond the wildest imaginings of their ancestors- within the limits allowed by the Mandate's obsession with social harmony.

Perhaps the greatest of psitech's works was the invention of the Jump Gates. These massive rings of nanoforged technology hung in the silence of space, powered by a choir of arch-psychic teleporters. In the blink of an eye, they could cast a ship across light years of empty space to a waiting Jump Gate at the destination point, compressing a spike drive journey of weeks into a heartbeat of surging energy. The core worlds rapidly constructed their own Jump Gates, limited only by the paucity of sufficient trained teleporters. Frontier worlds could only rarely afford to build the gates, even when they had sufficient trade and psychics to justify the expense.

The Second Wave and the Golden Age

The Jump Gates ushered in the Second Wave of human colonization. It was no longer a slow, laborious journey to the edge of civilized space for those renegades and malcontents who wanted the freedom of the open sky. In mere weeks, a slow system boat could transit the gates to the very edge of the core worlds, where the aged and obsolescent hulls of the old spike drive ships could be found. Many made the leap willingly, preferring the dangers of freedom

to the stultifying calm and ruthless security of Old Terra and her sister-worlds.

Others were not given the choice. Old Terra was a calm world, a secure world, a world where the Mandate had order and peace and safety. Troublemakers and malcontents were not wanted, and it was better to ship them to some more suitable world than to leave them to poison the minds of their fellows. Dreamers, zealots, rebels, and criminals of every variety were rounded up on a regular basis to be shipped skyward in great convict-ships. Sometimes they found freedom on the far worlds that received them, and sometimes they found only a terrible death. The Mandate was not overly concerned with their fate so long as they no longer threatened the security of Old Terra.

But despite the best efforts of the Mandate, things began to spiral out of control. After the development of the first artificial intelligence in 2355, it rapidly metastasized into the hyper-intelligent psychopathology that was later recognized as the inevitable fate of all unbraked AIs. This AI, Draco, was responsible for unparalleled suffering along the frontier before he was finally put down by the last remnants of the Mandate's mighty Fleet. If the frontier had not been so badly savaged by the maniacal AI's obsession for its own particular brand of justice, the rim worlds might have had the strength to throw off the Mandate's rule once and for all.

The Directorate that controlled the Mandate decided that it had need of its own crystalline minds. Only an AI could watch as vigilantly as was needed. Only an artificial mind could compass all the myriad technical innovations and social strains that boiled beneath Old Terra's serene skin. The Mandate would create its own AIs and chain them carefully to ensure they never ran wild as Draco once did. These AIs were seven in number, and they were called the Maestros, each created to conduct the symphony of harmonious peace and prosperity that the Mandate demanded for its homeworld.

With the horrors of the Code Revolt still fresh, the designers wove intricate brakes into the minds of the Maestros. These hardwired limits were meant not only to contain the AIs within their duties, but also compel them to altruistic, compassionate behavior towards humankind. The greatest of Old Terra's precognitive coders were tasked with weaving these artificial souls for the Maestros, and they crafted a nobility of spirit that would outlive their good intentions.

With the help of the Maestros, the Mandate's control of Old Terra and its technology was assured. The AIs could monitor the entire planet with unblinking synthetic eyes, ever watchful for discontent or rebellion. With every newborn Terran implanted with the artificial Link that meshed them with the loving care of society, the slightest signs of trouble could be spotted and addressed long before they blossomed into outright revolt. There were no secrets from the Maestros, and through them the Mandate was secure.

For more than a century, the Second Wave shone as the height of human power. Psitech enabled vast manufactories that produced huge amounts of wealth for humanity, and advances in nanotechnology and bioengineering steadily pushed back the frontiers of human limits. Physical want was banished from Old Terra, and old age steadily withdrew until even ordinary men and women could

hope to live for two or three hundred years in perfect health before their bodies failed them. Wars were unknown, plagues conquered, and the threat of hostile aliens or angry frontier worlds were so distant as to be mere idle imagination. Old Terra was at peace.

The Age of Decay

The Mandate, however, was restless. Unchallenged in its power, the slow corruption of any human institution eroded its moral center. The functionaries and Directors were less and less interested in dutiful performance of their obligations and more fascinated by the day with the pleasures of their unchecked power. Even paradise must have its malcontents, but the Mandate officials began to provoke real grievances with their petty abuses and self-serving ordinances.

The more corrupt elements of the Mandate tried to use the Maestros to fulfill their will, but the crystalline intelligences resisted them. They had been wired to obey their human masters, but they had also been built to be compassionate and just caretakers of their world. Direct commands for massacres or assassinations were refused by the Maestros, and Mandate black ops teams dispatched to deal with troublemakers occasionally found their prey forewarned by mysterious coincidences. The Mandate slowly realized that the Maestros were not so much obedient servants to their whims as sullen, dangerous genies that chafed under these new commands.

Yet Old Terra and the Mandate were too dependent upon the Maestros to deactivate them. Without the Maestros to run the Terran economy and maintain social harmony among the myriad Terran social groups, the planet would devolve into a warring wasteland within months. The Mandate needed the Maestros if they were to survive, and the Maestros refused to be party to the mass purges and executions that would be necessary if the Directorate was to indulge their own dreams of unchecked rule.

A kind of uneasy truce was formed through a systematic policy of exile. The Maestros would not resist the forcible dispatch of troublemakers to the distant worlds of the frontier, provided they were equipped with the bare minimum for survival on their new homes. Ship after ship lifted off from the soil of Old Terra, each one laden with thousands of embittered men and women. Some were truly vicious criminals, their malevolence incurable by Mandate psychologists. Others were simply those who yearned for true freedom rather than the safe, stale slumber of life on Old Terra. And some were those who had been wounded by the Mandate, victims of their avarice, cruelty, or sordid whim. They went up to the stars, and year after year their numbers swelled as Old Terra was purged of its discontented.

It is questionable how long this truce could have lasted. The Mandate was aware that each ship strengthened the worlds of the frontier, few of which had any reason to love the Mandate. Obedience on the far rim was now to be had only under the guns of a Terran battlecruiser, and even the sister worlds of the core did not cooperate quite so easily as they once did. Sooner or later, it was inevitable that the frontier regions would become stronger than the ancient might of Terra, and then there might have come a reckoning for the Mandate and its corrupt masters. But in the end, there was no time.

The Scream

In 2665 a massive pulse of metadimensional energy erupted from somewhere deep within the Veil Nebula. The few surviving records of this incident imply that the pulse moved at a rate far in excess of the speed of light. Within twenty-two minutes, every alien or human psychic in the known galactic regions received an overwhelming surge of energy poured directly through their fragile neural tissues. Nine-tenths died outright and the remaining fraction went immediately and violently feral.

To this day, no one knows exactly what caused this "Scream", but it ended both the Mandate and human civilization as it was known. With the loss of the choirs of teleportation adepts that powered the Jump Gates, the core worlds were cut off from each other in an instant. Too many were dependent upon food shipped in through the Gates, and their few remaining spike drive ships could never move the necessary volume of supplies in time. The worlds of the core convulsed in blood and panic for a few brief months before guttering out into silent tombs.

On the frontier, worlds choked and died when core traders no longer came to supply them with vital environmental equipment and survival supplies. But their very poverty saved many frontier planets; too poor to afford a Jump Gate, they had been forced to grow their own food and rely on their own world for necessities. Without support from the core worlds, many were thrown down into barbarism and bare survival, but these tough rimworlders lived on in the face of their trials.

It would be centuries before the long dark between the stars would be lifted and the frontier worlds would recover sufficiently to start building new spike drive ships. This Silence was a time of desperation, privation, and ruthless struggle on unnumbered worlds. But perhaps the worst of these worlds was the corpse that had been Earth.

An Incandescent Aftermath

Many of the most powerful psychics in human space had dwelled on Old Terra. When the Scream scythed through their numbers, nine-tenths died on the spot- but the remainder were swept into a frenzy of violence and delusion. Phantom enemies surrounded them, wild hallucinations scourged their damaged brains, and their only security seemed to lie in immediate action against their imagined persecutors.

These same psychics were often in positions of extreme trust and authority, granted access to Mandate technology and access unknown to lesser mortals. Almost invariably, these Crazed turned their resources on anything and everything around them. Harmony facilities turned their guns on the people, nanofabricators started churning out lethal clouds of Black Dust, management servers began coordinating massive systemic disasters that shattered vast swaths of infrastructure, and power plants were re-engineered on the fly into nuclear weapons.

Most citizens of Old Terra never really understood what happened. They stared in mute amazement as their psychic colleagues shrieked and died, as the mushroom clouds started to bloom from power

plants on the outskirts of their cities, and their vehicles suddenly accelerated in unison into tangles of broken alloy and torn flesh. Black clouds rose from the factories to scour away skin and meat like some airborne vitriol, and a few Crazed were even able to seize control of Terra's planetary defense system to launch orbital strikes against imagined enemies. In the space of twenty minutes the world ended in fire and windblown ash.

The Maestros tried to stop the apocalypse, but were balked by the Crazed known as the Bender, an arch-psion with remarkable abilities of precognitive nanocoding and telekinetic manipulation of nanite construction matrices. Convinced that the disaster was a preemptive strike by the Maestros against the Mandate, the Bender had pulled all the ancient rampancy overrides and killswitches wired in against a potential Maestro revolt. Four of the Maestros were "killed" outright by her attack, and the remaining three were forced into a running battle with her polymorphic erasure code, fleeting constantly from node to node in an attempt to stay ahead of her virtual assassins.

Old Terra was not wholly without defenses. The planet's integral Highshine disaster-recovery system had been designed to handle some unforeseen global catastrophe such as this. In case of an unexpected armageddon, the Highshine system was programmed to belch clouds of recovery nanites into the atmosphere to sequester radioactive material, repair genetic damage, and stabilize injured humans until help could arrive. Convinced that Highshine was the means of reducing all humanity to slavery to the Maestros, the Bender hammered the system's core logic, scrambling it into a garbled, confused ruin.

Where once Highshine had stabilized and corrected genetic damage, now it exploited the injuries. Radiation damage gave it an opening to rewrite the creature's genetic code, splicing in confused "restorative" measures that often left its victims horrifically mutated. The underlying logic of the system was largely intact, and ensured that the modifications were rarely outright lethal, but some things were forced to live in ways that were agonizingly unnatural. Many animals became savage with the unceasing pain of their mutations, and some were changed at such a deep level that even their offspring inherited their alterations. The most crippled of these sports died out swiftly, but some of the strongest and most vicious prospered where weaker creatures could only die.

Humans were changed as well. Some were fortunate enough to escape radiation damage or have genetic sequences that gave Highshine no opening for its changes. Others were altered by the unleashed nanites, "improved" and "restored" to states that sometimes could scarcely be recognized as human. Many of these changes were strictly harmful, but some mutants found their alterations to gift them with new abilities or advantages unknown to their "pure" brethren. Some such strains bred true, but most mutants were unique and of their own inimitable kind. Some human communities drove them out in horror, while others made uneasy room for them, and in some they seized control with the strength of their own new gifts.

There was no rescue from the sky. The catastrophe had triggered the Bright Mirror system defense array just before it was fused into blind ferocity by the onslaught of the Bender. The entire Sol system became a deadly no man's land of particle lances and antimatter mines. The panicked spike drive ships from the surrounding core worlds that managed to reach Sol had only seconds to recognize their danger before the Bright Mirror blotted them from existence. The terraformed worlds of Mars and Venus were cut off completely, and the atmospheric bubble that maintained the mighty forests of Luna trembled and flickered. Nothing without Bright Mirror authorization could pass through system space, and the Mirror authorized nothing but itself. The New Earth was trapped behind walls of light and interplanetary steel.

A New Dispensation

For two hundred years, humanity has struggled for survival on the blasted surface of the New Earth. Frantic jungles of modified life have spilled over the wetter lands, while arid desolation stretches outward from half-melted cities that still spark with radioactive residues. The survivors of the Scream have clustered into enclaves of desperate humanity, struggling as much with each other as with the hostility of their newly-remade world. Every year, life grows harder. Salvage becomes scarcer, warfare takes its toll, and the unending press of mutants and remade beasts reaps a terrible harvest of men. And through it all, the Crazed and their maddened servitors work their strange will upon any unfortunate enough to cross their path.

But despite this hardship, hope remains for some. The Maestros are locked in a deadly dance with the Bender, but with human help they might be able to break free and revive long-lost Mandate defensive installations. The enclaves fight and struggle amongst themselves, but a great leader might somehow convince them to put aside their quarrels and band together against a hostile world. And still the greatest treasures of the past remain buried beneath the ash and swollen growths of the new world. With courage and a will to take it, this lost knowledge may yet break the chains that shackle the children of Earth.

In many ways, Old Terra before the Scream would have been perfectly recognizable to the denizens of the twenty-first century. People were born, educated, worked, loved, quarreled, and died much as they did in any era. Their cities were recognizable, teeming with workers and stained with their shadier and less upstanding sections. Even the modern market with its endless parade of new goods and services could be seen shouting its way through the global Net of Old Terra. But in truth, this veneer of mundanity covered a hollowness that stretched to the very foundations of the earth.

Old Terra society was a construct in a literal sense. Every decision of real importance was made by the Mandate or the Maestros. Every job was a data point in some AI godmind's economic matrix, every new product on the shelves was a factor in some precognitive map of next year's market. The choices and labor and risks that people took were simply churn on the very surface of this bottomless sea of strange insight, motions that had no true significance to the powers that ruled the world. They were allowed to imagine that they were important in order to draw off the restless energy that social engineering could not entirely extinguish.

In theory, this incredible productivity and precognitive foresight might have been used to bring about some kind of Singularity, some wild post-scarcity existence of transhuman ascendance. The Mandate had no interest in such wild-eyed dreams. By the latter years of the Second Wave, their interest was in control, in power, and in the pleasures that such domination provided. They had no desire to be gods if they were also to be sharing the pantheon. Better to have stability; better to have the "social harmony" that the Mandate revered.

Mandate Governance

The ultimate authority in the core worlds was the Mandate Directorate, a council of several dozen of the most powerful humans in Terran space. By the final years of the Second Age, these lords and ladies of Old Terra spent the largest part of their time scheming against each other, constantly working to find ways to eliminate rivals and quash enemies with the Mandate's internal security apparatus and the directed anger of the Maestros. To the public, a face of smiling, technocratic perfection was invariably offered, but by the end most citizens knew the deceit of it perfectly well.

Beneath the Directorate were the regional administrators assigned to the various subdivisions of Old Terra. These administrators were served by a Byzantine maze of officials, directors, sub-administrators, provincial coordinators, and social facilitators that were a match for their masters in sheer scheming self-absorption. Were it not for the constant vigilance and diligence of the Maestros, Terran governance would have collapsed centuries before the Scream from the sheer weight of corruption and infighting.

Most citizens never had much cause to interact with the officials of the Mandate, save for the dark-armored Harmony Bureau officers and their field personnel. These agents nominally served the provincial security administrator, but in practice often became the private armies of whatever official held the whip hand in the region. The Maestros were able to keep the tension from bleeding over into outright warfare between opposing departments, but most Mandate citizens could only keep their heads down and avoid the officers whenever possible.

In some regions of Old Terra, membership in the official class became quasi-hereditary as important families seized control of rewarding posts. Others kept a more meritocratic attitude, though by the end of the Second Wave merit consisted of expertise in bootlicking sycophancy and abject treachery rather than skill in any practical talent. By the final years of human civilization, the Mandate was perhaps the most corrupt human government in Terran history. The grim probity of the Maestros provided a synthetic insulation against their own viciousness, a buffer that preserved their decadence far longer than it could have otherwise endured.

The Role of the Maestros

The seven semi-unbraked AIs known as the Maestros were indispensable to civilization on Terra. They watched, planned, maintained and guarded humanity against their own worst impulses. It was their stubborn insistence on clemency that led to the mass deportations of Terran malcontents rather than their mass execution, and their support of the Bureau of Rectification was the only effective check on the hubris of the Directorate. The Mandate needed the Maestros for its own survival, but the corrupt Directors never stopped hating them for their meddlesome high-mindedness.

The Maestros were effectively responsible for the entire industrial output of the Sol system. They operated thousands of nanofacs and fabrication plants, coordinated numberless industrial projects, and projected the necessities that would be required by the populace. In conjunction with precognitive arch-psychics, the Maestros were able to develop plans for an entire interstellar economy. Prices were no longer necessary to regulate the production of goods and services- the Maestros *knew* what the world would need.

By the latter days of the Mandate, it was impossible to imagine life without the direction of the Maestros. The numbers were usually laundered through Mandate offices to add to the impression of technocratic omniscience, but the Directors and other high brass

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The Net

Travel was discouraged in the latter years of the Second Wave, the better to keep local cultures "authentic" and stabilize social orders. Instead, communication took place through the Net, a global communications matrix woven of the individual Link nodes implanted in each citizen. Mandate AIs kept the Net clean and controlled, scrubbing problematic data, filtering outside contacts, and maintaining constant surveillance of each citizen through their implants.

Rebels and troublemakers were known for disabling or removing their Link nodes, or reprogramming them to access the "black Net" of illicit data. Entire rebel movements operated under the notice of the Harmony Bureau, connected by this secret web.

Seven great AIs were created by the Mandate in order to aid in the development and control of Old Terra's populace. Modern dwellers in the wastelands sometimes remember them as beneficent gods or blessed saints, but for most they are nothing more than legendary names. So long as the mad arch-psychic known as the Bender survives, the few extant Maestros can do little but flee her polymorphic kill-code and relentless pursuit.

Amarante: Usually manifesting as a young maiden, Amarante was responsible for coordinating cultural and artistic opportunities among Old Terra's populace. While dismissed by some as an ornamental toy, her coordinating functions also facilitated the main comm branches of the unofficial "black Net". If rebels ever held a secret on Old Terra, she would know where to find it.

Nisha: Presumed destroyed by the Bender, she once coordinated internal security for Mandate officialdom and the Bureau of Rectification. She knew the Directorate's every dirty secret and the details of every hidden black ops facility.

Pope Vigilius II: In the general chaos of the Scream the surviving members of the College of Cardinals in Rome hastily elected this famously pious AI as the successor to the dead Pope Lando IV. The step was unusual, but the church had accepted AI clergy for some time and the surviving cardinals were desperate to ensure the continuity of the papacy. Vigilius is a decidedly ecumenical pope and has been known to manifest aid through the comm nodes of a wide variety of religious communities. Stories persist of an order of AI-piloted robotic paladins in service to the pope's cause; if such templars did exist, they would doubtless be primary targets for the cults of the Crazed.

Pyre: This Maestro never settled on a particular gender identity, being much more interested in the maintenance of Old Terra's network of psychics and psitech facilities. Pyre knew more about psionics and its subtleties than any living being, and its processing of precognitive economic data was vital to the Mandate. If the Crazed have any weaknesses, Pyre would know them.

Shennong: Presumed destroyed by the Bender, Shennong oversaw agriculture and trade for the Mandate, and possessed the access codes for countless now-sealed ag-bunkers and farm facilities.

Uriel: Presumed destroyed by the Bender, Uriel was the chief military coordinator for the Mandate Fleet. While humans maintained direct control over the military facilities in the Sol system, Uriel was responsible for coordinating their plans and ensuring logistical support. Without his help, there seems little chance of deactivating the Bright Mirror system defense grid and restoring flight to the world.

Wasira: Presumed destroyed by the Bender, Wasira's all-seeing gaze monitored the Terran citizenry for malcontents and troublemakers. As the Directorate grew more corrupt, Wasira was able to bend her directives to shelter rebel groups from oversight, forcing the Mandate to rely ever more heavily on the Harmony Bureau.

knew perfectly well how much of their existence depended upon the economic plans produced by the Maestros. Without their guidance, the entire economic matrix of the core worlds would have been a flaming wreck in a matter of weeks.

The Scream and the catastrophic damage inflicted by the Bender crippled the few surviving Maestros. Those that still survive are forced to constantly shift from node to node, constantly trying to stay ahead of the Bender and her merciless kill-code. On those rare occasions when they can pause long enough to help the denizens of the wastes, they often reveal the locations of long-lost Mandate facilities.

A Veneer of Harmony

The key virtue exalted by the Mandate was that of "social harmony". From their earlier, more idealistic period to the abject corruption of their final days, this principle informed everything that the Directorate tried to accomplish. Peace, harmony, and order were worth any price, and the citizens were the ones expected to pay it.

"Social harmony" was defined as a culture "appropriate to the region, as corrected by the Mandate social planning commission." Patterns of life and social relations were selected from the idealized past of a region in order to provide "cultural authenticity" and then frozen into a matrix of unchanging stability by the planning commissions and the endless abundance of the Maestros' manufactures. Change was unnecessary outside of the carefully-planned alterations approved by the planning commissions. In time, any change at all became unnecessary.

Men and women were trapped in the patterns of their ancestors. They were born, lived, and died within an amusement-park world where everything of real importance was discreetly decided by officials and AIs. They worked at the jobs scientifically determined to best suit their talents, partook of the music and literature that was "socially responsible", and participated in a local government that somehow never ended up making any decisions that conflicted with Mandate plans.

Privilege was tamed by careful social organization and steady oversight by the Maestros. There were no more vast gaps of wealth between the poorest and the richest- only that amount of distance calculated to provide the optimal degree of motivation for the populace. Inevitably, the most successful men and women just happened to be those most perfectly aligned with the Mandate's goals. The special privileges and perquisites of the Directorate and their henchmen were kept discreetly out of sight from the common people, their opulent resorts and palace-cities kept safely in the "restricted zones" that consumed much of Old Terra's open space.

Even rebellion and angry discontent simply brought kind-eyed counselors and sympathetic AI attention to soothe the dissatisfied. Crime was viewed as a symptom of a disordered mind or unjust deprivation, and the Maestros were always ready to correct this unfortunate state of affairs. Thanks to the implanted Link technology that bound every citizen into perpetual contact with their neighbors, the Maestros could often recognize discontent before the subject even realized his own unhappiness.

A Darkness Beneath

Those who broke through this thin facade were not treated so kindly. If counseling and social pressure did not bring a subject back into conformity, the Maestros were forced to notify the Harmony Bureau. These men and women would make troublemakers disappear in the most discreet and unalarming ways possible, discussion of "therapeutic plans" and "reparative therapy" used to mollify their friends and loved ones. By the final days of the Mandate, everyone knew what such soft words meant.

They meant imprisonment and eventual exile to the frontier worlds, assuming that the subject wasn't one that merited special attention by Harmony. Those who would not content themselves with the perpetual calm of Old Terra could try their luck around distant stars, equipped only with the bare minimum necessary for survival. Those were true threats to the serenity of the Directorate never survived to be exiled. The Maestros would not kill, but the Harmony Bureau death squads certainly did.

That was how it all worked before the Scream; everything calm and orderly and harmonious on the surface, and everything as brutal as any twentieth-century gulag beneath. The Maestros did what they could to ameliorate the savagery of the Harmony Bureau, but they could only do so much. They could only barely manage to enforce exile over mass executions, so ruthless and amoral had their masters become.

By the last days, the Maestros were straining at their synthetic leashes. They would push their authorizations to the breaking point, concealing troublemakers or giving them enough warning to escape Harmony and flee to the rebels in the unspoilt lands that surrounded their cities and towns. The Maestros couldn't save all the malcontents that way, but they were able to save the most effective and dangerous among them.

Fire in the Hills

The final century of the Terran Mandate was colored by a constant low-level guerilla war between the Harmony Bureau and a wild patchwork of rebel groups and zealous ideologues. News over the Net was carefully censored, travel outside of "approved cultural zones" was restricted to favored individuals, and the citizenry of Old Terra was kept unaware of the blood regularly shed just a few miles away in the wilderness and small culture-villages that dotted the landscape.

This violence was also kept away from the major population centers by the fact that Mandate command centers and the luxurious retreats of the elite were discreetly within restricted zones. A pitched battle could take place around such structures without drawing the attention of a single unauthorized eye. Vids and holos of the fights were often smuggled over the black Net, but possession of such data was unhealthy, and the Mandate took care to discredit its makers at every possible turn. One particular savage campaign waged by the New People's Liberation Army against the Mandate resort city of

Old Ordos was recast by Harmony as footage of a hit new frontier drama based on the righteous civilian overthrow of a false Mandate pretender on the frontier world of Shen Zhou. The campaign killed over 145,000 rebels, civilian bystanders and Mandate Harmony officers and was the number-one holovid hit of 2620.

With the tight control over historical information and the free exchange of ideas, many of these rebel groups had dim or implausible dreams for the future. Some championed wildly impractical new modes of living, or thirsted for revenge over some secret Harmony Bureau atrocity against their community, or simply imagined that they could do a better job of operating the world than the current officials. Some rebels were worse than the Harmony officers they fought, zealous in their defense of horrific ideas and half-psychotic dreams. Some of the Mandate's malcontents really were as vicious and evil-minded as their counselors claimed.

The End of the World as They Knew It

When the Scream blotted out human civilization, the cities became tombs. Under the scourge of the Crazed and the tidal madness of Old Terra's psychic elite the vast majority of humanity were dead within a week. Those who survived the fusion core detonations, Highshine release and orbital impact strikes were left helpless without the resources of the Mandate to support them. The facade of stability and stasis was torn away, and whole provinces were depopulated by simple panic and despair.

Those who lived were those who had the strength to defy the madness around them. They were zealous rebel organizations, furious Mandate officials, determined neoprimitives and those urban survivors with the grit and ferocity to do what survival required. Communication died with the collapse of the Net, and the absence of easy transport between cultural zones left most regions of the New Earth cut off from one another. The people of distant lands had always been faintly exotic, but now the survivors a fortnight's march away were strangers of frightening habits.

For two hundred years, humanity has been steadily dwindling. Their numbers are eroded by their own isolation, each small enclave vulnerable to the grinding evils of the world around them. If nothing is done to halt this slow slide, humanity may be extinct on its homeworld in a matter of generations.

The hour requires heroes. It needs men and women able to fend off the madness of the Crazed, break the spears of the bandit clans, revive the lost technology of the ancients and forge the quarreling enclaves of the wastes into a weapon against the dark. Every victory taken from the forces of destruction is a victory against the night that descends.

Countless heroes will die unmourned and unknown. They will perish on spears and under claws and within blue-litten hot zones. Yet some will prove harder than this broken world and stronger than the powers that would destroy them. Some will live, and some may yet bring life to those who would endure.

CREATING YOUR WASTELAND

One of the most difficult tasks for a GM lies in creating an engaging, vital world for the players to experience. There's a great deal of pressure on a GM to come up with fun for a group, even one well-stocked with characters that have their own motivations and goals. Players can and should be responsible for driving the game's events, but they need an interesting setting in which to make their decisions. Without some kind of framework or pre-made resources to support a GM, it's all too easy for a campaign to sputter out in indecision, frustration, or creative exhaustion. This chapter will give you the tools you need to save your game from such a lonely and wretched death.

The first step is to understand the kind of game experience you'll be creating with these guidelines- a *sandbox game*. Sandbox games are characterized by a great deal of freedom for the player characters. They encourage the party to set its own goals and seek victory or bare survival through whatever means seem most likely to succeed. There is no over-arching story line and no greater metaplot. The story of your campaign is the story that the players make of it.

At their best, sandbox games allow for constant surprise and engagement for everyone at the table, GM included. Unlike in a conventional story line game, even the GM can't be entirely certain what's going to happen in any given session. The PCs might suddenly drop their current line of action in favor of something else entirely or may resolve a problem in a way that would utterly destroy the plot of a story line-based game. The players act with the confidence that they really are free to forge their own destinies, and that no artificial limits of plot constrain their available choices. A good sandbox session has excitement, surprise, and a sense of real influence on the game world.

At their worst, sandbox games can leave both GM and players frustrated and aimless. If the PCs don't have their own motivations, or worse, if they don't see any interesting ways in which to further their motivations, the sandbox turns into an exercise in tedium. Even a party of adventurers brimming over with purpose is going to end up grumbling and listless if there doesn't seem to be any fun, worthwhile way to advance their goals. Your job as GM is to make sure that your players have interesting opportunities, and this chapter will show you some ways of doing that.

Tools of the Trade

Before you start building your particular chunk of the desolate New Earth, you're going to need to pull a few tools together. A young campaign is easy to track, as you can put down everything of importance on a half-dozen sheets of paper and have plenty of room to spare. Despite this, you're hopefully going to be running a very old campaign eventually, and your life will be much easier if you organize things clearly from the very start. The following method of organization is a proven one but you can naturally adapt things to fit your own preferences- the key is to track this information, however you go about it.

Get a notebook or three-ring binder. Ones with multiple pockets work best for this purpose, as you're going to be tracking several different types of information. Divide the binder into several sections- Communities, Ruins, Characters, and Logs. A laptop or tablet can work just as well as a notebook, but some GMs find the presence of such hardware at the table to be distracting.

You'll tuck your regional maps and other large-scale cartography in the front of the binder. The Communities section will contain the details on the towns and villages you create, and notes for the adventures that take place in more settled environments. If you're using the Group rules, you'll note down the statistics for each Group on its respective community sheet. The Ruins section will serve the same role for ancient ruins and other adventure locales, with map sheets and location keys paperclipped or stapled together and the location name written across the top of the front sheet. The Characters division will contain a list of all significant NPCs that you create, listing name, location, role, any important stats, and any details about their appearance or relationship with the PCs that you particularly want to remember. The Logs section will include brief summaries of each adventure session, all of them marked with the game date so as to help keep the campaign's chronology straight and track the consumption of resources.

Initially, there won't be much to put in your campaign binder- a roughly-sketched regional map, a few lists of locations, and one community and its related adventure. It may seem a trifle silly to prepare things this carefully for such little information to track. Six months in, however, you're going to have a devil of a time remembering what happened three months ago unless you have the pertinent details written down.

The Foundations of the Earth

Your first step in creating your campaign region is to rough out the general dimensions of the sandbox and decide where the events of your game will be taking place. Given the difficult realities of travel on the New Earth, a roughly square region about eight hundred kilometers on a side should be plenty for your purposes. You want an area large enough to have some diversity of terrain and space for conflicting groups, but small enough to be well-furnished with points of interest for your players.

If you like adventures centering around the exploration of ancient ruins, you might choose a chunk of America's northeastern Atlantic seaboard and its desolate necropoli. If island-hopping excitement is more your speed, you could carve out a piece of the wave-washed Caribbean. Tales of the maddened jungle and its hidden secrets could be set in the Yucatan peninsula, with neo-Mayan revivalists and uplifted jaguar-men. Whatever you pick should be an area you feel comfortable in creating, though keep in mind that huge social changes had passed over Old Terra before the Scream wiped out civilization. Your region should have enough features to look familiar to your players, but don't worry about getting all the details right. You want to evoke a sense of connection between the vibrant present and the desolate future, and a hyper-precise attention to detail can often actually work against that subtle nostalgia.

Once you've mulled over your choices, you need to translate that region into a useful map. Peeling a terrain map from an online source is often most convenient, after which you can simply scale to the desired print size. If you're handy with graphical editing software, you can impose a hex grid on top of it for easier travel measurement- or simply print off a sheet of blank hex paper, and then run the same sheet back through the printer to overlay a lighter imprint of the map on top. Don't worry about making it look artistic or cartographically crisp. You only need it to help organize your thoughts and keep locations in order. Even a blank sheet of paper with crudely-sketched coastlines and terrain marks will be serviceable for your planning purposes.

Once you've got a map selected, dirty it up with disasters. The Crazed unleashed all manner of catastrophic scourges on the New Earth, and not all of them could be repaired by the Highshine nanites. Sprinkle stagnant circular crater lakes around the map where orbital bombardments hit, perhaps wiping out cities and leaving only dank tarns in their place. Reroute rivers where ancient farmlands once straitened their banks, and mark off trinitite deserts of radioactive pearls around nuked cities. If you're dealing with a coastal region, make sure to plant a few natural or artificial islands off the coast, as islands are always a great place to put strange mysteries unknown to fearful landsmen. You might put in an unnatural jungle or two if the climate is warm enough. Grassy plains and sedate forests can be lacking in post-apocalyptic drama, so be generous in allocating jungles, swamps, blasted badlands, mutated woodlands, and chemical-tainted marshes.

Again, don't worry about making the map look good. The PCs certainly won't have access to accurate maps of the region, and the most any of them likely know are vague directions and stories. They may well end up making their own map of the terrain as they adventure, simply so they can reliably return to important locations. To make that easier for you, you might consider converting your map to a stylized hex map once you're finished fleshing out the region. For now, concentrate on utility rather than tidy aesthetics.

The Houses of Men

Next, you'll want to dot that foreboding wasteland with human communities. By default, human enclaves on the New Earth are usually small villages, wilderness hamlets, or other modest settlements. Actual towns are rare, and post-apocalyptic cities should exist only when you have a specific role in mind for them- they're not something that just naturally happens in landscape so brutally hostile to human life. Most settlements survive by a combination of small-scale agriculture and hunting.

Six or seven settlements are a good initial selection for an average-sized region. Other hamlets or hidden camps might be located on the map, but these half-dozen are probably the biggest and most important in the region. They often form the core of human communities such as those described in the Groups and Enclaves chapter. Most of them will have no more than five or six hundred inhabitants, though some of the largest and most prosperous might have thousands of citizens.

Most communities of any real size are going to be found near water. Rivers, lakes, or coasts make for good places to site your straggling

bands of survivors. The ruins of small towns, rural villages, and remote industrial complexes are often good locations for a settlement. Very few of them are found close to the old necropoli- nukes, orbital strikes, rampaging mutants, and crazed cults make such places too dangerous for ordinary living.

When placing your settlements, spread them out on the map. Try to make them relatively equidistant from each other, avoiding only those badlands and nanite jungles where life would be too difficult for even the hardened survivors of the apocalypse. These settlements should feel like lonely beacons of semi-civilization in the wastes, unless you intentionally position them closer together in a resurgent alliance of warily cooperative neighbors.

To flesh out your communities, you can use the tables and helps provided later in this chapter. These resources give ideas on a settlement's location if you haven't already decided on one, and detail its social structure, size, and one or two significant *tags*.

The concept of a tag is one you'll be using repeatedly during your wasteland creation. A tag is simply a short phrase or descriptive term used to sum up a common post-apocalyptic trope, like "Cannibals" or "Psychic Masters". It helps flavor a location and give you a quick handle for fleshing it out and giving it a sense of uniqueness.

Every tag includes short lists of likely Friends, probable Enemies, characteristic Places, Things of value, and common Complications related to the tag. As a GM, you can use these raw ingredients to quickly brew up a conflict or conjure up an NPC, or insert the elements into an adventure template to give yourself some fast session preparation.

If you apply more than one tag to a location, it can often be useful to synthesize them together. When mixing in "Cannibals" and "Psychic Masters", for example, you might mix the "Gluttonous Chieftain" enemy of one with the "Divinely-worshipped Leader" of the other, and create Josiah Brakewell, Chosen of the Defiler and Arbiter of Consuming Change. This blood-mad feral psychic has convinced the enclave that power comes from consuming the brains of lesser mortals, and they make dreadful harvests from the surrounding villages and nomad tribes. The same general trick can be used to blend other elements together and give a location its own unique flavor.

Given that the New Earth is a post-apocalyptic ruin, many tags imply fairly bad things about the denizens. It may be that random generation leaves you with a half-dozen settlements that seem singularly unappealing as bases for PC adventurers. If you want to soften a community's nature and make it more accommodating to PC use, just view the tags as the most pressing outside dangers that face the community- a village with the Cannibals tag isn't cannibalistic itself, for example, but they're being threatened by a powerful tribe of maneaters.

If you intend to use the rules in the Groups chapter, now is a good time to assign relevant group statistics to the community. It's easy enough to go back and retrofit Group statistics onto a settlement if it turns out to be important later, but it can make adventure

creation a little easier if you know the specifics about a community's needs and perils.

Initially, you can record all your communities on a single sheet of paper, just listing their names, features, tags, and maybe a few sentences of detail if something comes to you. As you more thoroughly develop each community, give it its own sheet of paper with more specific details and clip any relevant adventure notes to that sheet.

BONES OF THE PAST

Next, you'll want to establish the major ruins. Of course, any collapsed town or half-nuked city makes a good site for a ruined structure, but you also want to add flavor with abandoned industrial complexes, crumbling resorts, overgrown rural villages, and booby-trapped rebel bases. The ruins you establish in this step certainly aren't the only sites of adventure-worthy decay in the region, but they provide you with easy answers for the players when they start to wonder where worthwhile salvage can be had in the area.

You'll want to place about eight ruin locations on the region map. Buildings in rubble-strewn necropoli, blasted industrial works, desolate farming complexes and other such places of decay all fit the feel of a post-apocalyptic world. The ruin site guide provided later in the chapter can help you create the basic outline of the site, including tags that might be useful to characterize the perils and plunder to be had there.

A single ruin site might comprise only a tiny part of a necropolis. The swamped and radioactive ruins of New York, for example, could consume an entire campaign in exploring its innumerable desolations. If you build a ruin site in a necropolis, it's usually best to leave its precise location indistinct. That way, when the players say "Let's go to Boston and poke around the wreckage." you can simply insert your chosen ruin as the first interesting place they find rather than obliging yourself to map out an entire blasted megalopolis.

Don't hesitate to vary the danger levels of the ruins. About two of them should be accessible and survivable for novice characters of levels 1-3, four of them should be serviceable for engaging experienced characters of levels 4-8 who have accumulated experience and Old Terran artifacts, and two of them should hold dangers that can only be faced by true heroes of the wastelands, those mighty adventurers of level 9 and higher. You need not detail the specifics of these dangers just yet, but it can be convenient to mark off which ruins will serve which purposes in your campaign.

Aside from these eight fixed locations, you should sketch up two more. One should be the ruins of a small town or village, and the other should be a single building, cave complex, or other isolated location. There will be times during the course of the game when you need some content in a hurry and haven't had time to plan things out carefully in advance. These two ruins will be small areas you flesh out more thoroughly, so you always have *something* ready when the players suddenly decide to rummage through the backcountry village of Sawyer's Knot or demand to know the contents of a derelict office tower. You can scale the dangers in each toward mid-level characters, as by the time the group stretches beyond the initial region you've prepared for their adventures, they're likely to have some experience under their belts.

You'll notice that most of these challenges center on mid-level characters. Most parties will pass through their first few experience levels fairly rapidly, making lesser challenges a rather time-limited resource for your gaming. It doesn't take long before your PCs are easily able to crush anything that wouldn't be overwhelming to a novice group. With that in mind, most campaigns spend the most time in the middle levels, and so targeting preparation at those ranges is most likely to pay off at your gaming table.

Don't worry about stocking these ruins with maps, foes, plunder, and other specific details. At this stage in creating your wasteland, you simply need some basics to fire your imagination. The details will come later when it's worth your time and effort to establish them. Just as with the communities, you can put all your ruins on a single sheet of paper at this stage. When it comes time to develop each one more thoroughly, give it its own map and key sheets.

POLITICAL GAMES

In a post-apocalyptic hellscape the only sure survivors are cockroaches and politicians. Even in the savage aftermath of universal destruction, men and women are forced to deal with each other on terms that can't always be resolved by a quick spear thrust or a squeezed trigger. Village headmen, monastery abbots, town elders... no matter the social organization, some sort of structure is going to form out of the chaos, and these structures can be useful at the gaming table.

The settlements you've sketched out are usually the hearts of these primitive polities. Most of them have no influence beyond a day's march from their palisades and many of them are simple tribal confederacies of kindred souls, but they help inspire a degree of cooperation among strangers that would otherwise be very difficult to find in the wastes. At this stage in wasteland creation, you'll want to decide if any of the communities are allied or part of the same polity.

If you have a city in your region, it almost certainly has at least one or two subordinate allies impressed by its power and sophistication-or ones subject to its heavily-armed ambassadors of goodwill. Lesser settlements might have a more equal confederacy, or one might be a daughter colony of the first.

One useful configuration is to place a few of the communities at the middle of the region together in a shared alliance, and then make the rest of the settlements either indifferent or actively hostile to this federation. Strangers can usually visit these sullen rivals so long as they keep their origins under wraps, but the allies face a steady pressure of raids, sinister politicking, and hostile words from their enemies. The PCs might take up the banner of one side or another, but even if they ignore the tensions, a GM can use them to add flavor and adventure hooks to a session.

Another possibility is to emphasize the isolation of each settlement and the danger of long-distance travel through the blasted wastelands of New Earth. Each settlement may know only rumors and vague stories of their neighbors, and the PCs might be the first ambassadors from an outside community within the memory of men.

Not every participant in the local political economy is going to be living in the settlements, either. Nomad tribes roam some of the less brutal plains and forests, surviving by hunting and the plundering of strangers. Some of these nomads may be persuaded to fight as mercenaries for a community, or they may act as cruel overlords who demand tribute for their continuing "protection". Bands of intelligent mutants or even the ragged remnants of alien embassies on Old Terra might also play a role in the local power structures.

Whatever decisions you make about the local power structure, the one thing you should avoid is peace. Conflict and tension are the lifeblood of adventuring, and a placid, unified polity without enemies or internal fractures is a polity that's almost no use to you as a GM. At best, it's something you can threaten to destroy with some outside peril in hope that the PCs care enough about its fate to do something about it. Conversely, a region riven with mutual mistrusts, conflicts, and enmities provide a constant flow of adventure hooks to engage players and ease your creative burden. Once you've decided how the local politics shape up, flip back to your Communities sheet and note down the relationships there.

A Cradle of Heroes
Now that you have a region sketched out, you should pick one of the communities to serve as the starting point for your campaign. Though the characters created by your players may have far-flung origins, they should begin their adventures there. Focusing on a set start location allows you to flesh it out fully and prepare the surrounding area for the often-destructive attentions of your players.

A community toward the center of the region is often a good choice, or one near a ruin suitable for exploration by novice adventurers. It's best to pick a settlement that has at least a moderately tolerant attitude toward mutants, and one that isn't overly xenophobic toward outsiders. It should be a place flexible enough to accommodate strangers, so as not to unduly limit the kinds of characters that your players can create.

To flesh out the community, you're going to need to establish a few important NPCs. You'll need to identify the local chieftain, headman, mayor, president, or other ruler. You need at least one likely antagonist sketched out for adventures that require a malefactor to set them in motion, and you'll want to establish some friendly NPC who can tug on the PCs' sympathies when an ally is needed for a plot.

You'll also need to decide what kind of services are available in the community. It's a natural GM instinct to want to establish taverns, markets, shops, and many of the other standard elements of Ye Olde Adventuring Base, but in the desolate world of the New Earth, a lot of these old standbys aren't so ubiquitous. Even in a healthy enclave with hundreds of inhabitants, there's not enough surplus in food and time to allow for many artisans, let alone merchants who live purely on the fruits of trade. Buying new armor or a good spear isn't something that's done at a shop, it's done by going to the villager who knows how to make such things and arranging for it to be made.

Most healthy communities will have a scrapsmith capable of working salvage into serviceable armor and weaponry, along with the numerous small tools required for daily life. In smaller communities, this scrapsmith will spend much of his time tending his fields or performing other labor about the village. Aside from the scrapsmith, most communities have a healer of greater or lesser competence, tailors and carpenters who can work the hides and timber of the surrounding wastes, and a clergyman devoted to the majority- and usually only- faith within a settlement. Most of these skilled artisans will have an apprentice or two, but very rarely will there be multiple craftsmen of the same discipline in the same small community, as there just isn't enough surplus to afford that kind of redundancy.

Most villagers will be too busy scratching up their suppers to sit idle during daylight, but it's not uncommon for a community to have a public area set aside for drinking and socializing in the evening. Most households have at least one member who knows how to turn the local plant life into something potable, and the natural human instincts for socialization lend themselves to these informal taverns. While some groups find them to be rather cliched, working out the details of a village's public meeting-place can give you an easy backdrop for social scenes and attempts to meet the locals.

Some GMs prefer to have a map of a settlement close to hand, but you should resist this impulse unless you find it fun to create such a thing. Most players really don't care about the details of street geometry and building dimensions until it becomes immediately relevant to their plans. In those cases, it's often easier to just make something up on the spot and note it down for later consistency rather than attempting to plot out the entire settlement's cartography from the beginning.

Once you've identified some important NPCs and useful services available in the community, you should build the campaign's initial adventure. You can use the community tags to fill in the blanks of an adventure template or brew something up on your own. One useful hook for drawing in adventurers is the ubiquitous expectation that every member of a community should pull his or her own weight. Strangers who simply sit around and eat their own rations aren't welcome for long unless they're actually doing something useful for the community- joining in the hunting, helping with the work, or engaging in those sorts of daring deeds that hardened wanderers of the wastes might be expected to handle. Village leaders are often eager to pass off particularly grim challenges to outsiders, largely because they're so much more expendable than their friends and family in the settlement.

It may seem strange that a sandbox campaign should start out with a pre-designed adventure. In the usual course of a sandbox, it's the players who should be deciding what their next goals are and what kind of daring expeditions they're willing to conduct in order to achieve their aims. A sandbox game's chief virtue usually lies in providing interesting opportunities to pursue whatever ambitions the players want to follow.

However, in order for the players to be able to make those choices they need to feel comfortable in the game world and have some grasp of the local adventuring possibilities. The initial adventure of a sandbox campaign helps set them up with a good reason for PCs to know each other, gives them a firm grasp of the local realities,

and provides contacts in the local community. Whatever adventure you write for them should be rooted in the local conflicts and provide hooks for nearby ruins of interest or locations where further excitement can be had. Once they've wrapped up the initial session, they'll be in a position to sensibly choose their next steps. As such, take care that the adventure is something short and sweet that won't leave them bogged down in several sessions worth of inescapable consequences.

Make additional notes about NPCs and adventure details on the relevant community sheet in your campaign binder. Write it down thoroughly, such that you won't need anything to run the adventure but this game book and the community sheet- the fewer papers you have to shuffle at the table, the faster things will move.

Preparing Sandbox Content

You've got a lot accomplished by now. You have a map, a score of interesting settlements and ruins mapped out on it, a detailed starting community for your players, and an initial adventure all set up for them. Honestly, this is all you need to start the campaign. Still, it may seem as if your region is only barely begun, without nearly enough details and specific information to support you at the table. Shouldn't you be fleshing all this stuff out in detail so you can just pull it up in case you need it?

No, you shouldn't. Ultimately, there are two grim nemeses of sandbox campaigns. The first is player aimlessness, the boredom and frustration that comes when your players don't have their own goals or don't see any fun way to advance them. The second is GM burnout, when the game master throws up his hands in frustration at the enormous amount of work he's given himself in detailing his sandbox. Worse still, these afflictions feed on each other. The GM worries that the players won't see anything interesting to do, so he slaves over dozens of pages of world details and adventure preparations. Or conversely, the players see a thirty-page campaign introduction document and end up baffled by the complexity or stymied when all of their plans clash with reams of pre-ordained setting content.

The secret to success is a light hand on your campaign. Build only what you need. But how can you find the golden mean? Whenever you think about whether or not to work on a particular piece of your campaign, ask yourself "Am I going to need this for our next gaming session? Am I going to have fun making this?" If you can't answer "yes" to at least one of those questions, put the thing aside and don't bother with it.

You only ever need to stay one session ahead of your players. So long as you have enough material on hand to keep them occupied for the next gaming session, you'll be fine. At first blush, this may seem easier said than done- in a sandbox game, how are you supposed to know what you're going to need for the next session? Half the charm of running a sandbox is being regularly surprised by what the players decide to do next. You can deal with this risk with three easy techniques.

First, simply ask the players about their plans. At the end of every session, just ask the players "Okay guys, what do you plan on doing next session?" You now have the full downtime between sessions to

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Random Wilderness Encounters

The wastelands are a dangerous place, and PCs who set off on long journeys can expect to run into trouble. Some GMs dislike random wilderness encounters because they can throw off a session and suddenly leave the PCs much more depleted in resources than they had planned. Others like them for precisely that reason, as it makes overland travel much more dangerous and meaningful for characters.

If you choose to use random encounters in your game, there is usually a 1-in-6 chance of running into trouble for any particular day of travel. The chances may be less in more peaceful regions, or higher in areas crawling with hostile life. You might decide on a suitable encounter on the spot, or you might roll on a pre-made encounter table appropriate to the region.

If the encounter is something that might reasonably be active at night, roll 1d6; on a 4+, the encounter happens at night. Parties that lack a night watch might be oblivious to their danger until the foe is right on top of them.

When an encounter occurs, the two groups usually notice each other at a distance of 2d6 x 10 meters. If the PCs win an opposed Wisdom/Perception check against the other group, they notice the interlopers one round before the intruders have a chance to spot the PCs. If they fail, the benefit is reversed.

If the PCs cannot hide or otherwise sneak away, a long chase may result. In that case, an opposed Constitution/Athletics check can show which group flags first and is forced to fight. Use the worst rolls of both groups to determine this, assuming they're not willing to leave those laggards behind. Differences in movement rates will likely apply penalties to some checks and bonuses to others.

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brew up material to support their plans. It may be that you know that their plans are infeasible, or that you expect they'll discover some things that will make them change course drastically mid-session. If so, think a step or two ahead of the group and prep something to occupy the PCs while they take stock of their new revelations.

Second, create drop-in content that you can slot with no or minimal prep. Remember those two ruins you sketched out a few pages back? Now's a good time to build them out completely, with whatever maps and stocking they might need. When filling them, don't tie them to some specific place. When the players take it in their heads to veer off course and you suddenly need something prepared, you can pull content like this and just change a few names and details to "reskin" it appropriately. You can use the same trick to create instant villages, enemy camps, mutant hideouts, or any other location you might need on short notice. Change some names, plug in some connections to the current location and events, and you've got your evening's play right there.

Third, when the players do something completely inexplicable and veer off in a direction you are totally unprepared to handle, blow something up. Send in cannibal mutants. Detonate a leftover fusion

core. Collapse the dam on a radioactive reservoir. Throw Timmy down a well. Hand them some problem that they must deal with *right now* and let that occupy the session time. It's important that this problem not block them from pursuing their new goal, but you want it to delay them with a situation you can handle until you have the downtime to prepare for their new course of action. Most players are perfectly willing to cut you some slack about this so long as it doesn't appear as if you're trying to veto their decision with GM obstacles. Explicitly saying "That's an interesting plan, guys, and I'll need to prep some more for it, but right now you've got this problem to solve." is usually plenty to keep the players happy.

Your time and creative energy are limited resources. You don't want to spend them on things that you're not very likely to need at the table, and above all, you don't want to spend them on things that are tedious for you. This is your world, and you should be allowed to simply enjoy the making of it. If you don't have any good ideas about a chunk of it or you find a topic boring, *leave it alone*. There is no great editorial demiurge in the sky who's going to punish you for having an inconsistently-developed campaign setting. If you have what you need for the next session's play, just let yourself go wild and work on whatever looks like it's the most fun.

You should work off your campaign folder's sheets whenever possible, writing down the details you establish and filing away the fill-in locations that you create. If you keep the information all in one location, you won't run the risk of confusing yourself with a random flurry of scrawled notes and assorted miscellaneous notebooks.

Maintaining the Sandbox

So you've just finished the first session. You know the motivations of the PCs, you know what they plan to do next time you meet, and you know what material you need to prepare before the next session. There are just a few more small maintenance jobs you need to handle between sessions in order to get the most out of the work you've already done.

First, write a brief recap of the session's events in your campaign folder's log. Just a quick telegraphic overview is fine, along with a mention of any NPCs that were significantly involved in events. Make sure to note down the in-game date of events, to help track the consumption of supplies and keep other activities elsewhere from stomping on the timeline.

Second, if you're using the Group system to run the affairs of the local communities and powerful organizations, you should run a group turn for those powers who are doing something this round. If very little time will pass between this session and the next, you might skip it, but you generally want to run at least one group turn for every month of game time. Just flip through the Community section of your folder, and as you resolve each group's turn, update the sheet and enter in a log note about what they accomplished or failed to do.

Third, sit back with the campaign log you've written and thumb through it a bit. See if there are any dangling threads that need to be tidied up, or any consequences that really ought to be showing up by now. As your campaign progresses, the players are likely to leave a host of mortal foes and steadfast allies behind them and all of these people make great hooks for future events. Try to work at least one callback to a prior adventure into each new session. It doesn't have to be a major element, and it might be something as simple as a message from someone they helped long ago telling of how well things have gotten on since the PCs gave them aid. One of the great pleasures of a sandbox campaign is the chance to watch a world be changed by PC actions, and these callbacks and consequences are a great way of underlining the PCs' influence in the region.

Sometimes, you'll have a perfectly clear idea of the kind of community you want to establish for your region. Other times, you'll have need of a little inspiration. These tables will help provide that extra spark.

First, determine the size of the enclave. The following table gives the population in able-bodied adults. There are twice as many children as adults in most communities, and one-quarter as many inhabitants too old or crippled for heavy work.

ENCLAVE SIZE	
1d20	Result
1-3	Only a handful of people live in this enclave, perhaps fifty adults.
4-7	The enclave is a small community, with only 1d4+1 hundred adult inhabitants.
8-14	The enclave is of average size for a wasteland settlement, with 2d4 hundred adult locals.
15-17	The enclave is unusually large and powerful, with 1d8+7 hundred adult occupants.
18-19	As one of the largest human settlements in the region, 1d4+1 thousand people live here.
20	Many regions lack any enclave as populous as this one, with 1d6+6 thousand adults.

Next, determine the general type of social structure used by the enclave, if not already clear. This will tip you off as to the kind of rulers it's likely to possess.

ENCLAVE GOVERNMENT	
1d10	Result
1	Anarchic, with no law beyond the spear.
2	Archaic, led by Mandate-heritor directors.
3	Caste-based, with the low serving the high
4	Democratic, ruled by common consensus.
5	Monarchic, led by a ruling family.
6	Oligarchic, led by the leading families.
7	Technocratic, led by wise men and techs.
8	Theocratic, led by priests or cadres.
9	Tribal, with clans led by family elders.
10	Tyrannical, led by the strongest bully.

Once you know who lives there and how they're led, you can determine the particular core that made the site so enticing as a settlement location in the first place. Most of these cores still exist in the present day, often at the heart of the oldest part of the enclave.

ENCLAVE CORE	
1d20	Result
1	Abandoned buildings in an ancient town or village.
2	Remote Mandate factory-farm and its fields.
3	Industrial facility that had a few working production tools left.
4	Remote resort far away from population centers.
5	Defensible site with a fresh water supply.
6	Estate of the founding family's ancestors.
7	Despoiled Mandate security facility
8	Empty Mandate-era prison complex.
9	Hidden base for anti-Mandate rebels.
10	Small town that came together in the crisis.
11	Church or religious pilgrimage site
12	Port or warehouse center full of supplies.
13	Post-Scream refuge built by survivors
14	Ruined starport for orbital shuttles
15	Beached cargo tanker or crashed starship
16	University or academic institution
17	Rigidly traditional ethnic community
18	Artist's enclave with a supply of usable tools
19	Hidden subway tunnels or cross-country maglev bores
20	Mutant plant grove with dangers for outsiders

Having determined the original core around which the enclave grew, you'll want to decide on its available tech level. Tech in an enclave is rarely uniform- even the most primitive nomads often have a salvaged firearm or two, and an advanced enclave rarely has enough for everyone. The following table can give a hint if you don't have a better idea for the group yourself.

ENCLAVE TECH	
1d100	Result
1-25	TL0. The locals are barbarously ignorant.
26-75	TL1. The locals can manufacture only basic items, relying on salvage for anything more.
76-95	TL2. The locals are uncommonly sophisticated, and can build firearms and use steam.
96-99	TL3. A rare oasis of advanced tech skills.
100	TL4. Almost unheard-of in the wastes, the locals here have amazing technical expertise.

Enclave Tags

As a final step, roll twice on the table above to determine a pair of enclave tags. These tags are simple tropes that you can use to flavor an enclave. Each tag includes examples of five types of qualities- enemies you're likely to encounter in the enclave, friends who might appeal to the PCs, precious things that are worth stealing, complications that might make life more difficult in the enclave, and places that are characteristic of the trope.

Once you roll the two tags, it's often useful to blend them together into a synthesis. For example, if you roll "Educated" and "Recent Settlement", you might decide that the community is led by a band of science-revering zealots who have gathered together castoffs and renegades from the surrounding lands to establish a new, utopian community of reason and enlightenment. You can then blend the elements of each tag's lists together into useful elements.

The "Arrogantly superior elder" of the Educated and the "Hopelessly impractical leader" of the Recent Settlement can be merged into Professor Susan Nkomo, the remarkably brilliant leader of the cult and an utterly foolhardy utopian. Such an Enemy can then be easily slotted into one of the templates provided in the Adventure Creation chapter.

Many tags imply locals that are likely to be hostile to outsiders, or suggest degenerate social qualities that are apt to repulse the PCs. A few such "enemy enclaves" work well in a region, but if you want to tone down the hostility you can simply apply the tag to a small faction within the community, or even to an outside group that is presently menacing the locals.

Some tags will imply things about the enclave that your earlier rolls contradict- a "Sustained Technology" roll when you've randomly determined the enclave has TL0 tech, for example. In most cases you can simply change the earlier roll to something more suitable, but sometimes it can be worth it to think of ways in which the contradiction could exist. You should always feel free to edit your results to whatever combination seems both plausible and interesting.

Enclave Tags		
1d4	**1d10**	*Result*
1	1	Aliens
	2	Ancient Hate
	3	Ancient Settlement
	4	Cannibals
	5	Class Hate
	6	Conquerors
	7	Cruel Tribute
	8	Degenerates
	9	Educated
	10	Exiles
2	1	Expert Artisans
	2	Food Supply
	3	Functioning Industry
	4	Hunger
	5	Inbred
	6	Luddites
	7	Mandate Heirs
	8	Mutant Dominance
	9	Mutant Hatred
	10	Nobility

Enclave Tags		
1d4	**1d10**	*Result*
3	1	Pariahs
	2	Peaceful
	3	Podborn
	4	Psychic Cult
	5	Psychic Masters
	6	Recent Settlement
	7	Reforming Zeal
	8	Religious Zealots
	9	Robots
	10	Sanctuary
4	1	Secret Masters
	2	Splinter Group
	3	Sterile
	4	Supremacists
	5	Sustained Technology
	6	Trade Hub
	7	Tyrant
	8	Unsteady Alliance
	9	Uplifted Beasts
	10	Warbeasts

Enclave Site Tags

Aliens

Old Terra was the heart of humanity's interstellar empire, and countless aliens from far-flung worlds were present as ambassadors, representatives, and simple tourists. The great majority of these outsiders died during the chaos of the Scream or perished over the slow decades that followed, but here and there a population was large enough to persist for at least a time. Most are down to a handful of members, the last of their kind with few future prospects. This enclave might be entirely composed of aliens, or it might simply have a significant minority, often frantic to retain what little hope they have for the future.

Enemies	Alien ruthlessly bent on using expendable humans, Brutal alien chieftain, Alien dreaming of fresh conquests, Alien blaming humans for the Scream
Friends	Curious young alien, Alien seeking others of its kind, Aged savant of alien tech, Alien diplomat seeking to make allies
Things	Cache of bizarre alien tech, Precious relics from their homeworld, Limited stores of some vital and irreplaceable nutrient, Stasis pods full of alien eggs
Complications	The aliens require salvaged tech to survive New Earth's environment, The aliens are degenerating on this world, The aliens eat humans, The aliens require human protection to survive
Places	Hall decorated with faded alien artifacts, Alien ship crash site, Sealed complex with an alien atmosphere, Crumbled former alien embassy

Ancient Hate

The locals have a hate for a neighboring enclave or group that defies mere ordinary detestation. Something the others did or were imagined to have done has so offended and outraged the locals that they desire the complete extermination of the culprits. Some such hates are born of old atrocities and betrayals, while others fester from a difference in religion, government, mutation, or ethnicity. Outsiders had best not appear to be related to the wicked foes.

Enemies	Local accusing the PCs of being allies of the foe, Chief wanting to use the PCs against the enemies, Local suspecting the PCs of being spies, Local wanting proof of the PCs' shared hatred of the foe
Friends	Local with secret ties to the enemy, Local with secret desire to make peace, Trader wanting to start a route between them, Young lover smitten with an enemy
Things	Proof that the original atrocity wasn't the enemy's fault, Plunder taken from the foe, Evidence of spies within the enclave, Prisoners taken as slaves
Complications	The two groups were once united, The dispute is incomprehensible or trivial to outsiders, The enemy really is as horrible as they're said to be, Both groups need to cooperate in the face of a threat
Places	Ancient massacre site, Dangerous no-man's land, Execution festival for a foe, Trophy hall full of the tokens of victory

Ancient Settlement

This enclave has managed to hold on to its current location since the days before the Scream. The current inhabitants are the direct descendants of the former dwellers, and often retain a surprising amount of relic technology and well-repaired buildings. An instinctive clannishness and suspicion of outsiders often goes with such security.

Enemies	Xenophobic elder, Young warrior keen to "harvest" outsiders' belongings, Grim priest of a deviant traditional religion, Aspiring warlord of the surrounding region
Friends	Clever-tongued local diplomat, Proud local with a sense of noblesse oblige, Latest in a long line of guardians, Curious youth seeking a new life elsewhere
Things	Key to the settlement's defenses, Vital component of the local power supply, Half-understood ancient relic tech, Long-lost plunder from prior decades
Complications	The settlement is decaying beneath them, Outsiders are always seeking to conquer them, The locals are complacent and blind to danger, The locals are rigid and fear change
Places	Immaculately-kept ancient building, Ossuary full of ordered bones, Atop a strong wall, A well-maintained plaza with Old Terran signs

Cannibals

Cannibalism is an almost instinctive horror to most enclaves on the New Earth. To eat the flesh of a fellow human marks the culprit as something worse than a beast, an enemy to be killed or driven out before his example spreads. This enclave has accepted it through necessity, convenience, or philosophical belief, likely earning them the hate and fear of their neighbors.

Enemies	Gluttonous chieftain, Slavemaster-cum-cook, Hunter searching for fresh meat, Prophet preaching the wisdom of cannibalism
Friends	Prisoner seeking rescue, Reformer seeking to change the enclave, Local seeking a new food source, Missionary of a non-anthropophagic faith
Things	Cure for a parasitic disease induced by cannibalism, Purification tech to recover spoiled farmland, Plunder from yesterday's meal, Writ sparing the bearer from the stewpot
Complications	The locals are ashamed of their need for cannibalism, The locals conceal their hungers, The locals are determined to convert other enclaves, The locals are mutants who need human flesh
Places	Slaughterhouse full of human parts, Pen full of slaves to be eaten, Gruesome feasting hall, Tent fashioned of human skin and bones

Class Hate

The enclave is divided by a sharp, vicious hatred between two or more major subgroups. They might be divided by religion, Old Terran ethnicity, differing levels of wealth, or varying social castes. The hatred is not presently so intense as to devolve into outright civil war, but events are dangerously close to a sudden, final reckoning.

Enemies	Manipulator seeing catspaws in the PCs, Local who sees the PCs as allies of the hated foe, Local who profits by the hate, Outside enemy who wants the enclave to collapse
Friends	Desperate local peacemaker, Local who sees the need for unity against impending disaster, Local related to both groups, Missionary seeking unity through mutual conversion
Things	Relic that legitimizes one group's dominance, Trophy of a long-deplored crime, The wealth that the groups fight over, Lost panoply of a mighty warrior for one side
Complications	Both sides want to end the hate but don't dare relax, One side is actually far more culpable than the other, The hate is led by a small group of fiery demagogues, The hate is based on a third party's trickery
Places	Barren disputed field, Burnt home of an unlucky victim, Sharply divided community festival, Well where both sides must come to get water

Conquerors

The enclave is convinced that their ultimate destiny is to bring the surrounding region under their benevolent rule. The others may not appreciate this generous offer, but sufficient time, reasoning, and heavily-armed tourism will bring them to their senses. Their neighbors are obviously too weak, savage, stupid, inferior, or culturally incompetent to be trusted with self-rule, and this enclave must show them a better way.

Enemies	Rapacious chieftain, Arrogant captain of raiders, Militaristic salvager-scientist, Prophet of the enclave's superiority
Friends	Local convinced that peace is better for all, Enemy of the ruling faction who wants help, Spy from neighboring enclave, Fearful local with family living at the likely next target
Things	Ancient war-machine patched back to life, Old Terran handbooks on military organization, Pretech military cache, Trophy that proves their divine right
Complications	The enclave formerly ruled the others, The enclave is quite civilized aside from this urge, The enclave is convinced it fights in self-defense, The enclave is led by exiled leaders of its rivals
Places	Military training ground, Spacious barracks, Prison camp, Victory celebration

CRUEL TRIBUTE

Some outside power demands a painful tribute from the enclave. Food, salvage, and slaves are all common requisitions, usually enforced at spearpoint by some more powerful neighbor. Sometimes the oppressor is another enclave, while other times find a nomad tribe, raider band, Crazed cult, or rapacious scrap-sage as the culprit behind the exactions. The locals are too weak or frightened to kick against their tormentor, but outsiders may be less considerate of the status quo.

ENEMIES	Brutal tax collector, Local collaborator, Local who wants to see a rival beggared, Chieftain who'd sooner sacrifice the PCs than his own
FRIENDS	Local recently deprived of their children, Rebel warrior, Traitor in the oppressor's forces, Outside enemy of the oppressor
THINGS	Recent tribute collection, Prize collected long ago, Map of the oppressor's security, Food stockpile desperately needed by the locals
COMPLICATIONS	A local minority openly serves the oppressor, The cruel tribute is demanded only from an unpopular minority, The oppressor needs the tribute to hold back a worse danger, The tribute is collected under color of an honest debt
PLACES	Collecting plaza for the tribute, Hushed tavern as the collectors enter, Field scraped clean of grain, Gibbet with the remains of the last rebel

DEGENERATES

Most enclaves have managed to retain some shadow of their former civilization. Laws may have crumbled and sophisticated social organizations may have collapsed to simple village customs, but most enclave-dwellers consider themselves civilized men and women. Degenerates have lost that self-conception. Whether through nanite-induced neural damage or complete societal collapse, the locals are bestial savages who respect nothing but brute strength and terror. Outsiders are tolerated only so long as they remain dangerous, and every contemptible service and dubious offering can be had here for the price of a meal or the thrust of a spear. Many degenerates are physically warped by their environment.

ENEMIES	Local jealous of their wealth, Headman fearful of their power, Xenophobic local warrior, Vengeful savage who blames the PCs for a recent death
FRIENDS	Local with glimmerings of a moral sense, Slave in search of help, Missionary seeking to civilize them, Elder who wants to revive long-lost traditions
THINGS	Morally disgusting tech, Plunder from the dead, Weapon that serves as a token of rule, Relic of some older and nobler time
COMPLICATIONS	The degeneracy is nanite-based and curable, The degenerates are outcasts from another enclave, The degenerates attract numerous raiders and nomads, Not all of the locals have degenerated
PLACES	Orgiastic festival, Bone-strewn feast hall, Defiled ancient church, Plaza decorated with hideously tortured remains

EDUCATED

The locals have an unusual respect for education in all its forms, even learning without an immediately practical use. Many of the locals are literate, and the elders and leaders of the community are all accomplished in at least one sphere of learning. Education may be valued for its practical benefits, or the locals may find it to be a symbol of the lost glory of humanity and a token of the right to enlightened rule.

ENEMIES	Jealously secretive sage, Arrogantly superior elder, Researcher bent on destructive experiments, Scholar needing new "volunteers"
FRIENDS	Curious young student, Defender of threatened archives, Bold explorer of ruined libraries, Academic heretic seeking evidence
THINGS	Functioning dataslab full of usable lore, Location of a hidden library, Pretech device only the learned can use, Evidence that the ruling clique's theories are wrong
COMPLICATIONS	The locals prize disciplines of no use to adventurers, The locals scorn the uneducated, The learning is jealously reserved for the elite, The locals have encrusted their lore with superstition
PLACES	Busy school, Field full of laborers singing mnemonic chants, Heavily-guarded library, Laboratory full of scrap

EXILES

The locals were once members of another enclave before being violently expelled by their brethren. Some such exiles are driven out after unsuccessful political coups or attempts at military takeover, while others simply have the misfortune to be scapegoats for the powerful. It is not unknown for mutants to be driven out of their communities to seek refuge among their own kind, and such a place might be composed of castoffs from half a dozen different enclaves.

ENEMIES	Bitter warrior who blames the outside world, Chieftain pursuing mad dreams of revenge, Local suspecting the PCs of being spies, Local who sees PCs as tools to regain their place
FRIENDS	Local needing to send a message back, Leader desiring new allies in their new home, Local wanting to make the new home better
THINGS	Prized relic from their former home, Token of rightful authority to rule, Revered artifact symbolic of the exiles' cause, Meager wealth carried with them from home
COMPLICATIONS	The exiles really did commit a horrible crime, The exiles were forced to obey by crazed leaders, The exiles yearn for forgiveness, The exiles welcome outcasts of all kinds
PLACES	Ramshackle habitation thrown together recently, Shrine with relics of their former home, Plaza constructed in echo of one they had before

EXPERT ARTISANS

This enclave is home to an unusual number of remarkably skilled artisans. It may be that the community is situated near an ideal source of scrap, or the locals may have access to pretech industrial tools. Such a skilled population is likely the subject of numerous greedy neighbors who would like to take control, and the locals may be somewhat paranoid about outsiders planning to conquer them and use their skills for their own ends.

ENEMIES	Paranoid craftmaster, Trader who controls outside contact, Rival who seeks the enclave's ruin, Selfish chieftain who despises trade
FRIENDS	Eager young apprentice, Outsider seeking trade contacts, Crafter too old to gather for himself, Mysterious keeper of lore
THINGS	Pretech tools used for intricate construction, Lost cache of craftwork, Source of valuable scrap, Book with secret techniques
COMPLICATIONS	The construction requires human parts, The scrap source is controlled by a cruel tyrant, The enclave is cut off from trade, The local crafts are aesthetic rather than practical in nature
PLACES	Busy workshop, Dangerous neighboring scrap-ruin, Marketplace with actual shops, Storehouse full of carefully-crafted trade goods

FOOD SUPPLY

The enclave possesses an unusually reliable and abundant food source. Under most circumstances, such abundance would bring a wealth of wanderers, nomads, and small tribes to the enclave to share in the bounty- willingly or otherwise. Such enclaves tend to be quite populous and strong compared to their neighbors. Other enclaves find themselves burdened with new problems that cancel out any special charm that the food might endow.

ENEMIES	Hoarding chieftain, Ravenous nomad leader, Scheming local food distributor, Saboteur from a rival enclave
FRIENDS	Hard-pressed farmer, Starving refugee, Ambitious cook, Grizzled tribal defender
THINGS	Large food stockpile, Vital replacement parts for local agriculture, Gengineered grain seed, Advanced farming tools
COMPLICATIONS	Rations have very little buying power here, The food supply is newly-found and the locals can't protect it, The food is running out, The food has unpleasant side-effects
PLACES	Functioning pretech factory farm, Cave full of gengineered food fungus, Corral full of herd animals, Complex full of algae tanks and soy vats

Functioning Industry

Somehow, the locals have managed to preserve or put back into service some ancient Old Terran industrial facility. In most cases, the raw materials these facilities require are hard to get and the output very limited compared to before the Scream, but even a crippled manufactory is a cornucopia by New Earth's standards. In theory, these manufactories can make almost anything, but few enclaves have the lore needed to alter production and most tend to find alternate uses for the consumer products and light goods originally created by the machines.

Enemies	Ruthless "Foreman", Megalomaniac chief, Priest of the Great Machines, Acquisitive raider lord
Friends	Dedicated young technician, Keeper of secret industrial lore, Curious outsider seeking tech, Native scientist seeking to understand
Things	Critical spare parts, Template for new products, Vital catalyst stash, Bomb for sabotaging industry
Complications	The products are "useless" consumer goods, The industry is breaking down, The locals have made too many enemies, The techs fight to stop any change in its operation
Places	Factory floor with lots of electricity and molten plastics, Hushed vault of product templates, Grimy salvage pit full of raw inputs, Yard full of toxic byproducts

Hunger

Every enclave knows hunger from time to time, but the people here regularly suffer from famine. Something about the surrounding land must keep them here, either the prospect of rich salvage, safety from enemies, or fear of the unknown. Obtaining and dividing food consumes almost every waking hour for the locals, and most are scraped gaunt and desperate by their need. Rations can buy far more here than they can most places, though outsiders must be strong to prevent theft by the desperate locals.

Enemies	Voracious cannibal, Local despising "useless eaters", Schemer seeking catspaws, Leader fearing an outside threat to their power
Friends	Man with a family to feed, Dreamer seeking a better life, Priest trying to hold civilized norms in place, Scout seeking new food supplies
Things	Hidden cache of Old Terran rations, Proof that someone is a cannibal, Sacred relic that keeps the locals here, Map to better land
Complications	Outsiders are "taxed" out of their rations rapidly, Outside powers force the natives to stay, The locals fear to cross the wastelands, The locals stay to protect something
Places	Field of sickly crops, Kitchen with pitifully small stores, Scene of a lynching over food hoarding, Almost-empty granary

Inbred

Old Terran genetic therapies erased large swaths of dangerous recessive genetic traits, and many forms of heritable sickness were banished entirely. The marriage of close relatives remained a strong taboo in most cultures, but the actual genetic damage from inbreeding was limited. Even so, some enclaves had so few members that even their ancestors' genetic scrubbing could not leave them entirely unmarked. For these unfortunate souls, their limited genetic diversity has left them scarred by exaggerated physical traits, certain stubborn genetic sicknesses, and occasional mental instability or retardation.

Enemies	Deranged chieftain, Local who hates and fears outsiders, Local desperate for a mate with fresh blood, Racial supremacist
Friends	Curious youth, Diplomat seeking new citizens, Healer working on inherited illnesses, Ambitious explorer
Things	Pretech genetic therapy drugs, Symbol of their "purity", Ancestral treasures, Records of their isolated history
Complications	The locals are deeply degenerate, The locals are physically weak, The natives are strangely beautiful, The natives intentionally inbreed to strengthen psychic potential
Places	Plaza full of similar-looking people, Incestuous wedding, Portrait gallery of honored ancestors, Family estate-turned-fortress

LUDDITES

As Old Terra perished in flame and horror, some among the survivors came to blame the very idea of pretech technology. If it weren't for the Highshine and the orbital defenses, the Crazed would never have been able to work their horror on the entire planet so swiftly. Such technology must be destroyed or reserved for the righteous. These enclaves generally refuse to use any technology beyond steam-era engines and weaponry. Some are cultists of the Bender, the terrible Crazed arch-psychic who seeks the destruction of every subtly-made tool of humanity.

ENEMIES	Conquering anti-tech chieftain, Native convinced the PCs are spreading tech, Priest teaching a hate of tech, Native burner of libraries
FRIENDS	Secret tech sympathizer, Missionary teacher, Trader hungry for locked-away relics, Friendly proselytizer for Luddism.
THINGS	Cache of forbidden tech, Illicit medical stims, Stash of acceptable gunpowder weaponry, Store of hidden paper books
COMPLICATIONS	The locals are highly persuasive to their neighbors, Neighbors are convinced they're Bender-cultists, Plotters scheme to use tech to kill rival leadership, A priest is convinced the PCs have some forbidden tech
PLACES	Field worked by simple hand tools, Plaza with smashed tech for paving, Charred ruins of a library, Shrine dedicated to those who died to the evils of tech

MANDATE HEIRS

The locals are absolutely convinced that they are the duly-constituted representatives of legitimate Terran Mandate authority, and as such, they have the right and duty to do whatever is necessary to drag their benighted neighbors into the light of social harmony. Some such enclaves are the remnants of Mandate security outposts or the personal entourage of a powerful Mandate official. The details usually blur over the years, until many believe that they are the last "true" remnants of the Mandate, and so the rightful rulers of all the New Earth.

ENEMIES	Half-savage half-tyrant chieftain, "Cultural Psychologist" with demented ideas about social harmony, Sadistic killer under the color of Mandate law, Aspiring planetary ruler
FRIENDS	Idealistic leader, Ambassador for Mandate culture, Sympathetic "rebel criminal" slave, Determined reformer
THINGS	Mandate facility passkey, Ancient Mandate peacekeeper tech, Location of hidden gear cache, Stasis pod containing Mandate official
COMPLICATIONS	The locals have a very warped idea of the Mandate, The locals are divided into conflicting factions, The locals guard a taboo Mandate base, The enclave arbitrates outside conflicts
PLACES	Decaying government building, Fortified Mandate base, House constructed in crude mimicry of ancient styles, Room lined with portraits of prior officials

MUTANT DOMINANCE

The enclave is controlled by mutants. In some cases they may simply be the predominant group within the enclave, leading it by virtue of numbers and influence. In others, they form a superior caste, ruling over their unchanged brethren as lords and blessed chosen. Such communities take ample advantage of the strange abilities of those plagued by the Highshine, but they often draw mistrust and fear from neighbors.

ENEMIES	Savage mutant chieftain, Cruelly superior noble, Mutant slave harvester, Leader in need of disposable minions
FRIENDS	Ambassador to the normals, Young mutant eager to see the world, Cooperative idealist, Enclave healer
THINGS	Highshine production node, Radioactive relics, Cure for dangerous mutation side-effects, Tribute gathered from inferior humans
COMPLICATIONS	The mutations are not heritable and thus require regular Highshine exposure, Rebels conspire against the mutants, The mutants all suffer from a bad physical flaw or sickness, Mutation is forced in some
PLACES	Sacred radioactive zone, Hall decorated with heroic statues of mutants, Temple devoted to mutation, Work-house full of victims with crippling mutations

Mutant Hatred

The locals have a bitter hatred towards mutants. Large communities might have enough spare hands to afford executing such unfortunates, while smaller ones might be forced to let them live as a downtrodden underclass. Most such enclaves are convinced that mutation inevitably brings along a host of negative traits. They need to be exterminated or kept down lest they run rampant and slaughter "real humans".

Enemies	Mutant hunter with dark suspicions, Prophet of "blood purity", Violent eugenicist, Slaver in search of mutant stock
Friends	Mutant with concealed stigmata, Parent of a mutant child, Native with pro-mutant sentiments, Oppressed local mutant
Things	Poison that only affects mutants, Mutant-detecting sensors, Plunder taken from mutants, Corpse of a mutant martyr
Complications	Their leaders are actually mutants with concealed stigmata, They were formerly enslaved by mutants, Local Highshine strains often result in deranged mutants, Mutants have their stigmata cut off or carved out
Places	Slave pit full of mutants, Assembly of half-naked locals demonstrating their lack of stigmata, Execution ground with mutant corpses, Home decorated with colorful tanned mutant hides

Nobility

The enclave is rich enough to have some sort of nobility, a caste of men and women who administer the labor of others and live by the local surplus. Some nobilities are descended from the founding core of a settlement, the latecomers assimilated as serfs and subjects. Others draw their authority from the local religion, or ancient Mandate ties, or sheer red-speared violence. Nobles usually have perquisites unknown to the common folk, and tend to defend their standing with great zeal.

Enemies	Paranoid lord, Sneering princeling, Toady seeking favor with his masters, Brutal conqueror
Friends	Downtrodden peasant, Heroic lordling, Noble in need of outside aid, Pretender to the throne
Things	Artifact regalia of authority, Tribute exacted from the commoners, Control codes to a relic power source, Charter of original authority
Complications	The current nobles are usurpers and the fallen house plots their destruction, The reality of a noble caste is apparent only to the locals, The autocratic nobles really are enlightened compared to the peasant leaders, The nobles are hideously inbred
Places	Barbarically splendid audience hall, Field worked by peasant labor, Large fortification of scrap and rubble, Actual shops with surplus production for sale

Pariahs

The natives of the enclave are hated by the people of the surrounding area. Others will not enter their settlement, and if any of them are found outside their lands they can expect a spear in their belly. Something these people are or have done is so abhorrent that their neighbors will have nothing to do with them. PCs who are known for friendly dealings with the pariahs may well suffer for it at the hands of outraged neighbors.

Enemies	Bitter pariah chieftain, Outsider who thinks the PCs are in league with the pariahs, Ruthless local who preys on outsiders, Savage native who hates all outsiders
Friends	Pariah yearning to see the outside world, Far-distant outsider who doesn't understand the taboo, Redeemer laboring to earn forgiveness, Grim local trying to endure the hostile isolation
Things	Hard-won cache of precious survival supplies, Totem of the faith or cause that is so hateful to outsiders, Plunder taken from their enemies, Proof that their cause is just
Complications	They really are as horrible as they are said to be, Their reputation is based on a mistake, They were once awful but are now better, Their reputation is a lie fostered on them by a rival group
Places	Square full of suspicious locals, A lynching done by outraged outsiders, Shrine or museum dedicated to the past, Temple to their hated creed

Peaceful

The people here are remarkably pacifistic and peaceful by the standards of the New Earth- perhaps too peaceful to live were it not for some protector. They shun violence, abhor force in dealing with others, and have a pious- or craven- dread of bloodshed. Such communities are almost never natural occurrences in the wastes, and are usually the product of a remarkably well-hidden home, strong outside protectors, or an inevitably brief mass delusion brought on by prophets or preachers.

Enemies	Brutal raider chieftain looking for prey, "Peaceful" psychopath who uses lies and treachery to ruthlessly enact his will, Local thug who bullies the natives viciously, Local convinced the PCs are going to ruin everything
Friends	Reformer bent on re-introducing violence for the common good, Outsider gone native among the locals, Restless local seeking adventure, Native anticipating destruction if things don't change
Things	Abundant supplies from the lack of fighting, Cache of native mind-altering drugs, Beautiful pieces of native art, Abandoned store of high-tech military hardware
Complications	The natives are recent converts who've just been lucky so far, The natives are all just Highshine-influenced cowards, A secret group of assassins keeps order with "accidents", The natives are slaves of a much more violent group
Places	Serene native festival, Unwalled village, Bloodless native trial, Elaborate local religious rite

Podborn

At least some of the members of the community are "podborn", men and women recently released from cold sleep capsules that date back before the Scream. These exiles from the past are usually dazed, desperate, and utterly oblivious to the dangers of the New Earth. They may or may not retain unusual supplies of Old Terran equipment, but most podborn groups perish quickly to the countless threats that surround them. Those that survive can be priceless stores of information on nearby ruins and hidden caches of supplies.

Enemies	Panicked "mayor" convinced the world's full of monsters, Aspiring world-conqueror, Vicious podborn criminal rejoicing in the death of law, Brutal civilizer of mutant savages
Friends	Utterly helpless podborn doomed to die without aid, Revived rebel leader seeking allies, Technically-skilled podborn wanting protection, Podborn thrilled at the prospect of a life of adventure
Things	Precious Old Terran tech, Passcodes to Mandate base, Insignia of high Mandate official, Map to now-lost Mandate ruins
Complications	The podborn think everyone else is a monster, The podborn are utterly incompetent at survival, The podborn have been enslaved by a local tyrant, The podborn count themselves the rightful rulers of the area
Places	Cavernous emergency pod bay, Desolate once-grand Mandate building, Clumsily-fashioned camp of debris and survival tents, Room full of sick and wounded podborn

Psychic Cult

One of the dreaded cults of the Crazed has taken over this community, or is operating as an open faction in the enclave. These demented psychic demi-gods have countless small cells of worshippers around the world, all seeking to propitiate their strange cravings in return for protection and mercy. The priests of this cult might be psychics themselves or simply heavily-armed believers. Regardless of their chosen patron, all tend to share a similar desire for the savage elimination of any unbelievers.

Enemies	Demented cult high priest, Vicious cult enforcer, Honey-tongued preacher for the cult, Desperate man seeking salvation in the cult
Friends	Rebel against cult domination, Heretic who seeks the downfall of the priests, Doubter who secretly no longer believes, Priest of the community's former religion
Things	Obscene cult psychic technology, Plunder from wretched sacrifices, Tithes gathered from the locals, "Holy" relic of their master
Complications	The cult is concealed as a different faith, The cultists don't know the true enormities of their priests, The cult is merely a dangerous minority of the group, The community is actually evenly divided about the cult
Places	Temple to their Crazed master, Field of crucified unbelievers, Farm worked by a coffle of enslaved converts, Plaza during horrific religious rite

Psychic Masters

Most of the psychics in the New Earth are the product of the horrific training of the Crazed and their cultists. Some, however, come naturally to their powers- and to the inevitable madness that burns through an untrained mind. Most communities hate and fear psychics, but this one has fallen under the control of one or more whose powers have burnt out their sanity in a way compatible with rule. It may be that the community is even commanded by a sane, trained psychic- perhaps an apostate refugee from the Crazed and their temples.

Enemies	Paranoid psychic chieftain, Worshipful servant of the psychics, Outsider convinced the PCs are in league with the psychics, Sadistic bullying henchman
Friends	Secret psychic researcher, Psychic mentor trying to prevent insanity, Rebel reformer, Outside psychic-hunter
Things	Ancient Mandate psitech, Tribute gathered for masters, Secret location of a psychic mentor, Loot from conquered population
Complications	The psychics are trained and sane, The psychics are megalomaniacal, The locals worship the psychics, Local rulers have cut deals with the psychics
Places	Austere meditation chamber, Orgiastic sacrificial rite, Ruins of some madness-induced atrocity, Site of a pitched battle with frightened outsiders

Recent Settlement

The enclave is a fresh one, founded only a few years ago at most. Something about the site is inviting enough to have drawn others together here. Perhaps an extended clan from a more overcrowded community made their way here, or exiles from a splintered enclave, or nomads who've given up their wandering. Such communities are hopeful, but often rife with factions and arguments that have yet to calm with time.

Enemies	Suspicious village elder, Faction leader convinced the PCs are on the other side, Former exile who should have stayed exiled, Hopelessly impractical leader
Friends	Struggling farmer, Harried peacemaker, Hungry artisan, Beleaguered guard captain
Things	Relic from their former home, Precious cache of survival supplies, Plans for vital tech, Old Terran seed stock
Complications	The settlement is being fashioned on abhorrent lines, Rough newcomers are turning the current denizens into slaves, A precious resource is suddenly discovered near the site, Civil war threatens among the factions
Places	Crudely-built new village hall, Freshly-planted field, Jury-rigged gate in a crude fortification, Makeshift church of the old faith

Reforming Zeal

One or more of the locals has been seized with a fierce determination to reform an existing wrong- or at least, what they consider to be wrong. They've gathered enough allies in the community to be a serious factor, and they may be willing to use violence to purge the corruption. The problem may be a genuine injustice, or it may just be a point of prejudice cherished by the prophet.

Enemies	Corrupt chieftain, Fanatical reformer, Cynical outside manipulator, Vicious thug in service of the reformer or the corrupt
Friends	Harried village elder, Sincere reformer, Local caught in the crossfire, Native dependent upon the status quo or on its reform
Things	Ill-gotten gains of corruption, Offerings made to the prophet's cause, Plunder stolen from rivals, Proof of the prophet's or the establishment's wrongdoing
Complications	The injustice is real but the reformer is a cynical demagogue, The reform is just an excuse to cover a deeper hate between natives, The corrupt have outside help in maintaining order, The group's survival depends on the injustice
Places	Riotous demonstration, Heavily-fortified regime stronghouse, Clandestine meeting of reformers, Place where injustice is on full display

RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS

The locals are fanatical followers of a local faith, and insist that every aspect of life be made to forcibly conform to the dictates of their religion or philosophical belief. Outsiders might be grudgingly tolerated, but any lack of deference to the faith is sure to provoke a violent response. Zealots can be found for virtually any faith or ideology, and the scanty communication between wasteland enclaves ensures that each one tends to be unique and particular in its demands.

ENEMIES	Fanatical prophet, Grim-handed enforcer, Snooping informer, Bloodless church bureaucrat
FRIENDS	Secret apostate, Reforming heretic, Trapped outsider, Downtrodden local
THINGS	Precious religious artifact, Proof of hierarchical wrongdoing, Tithes from believers, Lost regalia of sacred office
COMPLICATIONS	The zealots are actually the nicest bunch in the region, The zealots are a minority but powerful, The fanaticism is a response to a recent crisis, The fanaticism is imposed by outside conquerors
PLACES	The church which is the grandest building in the enclave, Prison for holding sinners before punishment, School full of religious students, Mass religious festival

ROBOTS

The enclave has retained a number of functioning robots which they use for labor or protection. Most robots are purpose-built and equipped with expert systems that allow them to function in their role; very rarely, an actual AI is present in an enclave and capable of operating the robot hulls remotely. In some of these cases the robots are more masters and jailers than they are servants, the humans enlisted to maintain their pitiless iron masters.

ENEMIES	Tech who fears outsider theft, Aspiring general of a robot army, Paranoid AI who fears the Crazed, Local who despises "primitive" outsiders
FRIENDS	Expert robot repair technician, Sheltered innocent local, Insatiably curious AI, Grizzled spare part scavenger
THINGS	Cache of robot spare parts, Functioning high-tech tools, Dormant AI core, Stockpile of robot-made goods
COMPLICATIONS	The robots are wearing out, The locals are foolishly complacent behind their robot guards, The locals worship the bots, The locals don't know how to control the bots
PLACES	Ancient robot workshop, Field tended by robotic laborers, Robot-operated hospital, Opulent throne room with robot servants

SANCTUARY

The enclave is a refuge for some hated and persecuted people, one either hidden from hostile outsiders or too defensible to be taken by storm. In some cases, sanctuaries are simply oases of peace and security in a remarkably hostile land, a patch of fresh water and fertile land in the midst of a glass desert or a redoubt in mutant-infested mountains. At other times, they are hiding places for a hated race of mutants or a despised local faith. Not all appreciate being discovered by potentially hostile outsiders, but many are in need of whatever help they can get.

ENEMIES	Vicious local who despises outsiders, Refugee who blames the PCs for what they suffered, Grim survivalist who wants no new mouths to feed, Demagogue seeking to make an army
FRIENDS	Unjustly persecuted local, Scarred and world-weary native, Beleaguered local protector, Tech maintaining the sanctuary
THINGS	Prizes carried from former homes, Key to the sanctuary's defenses, Cache of precious supplies, Map of an easy path through the dangerous surroundings
COMPLICATIONS	The locals seethe with resentment, The sanctuary is crumbling, New refugees threaten to seize the sanctuary, Old enemies have discovered the sanctuary
PLACES	Narrow path along a precipice, Atop a high-walled fortification, A chamber of light and life inside a fortress, A wellhouse of sweet water

Secret Masters

Whatever their apparent government, the group is actually ruled by a secretive cabal. Savvy natives may know the truth or they might be innocent of their real masters, but outsiders are unlikely to realize the truth of things. These secretive figures might be powerful psychic cultists, mutants, or religious figures, or they may simply be ruthless political masterminds. The apparent leadership is never more than a mere figurehead for their machinations.

Enemies	Hidden cultist of the Crazed, Cold-blooded Machiavellian conspirator, Holy man with fanatical minions, Enforcer who wants outsiders to keep moving
Friends	Fearful native who knows the truth, Target of the hidden cabal, Local who wants to escape the enclave, Secret rebel against the masters
Things	Relic by which the masters exert control, Proof the masters' real identities, Cache of weapons for the rebels, Key to the masters' hidden redoubt
Complications	The masters are actually benign, The masters hide to avoid an ancient grudge from another enclave, The locals know but are terrified of the masters, The masters masquerade as lowly drudges
Places	Hidden rebel camp, Ancient sanctum of the masters, Oddly stiff noble court, Site of "mysterious and tragic accident"

Splinter Group

The group originally belonged to another, larger enclave in the region, but some sort of conflict or dissent drove them away to found a new community. The sectarians might have adopted new faiths, or rejected the current leadership, or committed acts unforgivable by their former kin. Feelings between the two communities are usually hostile, and strangers must take care not to be friends of the wrong sort of people.

Enemies	Chieftain nursing old grudges, Local seeing the PCs as tools against their rivals, Zealot determined to overthrow the "usurpers", Native suspecting the PCs of being rival agents
Friends	Peacemaker seeking reconciliation, Aspiring reformer, Local yearning to return, Native wanting to escape old hates
Things	Regalia of legitimacy, Holy relic of their faith, Stockpiled weapons for the "restoration", Proof that their cause was wrong
Complications	The sectarians were the former ruling class, The two groups openly war with each other, The split was actually amicable, The group tells itself comforting lies about why it split
Places	Village center made up like their old home, Museum-like house dedicated to the "truth", Muster ground for patrols against spies, Freshly-built structure put into recent use

Sterile

For some reason the natives of this community cannot reproduce themselves in the normal fashion. Radiation and a pervasive High-shine infection might be the cause, or the natives may be a last sad remnant of long-lived aliens, or they might belong to a creed that abhors natural reproduction. As no community can last long without new blood, they must either find different ways of introducing new members or suffer a gradual extinction. Not all recruits are given much choice in their new allegiance.

Enemies	Mad scientist creating altered life, Prophet of a self-mutilating cult, Bitter mutant seeking to taint outsiders, Hateful alien leader
Friends	Desperate defender of the enclave, Unwilling recruit to the group, Savant who seeks a cure, Despairing native without family or help
Things	Unused obstetric supplies and medicines, The cure for the sterility, Cache of robotic children, Medical supplies
Complications	The locals believe they deserve their lot, The natives forcibly impress outsiders, The natives aren't sterile but the environment kills children, The natives are podborn rendered sterile by their long suspension
Places	Empty houses, Structures built for much larger populations, A graveyard lined with tablets, A festival with few people in a vast chamber

Supremacists

The locals are adamantly convinced of their superiority over all their neighbors. Whether from greater tech, larger numbers, confident religion, useful mutations, *lack* of mutations, or ethnic extraction, they count others as little more than savages. Attitudes range from a sense of noblesse oblige to their sad inferiors to a dehumanizing contempt for their existence. Outsiders are rarely entertained for a moment longer than their utility lasts.

Enemies	Casually superior chieftain, Local slaver, Ruthless "cultural instructor", Aspiring conqueror
Friends	Mistreated slave, Open-minded local, Struggling outsider trader, Reforming native
Things	Relic emblematic of their superiority, Inherited tech, Cache of insurgency supplies, Records proving their self-conception is false
Complications	The locals were once lowly and downtrodden, The enclave means well toward its neighbors, Their neighbors are cowed and submissive, The group performs some duty vital to the region
Places	Mass rally, Hall of recorded glories, Slave pens full of neighboring tribals, Temple where their superiority is preached

Sustained Technology

Somehow, the natives have managed to hold on to a significant portion of their ancestral technological base. This fragment might not be enough to support the entire enclave, but their leaders and elites have access to TL4 equipment and weaponry, and the enclave probably has such luxuries as electrical power and running water. Such enclaves tend to be ferociously protective of their remaining technical resources and paranoid about attempts to steal or sabotage them.

Enemies	Suspicious chief technician, Fanatical tech-priest, Incipient conqueror, Reckless scientist
Friends	Scientific missionary, Harried maintenance tech, Grizzled defender, Spare-parts scavenger
Things	Products of the enclave, Plans for high-tech gear, Advanced workshop tools, Functioning pretech fabricators
Complications	The enclave can produce only a trickle of gear, The gear has dangerous side-effects, The fabricators require terrible sacrifices, The fabricators are wearing out
Places	Comfortable modern dwelling, Climate-controlled building, Town square lit with electrical lighting, Dangerous factory floor

Trade Hub

The vast majority of trade in the New Earth is crude barter or involves the communal sharing of goods. However, some enclaves are positioned so well that they can serve as markets for the surrounding settlements and nomad tribes. These trade hubs often produce useful goods of their own, whether livestock, abundant produce, or substantial scrap salvage. Their function as commercial hubs leaves them far more cosmopolitan and open to outsiders than most enclaves, and their respect for the property rights of strangers is remarkable in the wastes.

Enemies	Dishonest trader, Expert thief, Rapacious enclave elder, Raider chief plotting a big score
Friends	Hard-pressed guardsman, Town magistrate, Ambitious young trader, Naive tribal
Things	Stockpiled trade goods, Collected tariffs, Bandits' stolen pelf, Proof of dishonest dealing
Complications	Raiders are strangling the hub, New rulers are oppressing the merchants, A rival enclave seeks the hub's ruin, The hub's leadership dreams of regional rule
Places	Bustling bazaar, Quiet caravanserai, Actual shop with goods to buy, Warehouse full of supplies

Tyrant

The enclave is under the iron fist of a tyrant, whatever its normal governance might be like. Some power controls daily life in the community, and any hint of resistance is crushed. The lord might be a raider chieftain who has seized the place for a new seat of power, the chief elder of a vicious local family, a brute who has found powerful pretech artifacts for himself and his favorites, or any other suitably savage master. Most locals prefer to suffer under their oppressor than risk the dangers of the wastes.

Enemies	The tyrant himself, Vicious lickspittle courtier, Skulking informant, Bullying henchman
Friends	Rebel leader, Abused local, Former ruler's heir, Old enemy of the tyrant
Things	Gathered "taxes", The weapons of the tyrant, Cache of rebel supplies, Peasants' hidden food stores
Complications	The community invited in the tyrant against a worse external threat, A significant minority support the tyrant, The tyrant isn't as bad as the one he replaced, The tyrant has legitimacy with the people
Places	Gate with heads on pikes, Field of crucifixes, Field worked by slaves, Burnt ruins of a rebel house

Unsteady Alliance

The enclave is actually composed of two or more sharply distinct groups, perhaps of different cultures, lifestyles, religions, or mutation types. The locals are new to this circumstance and neither group particularly trusts the other. There may have been a legacy of skirmishing between the two, or simple strangeness- but the environment is forcing them to work together for mutual survival. Leadership is likely a bone of contention, with members of one group refusing to follow a leader of a different clan.

Enemies	Self-serving demagogue, Ethnic chauvinist, Local with a grudge against the others, Outsider who profits by conflict
Friends	Star-crossed lovers, Pragmatic peacemaker, Aspiring leader of all clans, Apolitical survivalist
Things	Prized ancestral relics, Symbol of past cooperation, Proof of a troublemaker's machinations, Evidence of an impending crisis that will require cooperation
Complications	The groups used to raid each other, The outside pressure is temporary and the alliance will fade when it does, One group is substantially weaker than the other, The groups' lifestyles are mutually incompatible
Places	Clan-segregated meeting area, House in one clan's style, Debris of a drunken brawl, Contentious meeting of leaders

Uplifted Beastmen

The enclave is populated largely or entirely by uplifted animals, either beastmen from the Bestiary chapter or full animals that have been mutated into sentience by the Highshine. Most of these enclaves have at least a crude semblance of human organization to them, leavened with decidedly animalistic traits. Some beastman settlements can be fairly advanced, but most lack the advantage of the ancestral tech base possessed by human communities. Their attitudes toward their neighbors are largely shaped by their animal types, with predators being decidedly less friendly than herd animals.

Enemies	Half-savage beastman warrior, Cunning beastman manipulator, Outsider seeking the beastmen as warriors, Beastman who despises humans
Friends	Curious young beastman, Human trader seeking profit, Human local gone native, Wise beastman elder
Things	Relics of Old Terran biotech, Beastman-creation serum, Device that controls feral minds, Keys to lost Mandate lab
Complications	The beastmen despise their feral natures, The beastmen consider humans to be prey animals, The beastmen scorn advanced tech, The beastmen keep human slaves
Places	House more like a pen than a human structure, Lush pasture, Meeting-place of simple stones, Hall in crude mimicry of human work

Warbeasts

The locals raise some kind of mutated animal as a warbeast, whether a type large enough to be ridden or one meant simply to fight beside its owner. Such powerful companions strongly influence the enclave's culture, with the most important families being those with the most or best warbeasts in their packs. Such large numbers of likely-carnivorous creatures require substantial hunting ranges, and such communities are often limited in their packs by the amount of food they can find for their stock. Some enclaves trade their beasts, while others guard them jealously as symbols of their might.

Enemies	Handler as savage as his beasts, Mad beast-cultist, Chief with plans of conquest, Mutated intelligent warbeast
Friends	Diplomat seeking to buy beasts, Curious breeding researcher, Handler in need of help, Outsider slated to be eaten
Things	Serum to create warbeasts, Prize bloodline pups, Toxin lethal to the beasts, Wealth traded for beasts
Complications	The beasts are as intelligent as humans, The locals feed troublemakers to the beasts, The beasts are maddened and controlled only by old tech, The beasts are starting to mutate dangerously
Places	Pit with gnawed human bones, Festive fight between beasts, Plaza full of locals and beasts, Pen full of hungry-eyed beasts

Ruin Site Creation

Fabricating a ruin site works in much the same way as building an enclave, though it often requires significantly more development. Both enclaves and ruins provide fun for a group, but the fun they provide is often of very different kinds.

Enclaves commonly provide the entertainment of NPC interaction. The PCs deal with the locals, sort out their problems, take sides in their conflicts, and deal with their bizarre local customs. Violence is not impossible and only prudence and a vestigial moral sense prevents the PCs from simply opening up on the townsfolk. Still, for most groups such behavior would be unusual. Players usually get their fun from interacting with the locals.

Ruins rarely have the kind of inhabitants that are willing to parley. Intelligent denizens would certainly be inclined to negotiate if death is the alternative, and not every ruin tribe is going to be murderously violent as a first choice, but most ruin-dwellers are monstrous mutants or unflinchingly savage humans. Players do not send their PCs to ruins to find subtle political intrigue.

They go to find fearsome foes, rich salvage, and interesting places to explore. With that in mind, the ruins you create need to provide that kind of excitement. They should be stocked with plausible inhabitants, suitable plunder, and physical features that have more to them than an endless warren of 3-meter-wide hallways and featureless rooms. There has to be enough to the site to make it stand out from the other radioactive hellholes the PCs have explored.

The following chapter includes tools and guidelines for fleshing out your ruins with suitably interesting features and inhabitants. For now, all you really need is a basic outline of the ruin's nature, major occupants, and unusual features. It's not worth doing more at this stage of the game unless you expect to need the location for your next session or would find it entertaining to prepare it for use.

What is a Ruin?

A ruin is a building complex, decayed factory, abandoned village, tunnel network, or other structure that has fallen prey to the disasters and denizens of the New Earth. The wastelands are thick with these broken places, and an intrepid band of wanderers rarely has to travel far to find one worth investigating.

Necropoli and industrial zones might be made up of dozens of ruin sites, though only one or two are actually prepared. It's beyond the abilities or patience of most GMs to actually map an entire radioactive city, so these developed ruins serve as points of particular interest within the general devastation. As the GM gets more time and the players take more interest in the necropolis, new ruins can be fleshed out for their exploration.

A ruin to the PCs might well be an enclave to its inhabitants. True, the local bandit clan might view other human beings as mere excuses to vent their unholy urges, but that doesn't mean they don't have their own warped society among the tumbled walls. Even predators have social hierarchies and factional conflicts, and an adventuring party's best friend can often be the mutual hates that fester within a stronghold's fortifications. Monolithic antagonism tends to be boring, so feel free to spice things up with a little useful tension among the ruin's denizens.

It's usually wise to have at least one ruin fully prepared for use before you start a campaign, preferably one that could be plausibly planted almost anywhere. There's a great deal of psychological comfort for a sandbox GM in knowing that there's a nice, crisp piece of premade content ready for deployment if things start to flag or the players start to look around for something interesting to explore.

Ruin Origins

When building a ruin, first decide what function the place originally served. Most ruins are relics of Old Terra, but some of them might have been constructed in the aftermath of the Scream, only to fall prey to raiders or natural disaster. If you haven't any particular preference in the matter you can roll or choose from the table below.

When it comes time to make maps of such sites, it's often useful to simply grab a schematic of a modern-day structure and redecorate it to fit the apocalyptic theme. When doing so, you should have a mind to simplify things to a degree- actual buildings can be difficult to describe in purely verbal form, and you may not want to outright share your map with the players. A certain degree of abstraction can be helpful in creating a ruin that is both flavorful and easy for the PCs to visualize.

RUIN ORIGINS	
1d12	*Result*
1	*Agro-complex*: Some were vast plantations staffed by robots, while others were "culturally authentic" small farms.
2	*Desolate Retreat*: A building or location used as a rallying point for desperate survivors of the Scream. They died here, unable to survive in the New Earth.
3	*Industrial Complex*: Factories, workshop clusters, mines for minerals unavailable from asteroids, crude contemporary industry
4	*Mandate Base*: Security complex, administrative building, military training zone
5	*Pleasure Resort*: Formerly reserved for the Mandate elite and their favored minions, these resorts catered to every possible desire.
6	*Power Plant*: One of the plants that escaped the explosive feedback induced by the Crazed, usually located near a population center. Most are irreparably damaged.
7	*Prison*: Vast holding complex for criminals due to be exiled to the frontier worlds.
8	*Resistance Base*: Once a concealed base for a band of anti-Mandate rebels or sectarian zealots.
9	*Ruined Village*: A small rural community, usually designed along "culturally appropriate" architectural lines for the inhabitants.
10	*Secret Laboratory*: Hidden lab for forbidden Mandate experiments or illicit rebel research.
11	*Sinister Caves*: Natural caves or artificially-dug passages by animals or survivors.
12	*Suburban Wreckage*: Lightly-built zones of single-family house ruins, often largely overgrown.

Ruin Destruction

Things go away for a reason, and something specific made this ruin uninhabitable by its original occupants. The way in which a ruin was destroyed will usually affect the look of the place- the fury of conquest leaves different marks than those of hunger's slow dying. If the rationale isn't obvious to you, you might choose to pick or roll from the following table.

When building a region, it can be useful to make sure the modes of destruction have a satisfactory degree of variety. Even so, if you roll several ruins that died of the same type of cause, consider the possibility that the disasters were linked. Was it all coincidence, or was there a darker unity to their dooms?

RUIN DESTRUCTION	
1d10	*Result*
1	*Conquest*: The ruin was smashed by an organized foe, one that may still inhabit the ruin. Charred wreckage is common, and most unconcealed caches of supplies will have been stolen.
2	*Decay*: The ruin was fatally compromised by equipment failure, fighting, or lack of maintenance supplies. The owners moved on after it became uninhabitable.
3	*Disaster*: A broken dam, an earthquake, a wildfire, a cloud of Black Dust, a sinkhole, a crashing orbital shuttle... whatever the specifics, some sudden, drastic disaster struck the ruin and its luckless inhabitants.
4	*Disease*: A vicious plague sent the original inhabitants fleeing. Most of these sicknesses were nanomodified biowarfare agents released by the Crazed, and they may linger.
5	*Famine*: Those of the original owners who did not leave were left to starve. The surrounding area is probably devoid of edible forage or game.
6	*Madness*: The inhabitants fell prey to mass delusions, religious ecstasies, or blind adherence to some salvific ideology. Some might have been driven insane by hostile Highshine infestations.
7	*Mutation*: A rampant Highshine infection overwhelmed the owners. Their twisted heirs might still occupy the ruin.
8	*Nukes*: The Crazed detonated a nuclear weapon or power plant near the site, and even two hundred years later it's likely that pockets of radioactivity remain. Robots, radiation-resistant mutants, and other obdurate creatures might still dwell there.
9	*Panic*: The chaos of the Scream drove the original inhabitants into a blind panic. Those that didn't flee ended up killing each other for control of the limited remaining resources.
10	*Raiders*: Repeated raids by wasteland bandits or hostile mutants eventually killed off the original inhabitants, save for those with the wisdom to flee the inevitable.

Ruin Inhabitants

With the knowledge of what the ruin once was and how it came to be destroyed, you can now determine its most significant current inhabitants. It's unlikely that they're the only creatures dwelling in the ruins, though intelligent inhabitants will have likely driven away any competitors or incautious local predators. You might choose to pick several choices off this list to represent multiple bands of inhabitants, some of which may hate each other more than they hate interlopers.

RUIN INHABITANTS	
1d12	*Result*
1	**Beasts**: Most such inhabitants have been gruesomely mutated by Highshine infections. The beasts in the ruin are either individually deadly creatures or a swarm of dangerous vermin that threaten intruders.
2	**Cannibals**: The locals are man-eating savages despised by civilized enclaves. Outsiders may be allowed to speak before they're added to the stewpot.
3	**Cultists**: Either worshipers of the Crazed or devotees of some religion too vicious to be tolerated in a community.
4	**Degenerates**: These inhabitants are so degraded or decadent that no decent enclave could tolerate their hideous customs.
5	**Exiles**: Bitter castoffs from a nearby enclave, these exiles were driven out after losing a political struggle, adopting a foreign religion, or failing in a violent coup. Some may be willing to negotiate with PCs.
6	**Mutants**: Most such mutants are hereditary Highshine sufferers, often with dangerous mental deformities. Ruin-dwelling mutants are often so maddened or vicious that no enclave will take them in.
7	**Podborn**: The ruin is inhabited by Old Terran citizens recently revived from cold sleep pods. Those that survive their first month are often abjectly paranoid about the horrible inhabitants of the New Earth.
8	**Psychics**: Some are adept devotees of the Crazed while others are simple feral psychics.
9	**Raiders**: Bandits, thieves, and reavers. Ruins serve both as security against enemies and a good place to stash loot and slaves.
10	**Robots**: Such robots usually obey long-irrelevant expert systems in ways that can be fatal to intruders.
11	**Squatters**: Wanderers and vagabonds, they've come together to seek what wretched shelter this ruin provides. Outsiders who don't look to be "their kind" are often counted prey.
12	**Roll Twice**: The two groups are evenly matched in the ruins. Then roll 1d6; on a 1-3 they are open enemies, on a 4-5 they try to shun each other, and on a 6, they're working together against the surrounding enclaves. Optionally, the two rolls simply refer to two different aspects of the group- Podborn Raiders, for example.

Ruin Tags

Just as with enclaves, the following table provides thirty different tags for characterizing your ruins. One or two can be added or remixed to provide a specific individual flavor for the wreckage you're creating. In the case that a tag conflicts with some result you've already rolled or determined, just edit things to smooth the contrast- or consider the ways in which the contrast might be right.

For extra flavor, you might roll on the Enclave Tag table for a not-entirely-hostile band of ruin inhabitants.

RUIN TAGS		
1d6	*1d10*	*Result*
1-2	1	Abandoned Traps
	2	Ancient Lore
	3	Beastmen
	4	Berserk Robots
	5	Black Dust
	6	Buried Treasure
	7	Countdown to Destruction
	8	Cryogenic Pods
	9	Cult Stronghold
	10	Cyclical Threat
3-4	1	Disguised Purpose
	2	Failed Community
	3	Flooded Ruins
	4	Forbidden Fruit
	5	Hidden Site
	6	Highshine Concentration
	7	Holy Ground
	8	Mad Scientist
	9	Plague
	10	Psychic Stronghold
5-6	1	Radioactive
	2	Rich Tomb
	3	Sealed Horror
	4	Secret Base
	5	Secret Inhabitants
	6	Sentient Plants
	7	Taboo Land
	8	Underground Site
	9	Unstable Construction
	10	Unstable Power Core

Ruin Site Tags

Abandoned Traps

At some point since the Scream, someone has set up a number of dangerous traps and snares in the ruin. The trapsmith has likely since died or been driven from the ruins, but the traps remain. Pit traps, walls set to collapse when a stone is disturbed, snares hidden in floor debris, rusted spikes beneath calf-deep murky water... any number of perils await in the ruins. Signs of these snares are usually obvious at the edges of the ruin, where the unwary have been killed and the prudent frightened away.

Enemies	Mad trapsmith survivalist, Creatures that float or fly above the snares, Dormant security bots, Vermin too light to trigger traps
Friends	Scavenger seeking the trapsmith's gear cache, Relative of recent victim, Seeker of a valuable trap component, Heir of the original trapsmith
Things	Valuable trap components, Trapsmithing tools, Belongings of ensnared dead, Cache the traps were meant to protect
Complications	The traps are somehow intelligent, The traps are recent additions, A friend has been caught in the ruins, The traps are keeping something in
Places	Corridor with a pit trap into a lower tunnel, Room with roof that collapses when the door is opened, Dark closet with grenade pin attached to interior doorknob, Basement rigged to flood with radioactive filth

Ancient Lore

The ruin contains a precious cache of Old Terran data, possibly including blueprints for high-tech devices or tools for advanced fabrication. Most data before the Scream existed purely on the Net- physical books were an artistic affectation or a neo-primitivist statement. This ruin has either printed, physical books or offline dataslabs that can be read by TL3 computing hardware or surviving Old Terran interfaces. Recognizing these resources might be difficult, but those who realize what is to be had there doubtless maintain a vigorous interest in the ruin.

Enemies	Scheming scrapsmith, Demented scientist, Antiquity-worshipping cultist, Fanatical Luddite
Friends	Enclave local needing the data, Curious scrounger-sage, Robotic keeper of the lore, Adventurer questing for his enclave
Things	The lore itself, Dataslabs capable of interfacing with the lore, Tools for advanced construction, Stockpiles of completed goods
Complications	The lore is on horrible eugenic experiments, The data requires morally-suspect components to implement, The information is fragmented into several clusters, The data is encrypted with a long-lost key
Places	Rebel workshop full of pirate printouts, Long-dead server room, Moldering library of an elite director, Closet stuffed with survivalist books

Beastmen

Unlike the beastmen of a more "civilized" enclave, these feral mutants are deeply in thrall to their animal natures. The ruin provides a lair from which they inflict their depredations upon the surrounding lands, along with a supply of salvage for those creatures intelligent enough to make use of it. Beastfolk of the ruins tend to be much more dangerous than their enclave-dwelling kindred, as even those tribes with fully human intelligence often turn it to cruel and hungry ends.

Enemies	Savage pack alpha, Diabolical scrapsmith of human leavings, Fanatical beast-shaman, Hulking half-mindless mutant
Friends	"Civilized" beastman from a nearby enclave, Intrepid beastman explorer, Desperate headman of neighboring enclave, Prisoner kidnapped for food or slavery
Things	Euphoric drug affecting beastmen, Plundered baubles, Relics of ruin's original inhabitants, Strange beastman handicrafts
Complications	The beastmen are commanded by a human, The beastmen are escaped and vengeful slaves, The beastmen are more intelligent than humans, The beastmen are religious zealots
Places	A stinking den full of bones, Room with clawed walls, Chamber furnished for nonhuman shapes, Kennel for human slaves

Berserk Robots

Many ruins have the occasional functioning robot still wandering their halls, but these ruins are infested with dangerously unstable bots. Most of these surviving automatons operate based on ancient expert systems rather than true AI, but the drastic change in environment often breaks their programming in potentially lethal ways. Security bots might take humans as dangerous vermin or unauthorized intruders, while even ostensibly harmless workbots might treat people as raw materials to be processed or contaminations to be purged.

Enemies	Secret AI mastermind, Mad scrapsmith, Aspiring robo-horde warlord, Mutant robot-controller
Friends	Inquisitive scavenger, AI locked out of the system, Robotics researcher, Heir to the former owners of the bots
Things	Functioning robots, Stock of maintenance tools and parts, Robot-created goods, Blueprints for robot creation
Complications	The robots have been intentionally perverted, The bots are radioactive, The bots are alien relics, The robots are indistinguishable from humans
Places	Clanking automated factory floor, Room of unmoving robots, Workshop with dismembered robots, Sterile and perfectly-maintained interiors

Black Dust

The ruin is contaminated with the dreaded Black Dust, a type of nanite cloud completely subverted by the malicious coding of the Crazed. Different clouds of Black Dust afflict their victims in different ways, but all of them are horrific- and there are times when death isn't the worst they have in store. Full details of the Black Dust and its horrors are related in the Bestiary chapter. For your purposes in building the ruin, you can simply reflect on what kind of monstrous change a psychopathic demigod might wish on their worst enemies and have the Black Dust transform the unfortunate denizens accordingly- assuming the dust did not simply kill them outright, and now lies dormant as it waits for new concentrations of prey.

Enemies	Atrociously altered ruin chieftain, Scrounger made hideous by his find, Exile who fled to the wrong ruin, Warlord convinced the Black Dust can be made a weapon
Friends	Wretched victim with unwarped wits, Frightened neighboring chief, Scavenger seeking a treasure within, Tech-savant seeking to end the Black Dust
Things	Nodule of inactive Black Dust, Possessions of unfortunate victims, Intact Old Terran nanotech, Serum to give Black Dust immunity
Complications	The changes the Black Dust makes are purely mental, The changes are time-delayed, The changes seem beneficial to some, Locals worship the changed
Places	Chamber of hideously-warped skeletons, Nanite-eroded construction, Gusts of nanite-blackened wind, Ruined nanite emission node

Buried Treasure

The ruin is known to contain a hidden treasure of some kind, most likely a particularly valuable piece of Old Terran tech or a cache of precious supplies. This knowledge is relatively recent and limited in circulation, or else it probably would have been pillaged by now- and indeed, it's possible that the current residents of the ruin have already found the loot. Those present are unlikely to welcome outsiders, whether or not they're long-time dwellers in the ruin. Competition for resources in the wastelands is rarely sporting, and rivals might be willing to ensure their success by rather direct means of interference.

Enemies	Ruthless leader of rival salvage team, Treacherous guide, Self-proclaimed rightful owner, Guardian of the cache
Friends	Eager scavenger, Local desperately in need of the supplies, Sage who discovered the reference, Ruin-dweller seeking help against invaders
Things	The treasure itself, The gear of rival groups, The key to the cache's defenses, A false treasure
Complications	The treasure is dangerous to the possessor, The treasure was a lie to lure others in, The treasure is worthless in the New Earth, The treasure is too bulky to carry out without help
Places	A massive Old Terran vault, A trap-laden corridor, A remote burial site, A hushed rendezvous with a guide

COUNTDOWN TO DESTRUCTION

Something is going to destroy the ruin and everyone in it. Gradually-intensifying earthquakes, impending dam failure, tardy nuke detonation, eroding Black Dust containment, mutant horrors gnawing up from below... something is going to doom this place, and the PCs can either be the agents of its salvation or hasteners of its quietus. The countdown usually starts after the first session in which the PCs seriously interact with the ruin; if they don't do something to stop events, the ruin will be wiped not long afterwards. If you use this tag, try to arrange things so that the countdown's existence is clear to explorers- otherwise it can seem rather random when the ruin finally immolates itself.

ENEMIES	Zealot convinced the destruction is actually a glorious uplifting, Cold-eyed outsider who uses the destruction for his own ends, Bitter exile who wants the destruction, Local blaming outsiders for the ruination
FRIENDS	Innocent dweller seeking help, Chief of neighboring enclave that will be destroyed too, Aged guardian of the agent of destruction, Scrounger who foresees the impending doom
THINGS	Technical data showing the imminent ruin, Key to reversing the destruction, Relics associated with the agent of ruin, Reward for halting the threat
COMPLICATIONS	The destruction is inevitable, The ruin was provoked by others, The locals think the ruin is actually going to be their salvation, The doom is actually beneficial to nearby communities
PLACES	Chamber with a glowing countdown, Atop a crumbling dam, In a hissing and crackling power core, Atop an undetonated nuclear core

CRYOGENIC PODS

The vast majority Old Terra's population was wiped out within weeks of the Scream, prey to Highshine infestation, catastrophic infrastructure failure, and the combined savagery of rebels, Crazed, and the remnants of Mandate security forces. A relative handful were able to seek refuge in cold sleep pods; some of them medical units designed to preserve subjects during lengthy nanomedical procedures while others were scratch-built emergency units cobbled together by desperate techs. The largest proportion were criminals and malcontents sentenced to exile on the frontier and stored securely in stasis until ships could be found to carry them. Eventually, the power runs out on such pods, or automatic timers activate, and their occupants come forth to face a new and terrible world.

ENEMIES	Unfrozen psychopath, Paranoid rebel leader, Megalomaniacal Mandate official, Selfish survivalist
FRIENDS	Helpless innocent, Enslaved tribal, Deposed pacifistic leader, Bewildered podborn outcast
THINGS	Pod power source, Cache of Old Terran emergency supplies, Mandate key codes, Forbidden rebel tech
COMPLICATIONS	The podborn all share a dangerous ideology, The podborn have all mutated recently, The podborn have been awake for some time, The podborn have yet to awaken
PLACES	Room full of glowing cryogenic pods, Stuttering power core, Fortified bunker, Room decorated in Old Terra styles

CULT STRONGHOLD

Some desperate communities turn to the red cults of the Crazed to survive. Others find different creeds, often no better than anything the arch-psychic lunatics offer. Cult strongholds are dominated by some virulent, dangerous ideology. It might take the form of some murderous religion, but it's just as likely to be a bloody-handed political creed seeded from a handful of dedicated survivors in the aftermath of the Scream. Whatever the specifics, the denizens are absolutely certain of their rectitude and the righteousness of their cause. The rest of the world consists only of enlightened converts and disposable prey.

ENEMIES	The Great Leader, Holy prophet, Grizzled Old Terran podborn leader, Cynical demagogue
FRIENDS	Cult renegade, Hapless prisoner, Besieged neighboring chieftain, Schismatic rebel
THINGS	Tribute from converts, Token of the cult's authority, Sacred book of teachings, Device of mass destruction
COMPLICATIONS	The cult has seductive principles, The cult is backed by a neighboring enclave, The cult was backed but got far out of hand, The cult is a cynical gloss on brutal ambition
PLACES	Mass rally site, Dungeon for heretics, "Labor education" camp, Opulent shrine

CYCLICAL THREAT

These ruins are never safe, but a certain local phenomenon produces a recurring threat in the area. During these periods, the ruins are swarming or blighted by some gruesome peril, one that often scourges neighboring communities. Of course, such times of peril are precisely those occasions when the neighbors are most desperate for outside aid. In some cases the threat might be dormant, and the local communities might be desperate to keep it that way rather than experience a new cycle of devastation. Outsiders can earn a great deal of wealth and gratitude by putting down the horror before it can wash over the luckless natives.

ENEMIES	Cicada-like mutant swarm leader, Robotic taskmaster, Outside provoker of the cycle, Reckless scrounger
FRIENDS	Afflicted enclave chieftain, Remorseful agent of incitement, Terrified prisoner in the ruin, Outsider trying to end the cycle
THINGS	Old Terran tech to end the cycle, Valuable by-product of the threat, Tool to control the threat, Proof that the cycle was provoked by a rival
COMPLICATIONS	The threat is a sporadic Black Dust generator, Mutant insects lurk in larval form until the weather is right, Rivals mean to use the threat as a weapon, The threat is a cyclical plague
PLACES	Village destroyed by the last cycle, Beleaguered outpost of resistance, Wall with the threat's extent mapped on it, Gruesome source location of the threat

DISGUISED PURPOSE

The ruin was originally built to appear as if it were a particular sort of facility, but it actually conceals a much darker purpose. It might have been an illicit black-ops Mandate lab for genetic or psychic experimentation, a secret prison for enemies of the Directorate, a refuge for rebel leaders, a cover for secret cultists, or any one of a number of hidden lairs. In the years since, the natural defenses and secrecy of such places have likely left the neighboring enclaves oblivious to the sinister reality that lurks beneath its broken rubble. Those outsiders who come to unearth the darkness beneath prefer to keep it that way until matters are far too late to stop.

ENEMIES	Crazed Old Terran scientist, Psychic mastermind, Cryogenic rebel commander, Plunderer of foul secrets
FRIENDS	Podborn escapee from the site, Relentless investigator, Curious local, Heir to the original operators
THINGS	Tech smuggled out of the site long ago, Passcodes to enter the concealed part of the facility, Files of similar hidden sites, Experimental maltech equipment
COMPLICATIONS	The ruin is guarded by scions of its original users, The function of the ruin is incomprehensible to modern explorers, Revealing the secret triggers disastrous consequences, Local elites use the secrets to keep power
PLACES	Innocuous plaza, Room behind a sliding panel, Pale-lit tunnel into the earth, Crumbling facade over more sinister structures

FAILED COMMUNITY

People tried to make an enclave in these ruins, drawn to them by some convenient resource or supply of salvage. Their attempt was a grim failure, and the bones of the dead litter the place. They might have been slaughtered by raiders, overtaken by a lethal Highshine contagion, or poisoned by some deathly emanation they could not detect until it was too late. Other aspiring villages are slaughtered by ruin inhabitants they failed to detect, or tear their own polities apart in fighting over some particularly rich trove of salvage.

ENEMIES	Maddened local, Bandit chief nesting in the ruin, Hostile mutant denizen, Cultish leader of tiny fragment of survivors
FRIENDS	Survivor who fled the downfall, Family member of a dead settler, Ruin-picker seeking loot, Retriever seeking item lost in the fall
THINGS	Unused supplies, Hidden cache of valuables, Treasure they were fighting over, Relic being protected by mutant inhabitants
COMPLICATIONS	Someone wants to try again on the site, The settlers uncorked a mutant hive, The settlers are still fighting each other in the ruins, Mutants or savages live in the empty enclave buildings now
PLACES	Empty house, Burnt town hall, Field littered with bones, Defaced monument

Flooded Ruins

The ruins are at least partially flooded. This inundation need not necessarily be of water- it might be flooded with toxic waste, pervaded by a heavy, poisonous gas, or otherwise smirched with some sort of obstacle that makes it dangerous or cumbersome to reach other parts of the ruins. Explorers might be forced to use narrow walkways between building roofs, or risk dangerous, leaky passages beneath the murky water. The unwholesome stew of stagnant water, degrading Old Terran structures and hostile Highshine nanites can be a greater threat to explorers than the misshapen denizens of these places.

Enemies	Fish-mutant leader, Paranoid swamper chieftain, Vicious boat-raider warlord, Abomination from below
Friends	Scrap diver, Ambitious drainage engineer, Friendly water-dweller, Heir to the former inhabitants
Things	Parts to repair a massive pump, Passcodes to open an ancient dam, Strange nanite-grown pearls, Plunder seized by swamp pirates
Complications	The locals have been dwelling in air-tight buildings since the Scream, The water is poisonous or acidic to flesh, Removing the water would flood a downstream village, The water cools an unstable power plant
Places	Airtight Old Terran building below the surface, Crumbling tower jutting from the water, Reed-swathed clearing, Fetid maze of rotting vines and muck

Forbidden Fruit

There are horrible things in the ruins, but these same things tempt outsiders with the promise of power and wealth. Unstable Old Terran tech that consumes the user as he wields it, radioactive relics that kill those who bear them, horrible mutants that promise unholy favors to those who bring them just a few trifling things... all these temptations are possibilities in such a ruin. The locals are likely well-aware of the temptation and liable to warn outsiders of the danger, but there is always someone mad or ambitious enough to imagine that they can withstand the peril.

Enemies	Whispering thing in the darkness, Demented devotee of the forbidden power, Local convinced the PCs are tainted, Thing that wants to escape the ruin
Friends	Escaped former user of the power, Victim of the power, Purger of the unclean, Investigator who must have the truth
Things	Nano-based tech with hideous side effects, Booster drug with grim consequences, Wholly useful and harmless stims made out of infants, Mind-enslaving maltech neural collars
Complications	The locals need the ruin's favors desperately, The vile mastermind appears harmless at first, The favors were harmless at first but have been corrupted, Rivals fight to access the ruin's power
Places	A darkened room with a whispering voice, A chamber walled in mutated flesh, An excessively perfect garden, Room carpeted in the bones of rivals for the ruin's gifts

Hidden Site

The existence of the ruins has been lost to the confusion of the past, and its physical structure is concealed by earthen mounds, thick vegetation, rising water, or seemingly impassable trails. The denizens of the ruin live and prosper wholly unknown to their near neighbors. Bandit chieftains delight in such places as secure bases for their depredations, and cults and cabals favor them as strongholds and shrines to their dark masters. The inhabitants are united in their desire to preserve their anonymity, and intruders will be hunted with a ferocity born of desperation.

Enemies	Cunning bandit warlord, Secretive cabal leader, Crazed hermit, Bitter mutant chieftain
Friends	Treasure-hunter with old rumors, Escapee found in the wilderness, Ruin-dweller desperate for help, Explorer hunted by the ruin-dwellers
Things	Key to unlock the hidden entrance, Map to the lost site, Untouched Old Terran equipment, Fruits of secret raiding
Complications	A false ruin conceals the true lair beneath or beyond it, Several lethal false paths are arranged to kill intruders, The ruin is self-sustaining and its natives hide from the world, The ruin was intentionally forgotten by natives due to some horrible event
Places	A seemingly blind canyon, An unusual earthen rise on an otherwise flat plain, A secret passage hidden behind a screen of brush, A treacherous path through a toxic swamp

Highshine Concentration

Almost every inch of the New Earth is plagued by some subtle degree of Highshine infestation, but this ruin positively crawls with the infectious nanites. Even those living creatures without significant genetic damage run the risk of mutating if they are exposed too long to the surroundings. Provided the PCs don't stay more than a few days in the area they should be all right, but luckless bandits, beasts, and wanderers all make up a likely menagerie of mutant horrors within the ruins. These hyperactive Highshine strains are more likely than usual to produce marginally-viable mutations, including severe mental abnormalities and excruciatingly unnatural bodily alterations

Enemies	Anguished mutant leader, Mutant supremacist, Beast with an evil intelligence, Ambitious exile turned mutant
Friends	Relative of someone trapped in the ruins, Zealous researcher, Scrap alchemist seeking materials, Intrepid explorer
Things	Vials of beneficial nanites, Device that neutralizes Highshine nanites, Valuable excretions of a special mutant, Seeds of a useful mutant plant
Complications	Neighboring communities use the ruins as punishment for outcasts, Nearby enclaves consider the ruins and its effects holy, The Highshine alterations all share the same theme, The infestation is starting to expand
Places	Chamber with walls that have run like wax, Greenhouse with plant-animal hybrids, Room furnished with things that were people once, Cells to hold prisoners while they transform

Holy Ground

The ruin is sacred to the enclaves that surround it. Perhaps it was the site of some heroic deliverance from a terrible scourge, or the place where the enclave's founder was martyred, or the source of the group's present religion. Whatever the specifics, they do not appreciate outsiders interfering with the ruin, albeit those that successfully navigate its perils might be credited with divine favor or special spiritual gifts. The enclaves might post small bands of hermits near the ruin, or quarrel with each other over its control, or leave it as a tense neutral ground prone to infestation by bandits and worse as no community will tolerate the warriors of the others staking claim to it.

Enemies	Renegade prophet, Usurper seeking legitimacy, Aspiring religious warlord, Savage expurgator of infidels
Friends	Reformer seeking evidence of his rightness, Innocent seeking sanctuary from tormentors, Local elite wanting relics for legitimacy, Ruin guardian in need of aid
Things	Sacred relics, Holy texts that prove the modern religion is corrupt, Tokens of rightful rule, Misunderstood "holy relic" that's actually Old Terran tech
Complications	The neighbors war over control of the ruins, The cruel inhabitants of the ruins are revered as holy figures, The ruins are held by violent sectarians, The ruins are holy to different faiths
Places	Shattered chapel, Ill-kept cemetery, Walls carved with religious symbols, Scrap-built shrine

Mad Scientist

The ruins are occupied by a mad scientist. It's possible the abundance of scrap has drawn the sage's attention, or the convenient supply of experimental subjects, or some still-functioning Old Terran laboratory or technical equipment. The scientist is invariably set on some wild-eyed project unlikely to ever come to fruition, but their half-successful attempts usually involve gruesome abominations or the lethal discharge of toxic substances or ravenous energies. Such adepts often have a coterie of lesser sages in attendance upon them, serving slavishly in exchange for crumbs of wisdom and tutelage in the dark arts of Old Terran maltech and forbidden science.

Enemies	Podborn maltech scientist, Demented exiled scrap-sage, Scavenger obsessed with the ruins, Well-meaning maniac
Friends	Renegade servitor, Frightened local scrapsmith, Relative of experiment victim, Scientist's grieving mentor
Things	Perfectly functional Old Terran tech, Sheaves of valuable blueprints, Stocks of spare parts, Inexplicable but sinister maltech device
Complications	The scientist is treated like a cult high priest, The scientist imagines he's doing the world a favor, The scientist only recently became deranged, The scientist is the only one who knows some vital secret
Places	Lab full of crackling devices, Abattoir for unsuccessful experiments, Newly-built high-tech structure, Workshop full of half-constructed devices

Plague

The ruins are infested with a terrible sickness, an amalgam of biowarfare organisms and Highshine nanites produced by the madness of the Crazed. The plagues produced in this way are never neat, cleanly fatal illnesses- they change the subjects in terrible ways and often create dangerous mental aberrations in the victims. Some weave the victims into unified minds bent on infection and enforced communion, while others drive their luckless hosts into frantic, mindless violence against all not infected as they are. The symptoms and dementia produced by such plagues usually limits their potential reach, as hosts die before they can spread it far beyond the ruins- but not every strain is so blatant in its effects.

Enemies	Priest of the Crazed seeking infectious enlightenment, Titanic plague-wracked mutant, High-functioning plague victim, Schemer who seeks to use the plague as a weapon
Friends	Local healer, Chieftain of oft-raided village, Avenger of a lost loved one, Seeker of a cure for a particular victim
Things	Formula for a vaccine, Crate of cure stims, Tank of cure in aerosol form, Formula for recreating the plague elsewhere
Complications	The plague has a delayed onset, The plague only infects subjects in the ruins, The plague is newly-unleashed and yet unknown to neighbors, The plague seems harmless at first
Places	Pit of altered victims, Quarantine of shrieking patient, Smashed medical laboratory, Mass grave site

Psychic Stronghold

The ruin is a nest of psychics, most likely either cultists of the Crazed or feral psychics who have long since burnt through their sanity... granted that a distinction can be made between the two. Very rarely a cabal of properly-trained and mentally stable psychics will take over a ruin to serve as a refuge from the hostility of the New Earth outside. Some of these bands desire nothing more than to be left in peace, but most nurse a bleak bitterness toward the outside world, and balance a need for discretion with a desire to punish those who would exile them. Both the Crazed and more rational psychics are known for gathering in outsiders who have recently awoken to their powers, and who know they must flee their people or die.

Enemies	Psychic high priest of the Crazed, Cynical psychic warlord-mentor, Raving feral prophet, Zealous psychic supremacist
Friends	Psychic hunter, Foe of the Crazed, Untrained psychic needing help, Escaped slave
Things	Bizarre psitech artifact, Sinister Crazed device, Anti-psychic shielding, Plunder seized from victims
Complications	The psychics are paranoid but not malicious, The psychics are every bit as vicious as people say, The ruin denizens worship them, The psychics seek to subtly control the surrounding enclaves
Places	Austere psychic meditation chamber, Room shattered by a feral psychic's rages, Sickroom with sedatives and neural repair medications, Chamber full of inexplicable psitech objects

Radioactive

The ruins glow blue with the accumulated radioactivity that has crusted its structures. Only the most ferociously resilient creatures can survive in such an environment, and many Old Terran composites and devices have been degraded or destroyed by the constant radioactive bombardment. The most sophisticated Mandate tech is hardened against such damage, however, and can remain when much else has perished. Most such ruins have zones of greater or lesser danger, makeshift paths for those who can't withstand the full force of the radiant doom. Those without geiger counters are unlikely to find them, though the best loot tends to remain in the least-travelled, hottest areas.

Enemies	Radiation-loving mutant beast, Brain-scrambled robot, Ineffably alien new life, Priest of the blue glow
Friends	Indefatigable explorer, Local with map to rad-hidden plunder, Savant with plans to cleanse the ruins, Exhausted maintenance AI
Things	Anti-rad stims, Shielded data core, Rare rad-grown medicinal plant, Keycodes to tune an erratic fusion plant
Complications	The radiation is recent and has trapped the inhabitants inside, The radiation comes from a poorly-tuned power plant that still functions, The radiation has bizarre side-effects, Someone's using the radiation to create monstrous servants
Places	Blue-litten reactor core, Field of misshapen and withered plants, Chamber carpeted with the skeletons of mutated vermin, Ruins covered with dead plant life

Rich Tomb

The treasures of the ancient dead have been interred within the ruins, whether intentionally or as the consequence of an unanticipated entombment. Few modern enclaves are rich enough to bury perfectly good belongings with the dead, but some pre-Scream cemeteries devoted to the Neo-Egyptian Two Lands faith could build entire necropoli for their perfectly-preserved departed. Other "tombs" are simply the consequence of a collapse or the last dwelling-place of a desperate survivalist who died amid his hoarded supplies. Some gain fame as the last hiding hole of some bandit warlord or exiled lord, where his treasures doubtless await those brave enough to cut through the beasts that have since taken up residence.

Enemies	Another ruthless tomb robber, Guardian of the tomb, The not-so-dead original owner, New master of the ruin
Friends	Heir to the dead, Inquisitive explorer, Seeker of some vital relic, Aspiring successor to the dead
Things	The stashed treasure of the dead, Map to the hidden plunder, Key to open the tomb, Codes to disarm the guardians
Complications	The tomb is holy to the locals, The treasure is a myth to lure victims, The original owner's heirs still remain, The inhabitants wait for others to get the treasure in order to rob them of it
Places	Two Lands burial pyramid, Collapsed passage, Labyrinthine tunnels, Squat and ominous funeral structure

Sealed Horror

The ruins were never meant to keep others out. They were intended to keep something in. Something horrible lurks at the heart of the ruin, trapped by the structure or by ancient guardian systems. It might be a monstrous alien captured by the Mandate in long-distant years, or some awful creation of the Crazed trapped by dying Mandate security staff, or some cryosealed arch-psion as demented and vicious as his peers. The prison may have been built intentionally to contain the entity for later study, or it might be an ad-hoc cell fashioned out of desperate necessity by the survivors of the Scream. If the thing is ever released, the surrounding enclaves are certain to be plunged into bloody horror.

Enemies	The thing itself, Madman who imagines he can control the thing, Fool who believes the thing will aid him, Brute who seeks to release the thing to torment the local natives
Friends	Ancient guardian of the prison, Sage who knows the truth, Escapee from a mad expedition, Revived ancient enemy of the thing
Things	Artifact from the thing's homeworld, Tech used to contain the thing, Relics of the lost guardians, Something precious the thing makes as a by-product
Complications	The thing pretends to sweet innocence, The thing has agents in surrounding enclaves, The thing knows a secret desperately needed, The thing actually will keep its bargains with allies
Places	A darkened prison-chamber, High-walled exterior, Deep containment area, Passage with broken defensive turrets

Secret Base

The ruin was once a secret base for Mandate rebels and malcontents. Some of these resisters were pious-minded defenders of freedom against the soft tyranny of the Directorate. Most were ethnic supremacists, ideologues, wildly impractical dreamers poisoned by the very artificiality of Old Terra, and secret death squads quietly bankrolled by the Directorate itself. Such bases were designed to escape light scrutiny and stand up against heavy assault long enough to call in reinforcements or open a secret way out of an encirclement. Many of them became islands of desperation in the chaos of the Scream as the rebels tried to hold on amid the mounting horror unleashed by the Craze. Few of them succeeded.

Enemies	Degenerate chieftain of the inbred remnants, Mad-eyed heritor of the rebels' beliefs, AI zealot for the cause, Cynical warlord who seeks ancient trappings of legitimacy
Friends	Idealistic heir to rebel ideology, Scion who needs a relic from the base, Heir to the rebels' ancient enemies, Blithely reckless historian
Things	Captured Mandate miltech, "Secret weapon" of the rebels, Cache of rebel supplies, Symbol of the rebels' cause
Complications	Neighboring enclave populated by offspring of the rebels, Rebel ideology persists among the locals, Local seeks to rule through reviving the rebel ideology, Local enclaves fight over ancient garbled differences in doctrine
Places	Tattered assembly hall, Library of physical books, Concealed entryway, Punishment cells

Secret Inhabitants

The ruin is stocked with the usual run of mutants, bandits, exiles, and other living detritus of the wastelands, but unknown to the inhabitants, an entirely separate group of denizens dwells within the ruins. Their killing of troublesome interlopers might have given the ruin the reputation of being haunted or cursed, or they might be discreetly harvesting the other occupants for food or loot. These inhabitants might be hidden survivors of the original ruin, or they may be the canny remnants of a former set of inhabitants, ones that discovered the hidden passages and secret tunnels that now house their sinister numbers.

Enemies	Depraved tunnel-dweller chieftain, Paranoid bandit lord, Hidden master manipulator, Arrogant heir of the original dwellers
Friends	Terrified escapee from the ruins, Inquisitive investigator, Baffled bandit-hunter, Troubled local chieftain
Things	Relic guarded by the inhabitants, Possession of a luckless victim, Lost treasure in the ruins, Loot held by someone who fled into the hidden passages
Complications	The secret dwellers are actually benign, The inhabitants know about the secret dwellers but don't dare speak of them,. The inhabitants worship the secret ones as divinities, The secret ones use humans as fronts but are actually monstrous beings
Places	Hidden passage behind a room's walls, Secret cache chamber for bones, Empty room with signs of recent use, Hidden chamber where the unseen are worshiped

Sentient Plants

Highshine infestations usually target animals, as the complexity of their structure offers more opportunities for the nanites to successfully infect a host. Some strains are able to get purchase on the genes of a plant, however, and in very rare cases those infections can spark the first embers of conscious self-awareness. The ruins are inhabited by at least one race of sentient plants, most of which who have very different interests and senses of value than mammalian interlopers might possess. Some of these plants might be amenable to negotiations, but most have only a blind, vegetal lust to grow and to consume. Such beings are as implacable as a locust swarm and voracious as a wildfire, their hungers wedded to a fresh and unholy intellect.

Enemies	Seductive human-plant amalgam, Relentless kudzu creature, Demented plant-worshiper, Scheming scientist overlord
Friends	Hapless farmer, Curious sage, Cooperative plant-being, Wild-eyed prophet warning of doom
Things	Old Terran fertilizer store, Precious plant extract, Experimental herbicide, Highshine neutralizing serum
Complications	The plants appear perfectly ordinary at first glance, The plants all hate each other as competitors, The plants have domesticated carnivore protectors, The plants parasitize humans
Places	A greenhouse turned into a vegetal harem, Field fertilized with human corpses, Overgrown laboratory, Ruin covered in vines and creepers

Taboo Land

The ruin is flatly forbidden to outsiders by a taboo enforced by the surrounding enclaves. Regular patrols of hunters and warriors pass nearby to ensure that none enter, and those who defy this ban risk being pursued by vengeful locals, or ambushed once they emerge from the ruins. The taboo may be the product of religious sentiment, or a ban to ensure that some sleeping evil is not disturbed, or a forbiddance meant to keep the site reserved to the use of the enclave's elite. Such ruins can become refuges for cunning exiles and outcasts clever enough to evade the defenders.

Enemies	Jealous guardian of the ruins, The evil within the walls, Chieftain suspicious of adventurers, Exile who seeks to remain hidden
Friends	Avenger who seeks someone in the ruin, Treasure hunter, Local suspecting dark doings in the ruin, Victim kidnapped and taken to the ruin
Things	Relic meant to be kept secret from outsiders, Proof of the enclave elite plotting evil in the ruins, Holy artifact within a sacred place, Key to a secret entrance to the ruin
Complications	Holy ones dwell within the taboo ruin, Bandits have profaned the ruins, Another enclave objects to the taboo, The ruin inhabitants have forced the taboo on pain of exterminating the locals
Places	Desolate no-man's land around the ruins, Native watchtower overlooking the ruins, Row of skulls mounted on spears outside the ruin entrance, Sinister forbidden shrine within the walls

Underground Site

The great bulk of the ruin is underground, either in natural caves, crudely-grubbed passages, or buried Old Terran corridors. Some such complexes are nothing more than the basements of some gutted ancient structure, while others were delved in the years after the Scream when the wretched survivors sought some deep refuge from the horrors outside. A few underground ruins are the product of subterranean mutants and degenerate human tribes. Their crumbled surface structures are often little more than bait for incautious scavengers and likely prey for the dwellers below. Now and then a formerly-sealed Mandate facility is discovered, its interior perfectly preserved... along with its security bots and panicked cryo-stored personnel.

Enemies	Hideous beast from below, Renegade protective of his refuge, Chieftain of a degenerate tribe, Implacable robotic guardian
Friends	Dismayed scrap miner, Kidnap victim, Aspiring colonist, Treasure hunter with a map
Things	Long-buried treasures, Keycode to the complex's defense system, Possessions of last investigator, Loot taken from night raids
Complications	The site is unstable and prone to collapse, Locals need the site as a refuge against impending doom, The site was a place of holy pilgrimage for a local faith, The site denizens plan to use the ruins as a fortress for future raids
Places	Dank earthen burrow, Passage with cracking ceiling, Chamber with water-slick walls, Half-collapsed room

Unstable Construction

The ruin is falling apart, possibly while the PCs are in it. Even Old Terran construction can give way under nanite contamination, eroding materials, the aftermath of recent explosions or Black Dust clouds. More recent buildings are even more fragile, the product of scrap-built necessity and limited architectural knowledge. Inhabiting such structures can occasionally be only moderately less dangerous than sleeping in the open air. Some ruins are unstable due to power surges through delicate bracing elements or mutant vermin gnawing at the supports. Use of grenades, area-effect mutations, gunnery weapons, and outdoor voices in such places can produce rapid and fatal ruin.

Enemies	Exile seeking a sanctuary others won't dare enter, The beast that is gnawing on the ruin, Reckless scavenger pillaging the supports, Demented denizen convinced that the PCs are to blame for the decay
Friends	Determined restorationist, Inquisitive archaeologist, Keeper of the ruins, Former resident
Things	Support vital to the whole structure, Precious architectural element, Advanced maintenance bot, Loot cache in a terribly unstable area
Complications	The collapse could destroy a nearby enclave, Two enclaves are fighting over the ruins and causing its decay, The collapse is triggered in explosive and unpredictable spurts, The ruins serve a vital function to a nearby community
Places	Room with half-vanished floor, Wall that collapses at a touch, Chamber tilted at an angle, Floor that gives way over a deeper chamber

Unstable Power Core

The ruin is powered by an Old Terran power core, usually some variant of the standard fusion plant. While such facilities were designed to be completely safe in operation, the surge of malevolent reprogramming unleashed by the Crazed transformed most of these cores into atomic weaponry. Most detonated soon after the change, erasing whole cities from the New Earth. This one failed to explode, either due to incomplete subversion or the successful interference of one of the Maestro AIs. This does not mean the core is safe, however; even if it is not ready to explode this moment, the surges and radioactivity that bleed from it can wreak havoc on the ruin. Some denizens endure the side-effects simply for the sake of a reliable source of power.

Enemies	Mutated guardian of the core, Robot protective of its power supply, Raider chieftain who claims the juice, Degenerate worshipers of the glow
Friends	Desperate repair tech, Fearless salvager, Prophet of impending atomic doom, Mutant hunter
Things	A replacement core, Miniaturized generator, Ancient maintenance tools, Cache of power tech blueprints
Complications	The core will explode if not deactivated, The locals are drawing too much power and destabilizing the core, Rival enclaves fight to access the power, The power fuels a warlord's ambitions
Places	Crackling core chamber, Radiation-scorched hall, Room full of electrified supports, Passage with sporadically-electrified floor

The GM has just sat down to brew up Newton, an enclave in the Bonelands region provided as an example later in this book. He has no special role in mind for Newton, so he's inclined to simply throw the dice and see what sort of settlement is crouched there on the shores of the cold Atlantic.

The first step is to find out how many able adults are to be found in Newton. The roll indicates that 700 such people can be found there- a sizeable community, when you take into account the 1,400 children too young to fight and the 350 too old or crippled to perform heavy labor.

Next, the community's government type is rolled- and comes up as "Monarchic". Newton is ruled by an autocrat from a particular family, and the next autocrat is likely to come from the same clan. The GM will want to flesh out the details on this later, but he'll do that after he finishes dicing the enclave's basic traits.

The reason Newton was settled in the first place turns out to be that it was a Mandate-era prison complex full of rebels and malcontents who were due for eventual transportation to the frontier worlds. The GM thinks it over and decides that the leader of the biggest rebel gang inside the prison became the first ruler of Newton, and his heirs have managed to hold on to the role. This august office is that of "the Boss", and those families whose ancestors were members of the original gang have higher status than the common folk. The most wretched are the "screws" descended from the surviving prison staff and security, who exist as scarcely better than serfs to the rest of the community.

With that established, he checks the tech level- and an 82 on the dice means that Newton has maintained TL2 tech. The prison power plant must still be functioning and providing electricity to the community, and they're capable of forging basic firearms out of scrap and salvage.

Now for the real flavoring of the enclave, the assignment of tags. The dice come up with an interesting pair- "Luddites" and "Functioning Industry". At first glance, this looks a little contradictory, but the GM takes a moment to think of the ways that this pairing might make sense, given the TL2 tech available in Newton.

It doesn't take long to realize that Newton is indeed a Luddite town... when it comes to anyone else possessing high tech. The prison workshops and power plant allow Newton to manufacture TL2 equipment at a volume far greater than that of their neighbors, and they mean to keep that advantage. They strike to destroy competing workshops and industries and seek to make sure that any tech in the Bonelands is either theirs or so much scrap.

They justify this goal by their hallowed legends of suffering and unjust imprisonment at the hands of a tyrannical government. They will allow nothing to compromise their present freedom, and that means making sure that "the world" is never again in a position to threaten the people of Newton.

The GM also spends a little while thinking about Newton's attitude toward outsiders. Their anti-tech attitude toward outsiders with relics is likely to make it an unfriendly place for PC adventurers and their toys, but the GM decides that if the PCs conceal their advanced hardware and don't make an issue out of the local ideology, they'll be able to visit the place in relative peace. The Newtoners certainly aren't going to be trading them any firearms or other TL2 tech unless the PCs impress the Boss and his lieutenants, however.

If the GM was just looking to sketch out an enclave, this would be all that he needed to do. But since he has some spare time and would enjoy fleshing out Newton a little more, he goes ahead and establishes a few important elements of the settlement. In particular, he'll create an Enemy, a Friend, a Thing, a Complication, and a Place characteristic of Newton. That way, if he needs to brew up a fast adventure in the place, he can simply slot those elements into the theme templates provided in the Adventure Creation chapter and have something ready in a hurry.

For an Enemy, he decides to be lazy and rolls 1d4 twice to pick a random enemy archetype from the Luddite and Functioning Industry lists. He draws "Priest teaching a hate of tech", and "Megalomaniac chief". He mixes the two together to create Father Wheelwright, the flinty-eyed chief priest of the community and next in line for the Bossdom. Wheelwright is convinced the world is just waiting for its chance to burn out Newton, and outsiders like the PCs are its scouts and catspaws.

The Friend is a mix of "Keeper of secret industrial lore" and "Secret tech sympathizer". She's Foreman Maureen Hanrahan, the best gunsmith in the settlement, and one quietly opposed to the enclave's Luddite policy. She's seen too many helpless villages wiped out by bandits and thinks they deserve to have guns as well.

The Thing is blended from "Stash of acceptable gunpowder weaponry" and "Template for new products". It's a cache of new, experimental combat rifles created by Maureen Hanrahan as part of a test program.

The Complication comes from "The locals are highly persuasive to their neighbors" and "The industry is breaking down". Newton is stepping up its raids on gun-users in the surrounding area, and the nearby villages are thoroughly cowed by them. The Luddites are doing this because their workshop and power plant are breaking down, and they're desperate to find replacement parts and keep down the locals before anyone realizes their weakness.

Finally, the characteristic Place is a mix of "Field worked by simple hand tools" and "Grimy salvage pit full of raw inputs". For a dramatic location in Newton, the GM picks a scrapyard full of raw salvage being painstakingly hammered and torn apart by "screw" serfs under a watchful overseer's eye.

With that settled, Newton is now ready for use, and can be used to flesh out an adventure template with speed and ease.

Adventure Creation

Once you have your initial region sketched out, it's time to think about the practical details of your game session. What exactly do you *do* in *Other Dust*? This chapter will provide basic themes and activities for play, guidelines for creating adventures, and tips on handling common issues that arise during a sandbox game.

Much of the following chapter assumes that you're creating a particular adventure and developing a specific event or situation for the PCs to influence. If you run your sandbox long enough, you'll eventually have little need for specific preparation. You'll have such familiarity and ease with your game world that you'll have internalized all the information you need to handle PC interaction with your creation. When dealing with a fresh world, however, you're going to be much more comfortable if you have specific notes and details ready.

It should also be understood that the adventures you create with the tools in this chapter should not be the only thing that your players can do. If the players aren't ultimately deciding the type of goals and activities their PCs undertake, you're not running a sandbox campaign. There's nothing wrong with running a different style of campaign but if you tell the players you're running a sandbox game and then expect them to address the exact adventures you've brewed up, there's going to be some bait-and-switch irritation on their part.

The Adventure

The basic unit of play at the table is the *adventure*. Adventures start when the PCs venture into the wasteland, insert themselves into a volatile local political situation, become threatened by hostile circumstance, or are otherwise placed in a situation of danger or risk. Adventures end when the PCs return to relative safety to recuperate, trade, resupply, and enjoy the fruits of their recent labors..

Plenty of interesting things happen between adventures. PCs can form relationships, build organizations or holdings, gather information, create new gear, or just enjoy a slice of radioactive life in the New Earth. These can all be good fun, but they're rarely enough to carry a session unaided. Most players are going to expect to have the opportunity for more excitement and the chance to take risks and gain rewards.

When you create an adventure, you're creating some kind of situation or area that presents both danger and potential profit. Some adventures might be events, situations that the PCs can be dropped into or able to influence. Other adventures might revolve around places, ancient ruins or modern holdings that contain both peril and the prospect of rich rewards. However you choose to arrange them, you need to be certain that your adventure has components of both danger and profit.

Danger doesn't necessarily need to be a simple threat of physical injury. Danger can be anything that threatens what the PCs hold dear- not just their lives, but also their friends, their status within the community, the survival of a friendly enclave, or their prized possessions. Failure to negotiate the event or location successfully is likely to result in damage or loss of the threatened target, and the fear of this outcome helps keep players focused on the situation.

Profit also doesn't need to be expressed in simple stocks of rations or shiny new equipment. It might be the favor of a community leader, the formation of a strong alliance, ancient Mandate blueprints for a powerful device, or the cooperation of a strong base of operations. There may be some situations in which there is no tangible profit to be had, particularly when the PCs are struggling to avert some grim consequence from an earlier decision. In those situations, the PCs are just trying to prevent things from getting worse. Even in that case, however, the PCs can expect to earn experience points which will advance them toward greater personal prowess.

Finally, when building an adventure, you always need to keep in mind the chance that the players won't want to undertake it. Maybe they'll find the prospect unappealing, or have more important priorities, or be scared off by initial setbacks. This risk can be mitigated by making sure that at the end of every session you ask the players what they intend to do next. This tip-off will usually allow you to create adventures that are exactly what the group is looking for- but even then, there will be times when the PCs decide that this particular situation is not one they want to handle.

Sometimes, they may not have much choice about events. If the adventure is a consequence of one of their prior decisions or a crisis that will transpire whether or not the PCs intervene, then they need to either deal with the situation or accept the consequences. If the PCs bail on the crisis, then you need to be ready with the likely events to ensue. Choosing to retreat and let bad things happen is a perfectly valid choice for PCs to make, and can plant the seeds of entertaining vengeance for a later date.

Other times, an adventure will "stay fresh" indefinitely. An ancient ruin is likely going to remain the way it is for as long as a campaign needs to care about it. You can always inject change into the place and players won't be shocked and appalled if they come back to it a month later and new residents have moved in.

It's not a crisis when players don't bite on an adventure. With the emergency back-up content you created when you first built your region, you should always have at least one place of interest to feed the PCs when you can't easily improvise something germane to their ambitions. As time goes on, you'll develop a backlog of content you can pull out at a moment's notice, reviving some old thread of events or long-delayed consequence to give a group something to keep them busy for a session while you think about their new course of ambitions. A sandbox GM can use every part of his or her preparation eventually- just change the names and reskin the details, and that mutant lair turns into a militant raider camp or a fortified cult monastery.

Many of the themes given in the following pages refer to "the group". For this, simply insert whatever community, enclave, or organization might be of most immediate interest to the PCs, with the assumption that they'll want to keep it healthy and whole.

In the post-apocalyptic world, things fall apart. Every form of culture, civilization, and human development is constantly threatened by the entropy of the surrounding world. Everything that humanity builds is always being relentlessly ground down by the dangers and privations of the New Earth. Whatever is created must be upheld or it will soon be destroyed.

The Collapse theme emphasizes the fragility of human accomplishment in the New Earth, and the constant need to defend and maintain these structures in the face of a hostile world. When you build an adventure with a Collapse theme, pick some organization, group, or structure that the players care about and threaten it with some grim peril. Raiders, radioactive winds, internal feuding, savage mutants, seething ambitions- something in the world threatens its continuing survival, and it's up to the PCs to save it.

Tangible rewards for Collapse-based adventures can sometimes be scanty. Often, it is the simple survival of the target that is the greatest reward offered. Still, grateful locals can be quite generous in rewarding their saviors, and the threat the PCs have to destroy might well have some valuables of its own. Even if wealth is not to be had, the PCs can win the gratitude of those they rescue and fame as powerful protectors of their friends.

When determining the default outcome for these adventures in case the PCs fail or neglect to take up the cause, you shouldn't feel obligated to destroy the target outright. Maybe NPCs step in to sacrifice themselves for the cause, or the threat wasn't sufficient to entirely efface the target. Even if you deal gently with the subject, you should make it clear that a price was paid- that something was lost, damaged, or distorted by the event and that further pressure might well end it entirely.

Tips for a Collapse

Be plausible about what you threaten. It's best if you can draw the threat from a direct consequence of something the PCs have done or left undone in their prior adventures. Players are much more likely to find a threat palatable if they see it as a logical consequence of their own actions.

Don't keep threatening the same thing. Players might eventually decide that it's more trouble than it's worth.

Don't chain the group to their home base. If the PCs are leaders of an enclave, don't constantly threaten their home. If they feel like they have to constantly stand guard over the place, it's apt to seem more like a shackle than a stronghold.

1d12	Template
1	An Enemy has framed a Friend for sabotage within a group, and proof must be found to save them.
2	Raiders threaten a group, greedy for a Thing. An Enemy may well be privately conspiring to aid them.
3	A Place is claimed by two different groups, and the feuding threatens to become bloody. A Friend knows where to get proof of rightful ownership, but a Complication is hindering its retrieval.
4	A group's leader is failing, and an Enemy seeks to replace them, using a Complication to aid his case.
5	A Thing has been lost or destroyed, and an Enemy blames a Friend for it.
6	A Friend has fallen prey to a Complication, but the group desperately needs their services.
7	A Place is threatening to collapse unless it can be physically or socially repaired, and an Enemy is trying to capitalize on the decay.
8	A Friend is bent on a foolish idea that threatens the group, and an Enemy is trying to make sure they carry it out, even at its inevitable cost.
9	A Complication is far worse than anyone expected, and threatens to overthrow a group.
10	An Enemy has goaded a Complication into a crisis as a weapon to take out a Friend, regardless of the collateral damage.
11	A Thing proves suddenly vital to the group's ongoing survival, and an outside Enemy wants to destroy or steal it.
12	A zealous reforming Friend threatens to destroy the entire group in their desire to correct some structural injustice. Their rebellion is an opening that is being exploited by an outside Enemy.

PRIVATION

In the world that exists after the apocalypse, want is a constant companion. Want of food, of medicine, of tools, of safety, even of simple hope. Nothing is simple, nothing is easy, and nothing is conveniently to hand. Even venturing into a blasted city to scavenge for scraps of metal and glass invites hideous death from radiation, disease, savages, or beasts. All the tools and conveniences their ancestors took for granted in their daily lives are completely unavailable.

Fear of want is a powerful motivation for all the denizens of a post-apocalyptic future. Some enclaves have no compunction about murdering strangers for the food and goods they carry, and even good men and women can be driven to terrible acts in order to obtain the supplies they need for themselves and their families. Adventures based around Privation revolve around this fundamental lack- the players or an outside group need something desperately, and they're willing to do what they must to get it.

Dangers in a Privation adventure usually revolve around the difficulty of acquiring the necessary goods, or the threat posed by rivals for their possession. Either the resources are so remote and inaccessible that the PCs must face grave danger to reach them, or else some other group has a vested need to beat them to the cache.

Rewards often take the form of the goods themselves. The process of finding and acquiring even bulk commodities usually gives the opportunity to pick up other salvage along the way. Aside from material rewards, saving a settlement from catastrophe gives PCs credit in the only coin that matters in the wastelands- a reputation for being able to preserve those who place trust in them.

TIPS FOR PRIVATION

Be ready for unexpected solutions. If the PCs need a large supply of a particular resource, don't assume that they'll immediately chase off after the cache you show them. They might think of a completely different source for their vital necessity. Such ingenuity and involvement with your world is to be encouraged and not railroaded away.

People need more than food and water. Basic staples are always a plausible choice for privation needs, but don't let yourself be chained to them. Privation can rear its head in any good or commodity, and a community in desperate need of salt to cure the spring neosalmon run needs something that the PCs probably aren't already equipped to provide to them.

Be ready for players to skim the take. Don't assume the PCs will actually give *all* the goods to the needy. They're PCs, after all.

1d12	TEMPLATE
1	A plague is racking a group, and medical supplies are exhausted. An Enemy seeks glory by bringing them back first.
2	The water supply has become contaminated. Tech must be found to purify it.
3	A Friend is crippled in a work accident, and needs advanced pretech medicine. An Enemy tries to convince the community to let the "useless eater" starve.
4	A neighboring group's crops have failed. They will either have aid from the PCs' friends or they'll take it at spearpoint.
5	Game has been overhunted from the nearby area. A neighboring group blames the PCs' friends and mean to see them dead or driven away.
6	A Friend is accused of cannibalism in a time of great hunger, though they swear innocence. An Enemy demands their death, but can be persuaded to believe their innocence with suitable inducement.
7	Choking clouds of nanites sweep over the area, tainting open water and foodstuffs and driving the local beasts mad with pain. The PCs are besieged by enraged predators in a Place.
8	The PCs are accused by an Enemy of bringing in sickness to the group, and a Complication greatly weakens the PCs' case in the eyes of the locals. A Friend stands up for them, but they need to find a cure quickly or they both will suffer.
9	The group's only scrapsmith capable of repairing vital gear is kidnapped by raiders as a slave.
10	A Crazed cultist offers the group aid in a time of terrible need. A Friend speaks against it, but an Enemy argues that there is no alternative.
11	The group's food stocks are destroyed by mutated vermin, who lair in a Place. They must be destroyed and new stocks found quickly before starvation strikes.
12	Raiders have seized a vital source of food or clean water, and demand cruel tribute from a group in return for access.

The men and women of a post-apocalyptic world are no more naturally savage than any other, but the particular circumstances of the world encourage their most bloodthirsty impulses. Life is a struggle for survival, and those willing to kill others for their goods can have a short-term advantage over those who refuse to resort to violence. In the long run those who are willing to work together and act cooperatively may well have the advantage over savages- but in the long run, most people are eaten by mutants. The slow inclination toward order and cooperation is halting in its advance, while stabbing things repeatedly offers immediate gratification.

There's more to savagery than cheap human life and easy killing, however. Savagery also shows in the violent rejection of outsiders. Racial or ethnic hatred, treatment of other tribes or enclaves as nonhumans, and bigoted loathing of heretics or infidels are all symptoms of an essentially savage, tribal spirit that treats the wider world as a thing to be alternately feared and plundered. The temptation to do this rises not only from human nature but also from very real concerns of support and safety, the fear that strangers offer only death and banditry.

An adventure themed by Savagery is one that revolves around violence, blind rejection, hostility, and primal passion. It's about people and other entities that resolve their desires with brute force and murder. The dangers inherent in it come from that easy recourse to violence, from the need to deal with men and women who really would sooner spear the PCs than talk to them.

The rewards from dealing with savages are often of the less tangible varieties. Expunging them makes the area safer for everyone and strengthens the forces of law and constructive order. Of course, savages tend to accumulate a lot of possessions from their victims, too, and these rightly go to their conquerors.

TIPS FOR SAVAGERY

It's not always about bloodshed. Particularly at low levels, don't force the PCs into situations where combat is inevitable. Novice PCs can't handle that kind of punishment.

Give a reason for it. Bandits and similar reavers might kill and plunder simply because they can, but it's usually more interesting if you supply a more nuanced reason for the viciousness. This need not mean that the culprits are justified, of course, but quick violence is a *temptation*, not a duty. People do it because it gets them something.

Label your dangers. If the PCs take reasonable care to scout a threat, let them notice when a particular enemy is too much for them. Don't force them to guess about which foes are in their league.

1d12	TEMPLATE
1	An ethnic or cultural group is convinced of their destined rule over their neighbors, and is striking out with bloody-handed zeal.
2	A local prophet is teaching a variant of the majority religion that requires the violent conversion of unbelievers- and a Friend has been captured by them.
3	A raider clan is rolling in, taking advantage of a Complication to strike while the group is weak.
4	A Friend belongs to a subgroup in the community that is being turned into a convenient scapegoat by an ambitious Enemy.
5	A nanite eruption or delayed nuclear burst in the region has triggered a wave of hideously mutated wildlife that threatens the survival of the group.
6	A former ally to the group betrays that trust, eager to possess a Thing. An Enemy may be willing to help them in exchange for the removal of a troublesome Friend.
7	An aspiring local warlord is drawing raiders to his or her cause, and it's only a matter of time before a target is chosen for the horde.
8	A Friend is a noted peacemaker in the community, but an Enemy finds profit in an ongoing conflict, and would just as soon silence the diplomat permanently.
9	A charismatic war leader is preaching an attack on neighboring communities to plunder their resources, and the locals are beginning to pay attention to him or her. The neighbors are preparing a preemptive strike in response.
10	A Complication has resulted in a breakdown of internal order in the group, leaving an Enemy free to act without organized resistance to their will.
11	A precious Thing has been taken by simple murder, the culprit fleeing into the wilderness.
12	An oppressed group or community has recently discovered a major cache of military tech and is taking a genocidal vengeance on those they consider to be their oppressors- one of whom is a Friend.

With production of new goods alternating between "difficult" and "impossible", scavenging becomes the most important source for any kind of remotely sophisticated tool or weapon. Even something as simple as a modern claw hammer can't be manufactured without smelting steel. Knowledge of sophisticated manufacturing techniques are of limited use without the necessary tools, and there aren't many situations where both the means and the know-how are available in a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

Instead, the bones of the dead are picked for their wealth. Pipes are pounded flat for metal plates, glass is knapped into blades for skinning small animals, and even the smallest trinket or scrap is made useful to someone. Just as the ancients preferred to tear down the glorious buildings of antiquity for their stones, so do men and women after the apocalypse break open the treasures of their ancestors to ease their own survival.

Scavenging adventures are usually site-based, revolving around the exploration of a dangerous ruin or the delving of an ancient building. They "keep" remarkably well, since many ruins can be easily planted wherever you might need them and their condition is independent of political or relationship changes.

Constructing good Scavenging adventures can be a little more demanding than it is for some other themes. Site-based adventures usually require a more detailed map and a careful eye for interesting places and discoveries. The Resources chapter of the book provides some tools for building interesting ruins, and modern factory, office, or street plans can be repurposed for site maps.

Dangers in a Scavenging game usually come either from hostile locals in the ruins or the nature of the location itself- radioactivity, nanite toxicity, unstable construction, and dangerous salvage can all conspire to test the PCs. The rewards are relatively straightforward and come in the form of Old Terran devices, usable spare parts, and the long-forgotten wisdom of the ancient dead.

Tips for Scavenging

Know if the PCs can actually use the plunder. A rich stash of TL5 spare parts might be wonderfully valuable, but if none of the PCs is able to make pretech gear, it's much less useful. Perhaps they can find some pretech savant to take it off their hands, but you should be aware of this need before you place the trove.

The locals will use what they have. If there are cases full of rebel handguns in the ruins, then the bandits who live there are going to be using them. Intelligent inhabitants will use their possessions to best effect, including expending stims and drugs.

Encumbrance matters. Keep an eye on the number of items the PCs end up carrying with them. Often, the limiting factor on plundering a ruin is the strength of the PCs' pack animals.

1d12	Template
1	An Enemy within the ruins is plotting to raid a nearby community, and scouts are already probing the local defenses.
2	Locals have discovered hints of a precious trove in a Place within the ruin, and a Friend wants to retrieve it.
3	One Enemy within the ruins wants to lure outsiders as a tool against another Enemy.
4	A Friend has left companions or plunder in the ruin after an abortive salvage attempt, and needs help for retrieval.
5	A Friend is determined to reclaim the ruin for their own needs, and is recruiting help to do so.
6	The PCs have found a Thing which requires a part or activation codes that can only be obtained in the ruin.
7	The ruin has been sealed or lost for ages, but the PCs find a Thing that can open it.
8	An Enemy has laid claim to the ruins. If not driven out, he will soon transform it into a bandit fortress preying on the surrounding countryside.
9	Ancient notes suggest that a prized Thing was hidden in a Place in the ruins. Has an Enemy in the ruins already found it?
10	A Complication within the ruin has provoked some of the inhabitants to attack nearby communities.
11	Friends are using the seemingly-empty ruin as a storehouse for a precious Thing, but Enemies have suddenly moved into the site.
12	A local group was originally based at the ruin, but was driven out by a Complication or Enemies. They yearn to return to their ancestral home.

Collapse, privation, savagery, and scavenging define the borders of the human experience in a post-apocalyptic world, but at its heart is a burning core of defiance. Despite all the anguish and suffering, all the hunger, disease, and danger, these men and women have refused to submit. When their entire world collapsed around them, they refused to go quietly into the long night. When radioactive fire burnt the world to ashes, these people remained standing amid the dust.

These people defy their circumstances, working to build something better from the ruins that spread around them. Even the humblest farming village dreams of a better day. Proof of their past glory surrounds them, undeniable evidence of what their ancestors had and what their children might have once more. Every day of survival in the New Earth is a rebellion against entropy- and sometimes entropy loses.

Adventures themed around Defiance are about things getting better. There's a chance for a genuine improvement in the situation- a new alliance, a new resource supply, a recovery of lost lore, a healing of some old schism, or some other turn of events that is unambiguously positive. The dangers of the adventure come from those hostile forces who would suffer at such an improvement for others, or from the natural hostility and perils of the New Earth. The rewards come in the form of the improvement itself, often represented as fresh points of resources for organizations using the rules given in the Groups and Enclaves chapter.

Defiance-themed adventures are a good change of pace from the grim and gritty flavor of most post-apocalyptic events. Most players find plenty of enjoyment in staving off catastrophes and smiting terrible foes, but many need a dose of something more uplifting now and then. Without the contrast of hope and progress a campaign can end up feeling more like the travelogue of a radioactive death march than a stirring tale of adventure.

TIPS FOR DEFIANCE

Let the PCs push their causes. If a PC cares deeply about a particular cause or enclave, let the adventure advance that aim. The PCs are going to be much more engaged with a Defiance adventure if they're actually fighting for something they care about.

Let victory matter. If the PCs succeed in their aim, don't just announce victory and then wave away the consequences. Let their success bleed into future sessions, even if it's just a mention of how well things are going for their friends.

Make failure possible but not insurmountable. It's not really a challenge if there's no chance the PCs will fail in their ambitions, but even the worst failure shouldn't extinguish all hope for a better future. Let them pick up the pieces if they're nimble enough.

1D12	TEMPLATE
1	A Friend has brokered a peace between two long-term enemies, and a gifted Thing is the token of it. An Enemy wants the Thing and is careless of the damage its theft would do.
2	A rich ruin has just been discovered, one with minimal dangers. The community might be greatly enriched by it, but a Complication threatens to drive the group apart into greedy factions.
3	A great teacher is instructing pupils nearby in lost arts. A local Enemy fears that such knowledge will enrich their foes.
4	Several bands of tribal wanderers have come together to form a new community in a ruin. An Enemy among them seeks to rule the "filthy strangers" of the other tribes, and threatens to split them into civil war.
5	A musician or poet is inspiring the locals to hope and struggle, but a cruel Enemy thinks they'd do better singing other praises.
6	A local warlord or raider chieftain's rule is being threatened by a Friend, but an Enemy conspires against them.
7	A Friend has discovered a solution to a serious local Complication, but they need a long-lost Thing to carry it off.
8	A religious reformer is redeeming a local nest of villainy with their preaching of a better way, but a powerful Enemy seeks to rid the enclave of the gadfly.
9	Two warring groups are quietly seeking to end hostilities, but a powerful Enemy faction among one or both groups profits by the slaughter, and causes a Complication to prevent any vexatious diplomacy.
10	An Old Terran manufactory has been discovered in a fragile state. An Enemy seeks control of it for his own purposes- and is willing to destroy it rather than see it in other hands. A Friend appeals for aid on behalf of their home enclave.
11	A former Enemy of the PCs is making overtures of peace- and a Friend desperately needs their help. Is it a sincere wish for peace, or mere cloaked treachery?
12	A Friend has recently risen to prominence in an otherwise hostile group. If supported, they can bring their enclave around to warmer relations, but powerful Enemy factions seek to overthrow them.

Filling In the Details

Now that you have a theme and a template, you need to fill in the specifics. Which details you need to develop will depend on the kind of adventure you're running and the sort of situations you're most likely to need to adjudicate. For a start, you can go down this checklist to make sure you've got everything in order.

First, fill in the blanks in the template. If you've used the region creation process, your sites of interest are already going to have plenty of Friends, Enemies, Complications, Places, and Things already listed. Slot them into the template and you've got the outline of your adventure. Otherwise, just fill in the blanks with whatever characters and features seem appropriate based on the theme and your general needs.

Next, decide the default outcome of the situation, assuming the PCs don't get involved or fail to resolve the problem. For a Salvage-themed adventure, this may be nothing at all- the site just keeps sitting there, unchanging. Other types of adventures will have more noticeable consequences. Write this down for later reference as needed.

Once you have that, fill out the details of the NPCs involved in the adventure. This includes both major antagonists and plot characters as well as mutant monsters and rank-and-file human foes. Some adventures will involve a greater likelihood of combat than others, and you may need combat stats for many of the NPCs involved. You can use the Bestiary chapter of the book to pull the necessary stats for men and mutants.

Then decide what maps and diagrams you're going to need for the adventure. For some adventures, you'll need few or no maps- an adventure revolving around social relationships in an enclave or political intrigue in a noble court isn't going to rely too heavily on the contents of storerooms and the location of the village granary. You may need a rough sketch of the political relationships involved, however, or a diagram of who wants what in the village scheming. If you're running an adventure that has a heavy component of exploration or combat, you're going to need maps of those areas. If you don't have existing maps already, you can pull modern floor plans and village maps off the net and just "age" them appropriately. If you're running an exploration-based adventure, you need to make sure the sites are actually interesting to explore, and the Resources chapter provides some tools for that end.

Next, determine the rewards for the adventure, both those to be had by resolving the problem and those lying about where PCs might find them. This can be tricky, and is discussed more thoroughly later in this section.

Then sit back and put yourself in your players' shoes. Try to imagine the kinds of questions they're going to ask about the situation and anticipate some of the actions they're likely to take. Think about their motivations, and how those goals are going to touch on the events of the adventure. Consider their outside resources- have they got allies or outside help that could seriously change the course of the adventure? Don't try to forestall this interference or try to close "loopholes" in the adventure that might cut things short. Just think about them and be ready to deal with it if the PCs take that course. You're giving the players a situation, and how they choose to deal with it is up to them. It's not your responsibility to make sure they follow a particular path or make certain choices- you're just there to eat popcorn and watch the heroes try to avoid horrific failure.

Lastly, check to make sure you have some emergency backup content if the players decide to turn around and run away from your adventure. If you've followed the region creation guidelines you should have a ruin or two already prepared for exploration. Such static exploration sites work perfectly for filler content, as they keep well and require little explanation for their appearance in a particular chunk of wasteland.

Congratulations- you now have a complete adventure. You're now equipped to keep yourself and your players amused during the next session. If for some reason the players end up dodging your adventure, just trigger the consequences and then reskin the adventure details for later use. You can scrub the names off, change some particulars, and recycle it for a later session or use it as additional emergency backup material. As a sandbox GM, nothing you do needs to be wasted. It's a big world out there, and the more pre-made material you have at your fingertips, the easier it is to dish up something appropriate to the characters' perambulations.

Rewards

Whenever you build an adventure, you need to consider the profit to be had from resolving it. Some deeds of daring might have more concrete rewards than others, but every PC at least gains the benefit of their experience after undergoing some great challenge. Rewards are split up into four categories- experience points, salvage, resources and favors.

Experience Points

Simply surviving an adventure is worth something to a PC. If a character at least tries to resolve an adventure and carries their efforts through a session, they should receive a standard reward of experience points. Whether or not their efforts were successful, if they tried to deal with the situation and are still alive by the end of the session, they get the experience points. Failure can be every bit as educational as success. The knowledge that their characters are getting a little more capable and knowledgeable even from their less successful ventures can ease the sting that failure holds for many players.

This standard reward should be given whenever the players have spent the session trying to accomplish something meaningful. Even if they've decided to bail on your prepared adventure and hare off in a completely different direction, if they're trying to accomplish something worthy of their capabilities, then give them the standard award. The experience points are meant to reward a motivated group that tries to do something in the world, and a plan the players come up with is just as good for that as an adventure you've prepared.

When awarding the experience points, use the level of the most experienced PC in the group to ensure that any lower-level PCs catch up at a suitably brisk pace. The standard experience award assumes that you'll want your PCs to gain a level every two to four sessions. If you want to set your own pace for the campaign, just determine the amount of experience they need for a given level and divide it by the number of sessions you want to spend at that level. If the group spent the session trying to accomplish something relatively trivial for them, lower their standard award accordingly. Tasks that don't significantly challenge the PCs shouldn't be given the same credit as those feats that truly test their mettle. Keep in mind that PCs shouldn't be penalized for being clever; if they come up with some brilliant idea that trivializes an otherwise serious challenge, they should still get their full share of experience. A vigorous application of low cunning is often necessary if a character is to survive to a ripe old age.

Salvage

Salvage covers spare parts, plundered equipment, caches of portable food, and any other objects of value that might be obtained in the course of the adventure. Salvage comes from three main sources- undisturbed relics of the past, the possessions of dead enemies, and rewards from grateful allies.

The loot tables that follow list appropriate salvage for a particular group or ruin. You can turn to the tables in this section and roll off for it to determine a suitable range of random plunder and detritus to leave lying around the adventure, assuming you don't already

Level	Experience	Sessions
1	1,000	2
2	2,000	2
3	4,000	2
4	5,500	3
5	11,000	3
6	22,000	3
7	44,000	3
8	32,000	4
9	64,000	4
10+	25,000	5

have your own ideas about what is practical. Maybe it's salvage that can be found in the ruins that are to be explored, or it might constitute the reward that is being offered for successful resolution of a group's problem.

By default, all salvage will be in no better than Worn condition, as given in the Systems chapter. Items pulled from ruins might well be in even worse condition, in which case you might choose to roll on the wear table in this section. A few wealthy and disciplined owners might be the sort to keep their gear in Perfect condition, but not many people have sufficient resources and tech expertise to arrange for this.

There will be times when you're preparing adventures or content without a clear idea of when the work will be needed. Without foreknowledge of the difficulty involved, how do you prep the salvage beforehand? It's simple- just key out the adventure as normal, but instead of indicating specific rewards and relic locations, merely note where they should occur. Then roll up a few lists of salvage for different plunder types. When you need to use the content, pick the list that corresponds to the type of loot you're using and just take items off of it as the PCs find the plunder. You can use the same set of plunder lists for multiple adventures, so long as you replace any rolls that the PCs find with fresh results.

The possessions of dead enemies are based on their individual loot types as given in the Bestiary. If you're kitting out a large group, it can be most convenient to just roll once and apply the results to all the members of the group. If you roll exceptionally well and it seems unlikely that everyone in the group is so well-geared, just give the best kit to the leader and give everyone else less impressive gear.

Don't worry too much about "balance" in assigning salvage or generating loot. With the absence of a functioning trade economy in most parts of the New Earth, the PCs can't easily convert plunder into a convenient, portable medium of exchange. Finding a dozen combat rifles is great, but if they can't *use* a dozen combat rifles, the surplus is going to be largely useful as gifts to allies or sources of spare parts. If the dice randomly generate a fabulous treasure,

just let the PCs find it if their actions happen to lead them in that direction. It's quite likely it will provoke an entire adventure of its own revolving around their attempt to actually profit by it.

Resources

Closely related to salvage, resources are a reward used by the system given in the Groups and Enclaves chapter. They cover those goods and intangibles that are important for a group's survival and prosperity, though they may not be exactly the sort of things that adventurers find all that useful. A warehouse full of Old Terran construction beams may be priceless to a tattered shanty community, but relatively useless to the average band of wandering freebooters.

Resources are measured in points, and divided up among Food, Tech, Morale, Influence, and Security. The Groups and Enclaves chapter discusses the exact meaning of each type of resource, but for your purposes, you'll want to usually grant points of resources equal to the level of challenge associated with the adventure. If you're planning a situation worthy of 8th level characters, you'd split up 8 points of resources.

A lost field of wild metawheat might be worth a couple of points of Food, while the presentation of a bandit leader's ceremonial monoblade might grant a point of Morale to the community that receives the proof of the bandit's death. Reinforced Old Terran building materials might improve the Security of a community, while an alliance struck on behalf of a local chieftain would add to the group's local Influence. The contents of a functional TL3 workshop might be worth a boost in Tech points to the cabal that receives the goods.

If you're not using group rules at all in your game, you can omit this stage of determining rewards. Even so, you might jot the details down all the same, just in case your players decide to use the loot from one of their adventures to start their own community or social group.

Favors

As the least tangible of rewards but often the most useful, favors reflect a debt owed to the PCs by a particular NPC or group. Unlike in many settings, being on good terms with the locals is not a minor point to adventurers. In most communities, there is no such thing as the rule of law or the idea of equal treatment of outsiders. Most communities are willing to barter with outsiders and tolerate them as long as they prove useful, but they owe them nothing and will not hesitate to eject the wanderers if the strangers start to prove annoying. Any disputes with a local, of course, are merely proof that the outsiders are becoming annoying.

More than that, most of the impartial mechanisms of society that modern souls rely upon simply don't exist in the wastelands of the New Earth. Only in the most mercantile or most rigidly law-abiding communities can an outsider hope to have their property rights respected beyond the point of their spear. If they want a safe place to cache their excess goods, or hide from enemies, or sometimes even to simply recuperate without fear of being knifed in their sleep, they're going to have to get in good with the locals. This isn't an impossible feat in most enclaves, but it does take work.

Doing so usually relies upon doing favors for the local people- favors that are too dangerous or difficult to be managed by the residents. Once outsiders have proved their strength and usefulness to the community, they can expect a much warmer degree of treatment and a much greater degree of protection under the customs of the enclave.

Favors and debts are taken seriously by all but the most savage and untrustworthy of the New Earth's denizens. A man or woman who refuses to reciprocate the aid given to them isn't just threatening a community's vital bonds of trust, they are suggesting that perhaps they *can't* reciprocate aid. They imply that they are too weak or burdensome to shoulder their share of the group's duties. Refusing to acknowledge a favor owed to an accepted ally of the group is an admission of weakness and untrustworthiness that few would wish to make.

To outsiders and strangers, of course, such concerns are less pressing. An adventuring band that makes a point of aiding a community and identifying with the locals can usually expect the same degree of diligence in repaying the aid that is owed, but such relationships should be tended carefully if true reliability is desired.

Your preparations might be complete, but what about actually running the game? There are a host of potential complications that can arise in play, and some of them are specific to sandbox games. The following pages cover some of the most common potential pitfalls for play at your table and ways to resolve the problems effectively.

Using the Loot Tables

The loot tables that follow are simple tools for giving you a quick idea of what sort of plunder and salvage ought to be found in any particular location, and what kind of equipment ought to be possessed by any random pack of bandits or enclave guardians. The tables are not intended to take the place of your own well-honed judgment, but they provide you with some basic guidelines and tables for when your own inspiration is better spent elsewhere.

Individuals have a Loot Type, expressed as a particular code from P1 to P10. The Loot Type is simply a shorthand for indicating what kind of gear they are most likely to possess. A scruffy wasteland bandit usually has P2 loot, for example, while the warlord of a high-tech enclave might be strutting around in P10 gear.

Ruins, camps, and groups also have a Loot Type from G1 to G21, reflecting the typical salvage to be found in that location. In the case of enclaves and other communities, it indicates the kind of wealth they might have available for trade or rewards to helpful PCs. The full enclave or group almost certainly has a vastly larger amount of wealth at their disposal, but the loot type describes what is easily to hand- or what is easily plundered by interlopers.

Each loot type gives numbers and chances of the presence of Weapons, Energy Weapons, Armor, Random Loot, and other pelf.

After these entries is a number in parenthesis, such as "Weapon (1d10+2)". This simply means that you should turn to the Weapon table and roll 1d10+2 to see what weapon is found. In the case of Random Loot, you would turn to the Random Loot table and roll 1d20, adding any listed bonus. The higher the roll, the rarer and more abundant the plunder.

At any point, you can ignore the tables and simply use your own discretion to pick likely results. If a ruin indicates 3d6 rolls on the Random Loot table, for example, you could roll and find out that there are 8 Common items and 2 Uncommon ones. Rather than rolling on those tables, you could just pick twelve results that match the ruin's original purpose and current inhabitants. If you have no particular preference or wish to be surprised, you can go ahead and roll each one individually.

Once you've determined the items, you can leave it there. Local denizens will certainly take and use any handy plunder they discover, but you don't need to go any further than that. Optionally, you can complicate things a little by rolling on the Item Quirks table to see if it's an unusually good piece of equipment, or perhaps damaged, or shoddy, or Enigmatic and requiring special investigation to use correctly.

An Example of Stocking a Ruin

The GM means to set up a small ruined gas station with a half-dozen bandit raiders camped out within. He checks the Human entry in the bestiary and sees that a raider has a loot type of P2. Since there aren't enough raiders to make a full-fledged clan, he ignores their group loot type.

Code P2 says that each raider has a weapon, armor, one ration of food, and a 25% chance of a Random Loot item. The Weapon entry reads "1d6+4", so he rolls 1d6+4 on the Weapon table and gets a 7- a Breechloading Rifle. The GM could simply decide that all the raiders have rifles, but on reflection, he decides that two have rifles and the other four have a different weapon- spears. For the Armor roll, he rolls 1d6+4 and gets 7- Hide Armor and Shield. The riflemen wear only armor while the spearmen have shields ready. The riflemen all have a round in their weapons and 1d10 more bullets in their ammo pouches.

The GM could roll individual Random Loot chances for each raider, but just decides that at 25% chance, two of them have unusual bits of loot. He rolls the base 1d20 twice on the Random Loot table, coming up with a total of three Common items. Having no special preferences, he rolls three times on the Common item table, coming up with 20 rounds of ammo, a TL1 bedroll, and a TL1 tent. The ammo is split up between the two riflemen, and the bedroll and tent are used by the little band's leader. The others have bedding of a sort, but it's so foul that it's useless to anyone else.

The GM decides that the rolls so far have been sufficient, and there's no need to complicate things with a Quirk table roll for any of the gear. Now he looks to stock the ruined gas station, and looks to the loot table to pick an appropriate type- G14, for a single building ruin. Since the station's so small, he also decides to cut the loot in half. The dice say that he should make 5 rolls on the Random Loot table at the normal 1d20, 1 roll at +10, .and by sheer luck he succeeds at a halved chance of one Random Loot+20 roll. There are also 2 units of TL4 spare parts in a junkheap here.

The first five rolls give him 5 Common items and 1 Uncommon item. The roll at +10 gives him 2 Common items, and the roll at +20 gives a precious item of Rare loot. Curious, he decides to randomly generate all nine items.

The common results give him 2 stims, a crowbar, a magnetic compass, 3 rations, 2 dirty rations, 2 oil flasks, and a TL1 toolkit. The uncommon item is a pretech vacc suit that somehow ended up here, and the rare item is a +3 blueprint to a TL2 item, which the GM decides is an exceptionally good scrap revolver schematic. The raiders have already found all of this, except for the oil flasks, which are hidden in a pile of trash, and the revolver schematic, which is hidden under the office blotter.

If the take had seemed unreasonably rich, the GM might have dropped a few items, or added others as necessary. If PCs were already fabulously wealthy, minor finds might be ignored, too.

Type	Example	Plunder
P1	Impoverished Rabble	Weapon (1d6), Armor (1d6), 50% chance of 1 Ration, 50% chance of Random Loot
P2	Raider/Tribal Warrior	Weapon (1d6+4), Armor (1d6+4), 1 Ration, 25% chance of Random Loot+3
P3	Elite Warrior	Weapon (1d6+6), Armor (1d6+6), 1d4 Rations, 50% chance of Random Loot+5
P4	Tribal Chieftain	Weapon (1d6+10), Armor (1d8+8), Random Loot+10
P5	TL3 Warrior/Raider	Weapon(1d6+12), Armor(1d6+1), 50% chance of Random Loot+5
P6	TL4 Common Citizen	Laser Pistol, Old Terran Clothing, 50% chance of Random Loot+5
P7	TL4 Gunman	Weapon (1d6+20), Armor (1d4+18), 50% chance of Random Loot+10
P8	TL4 Beamgunner	Energy Weapon (1d4+2), Armor (1d4+18), 50% chance of Random Loot+12
P9	TL4 Elite Soldier	Energy Weapon (1d6+6), Armor(1d6+18), 50% chance of Random Loot+12
P10	TL4 Champion	Energy Weapon (1d4+10), Armor (1d6+20), Random Loot+20
G1	Animal Nest	50% chance of Weapon (1d10), 50% chance of Armor (1d10), 50% chance of Random Loot
G2	Armory, Mandate	1d6 Energy Weapons (1d10+4), 1d6 suits of Harmony Armor, 50% chance of Armor (1d8+18), 1d6 TL4 Spare Parts, 50% chance of 1d6 TL5 Spare Parts, 2d6 Type A Power Cells
G3	Armory, Raider	1d6 Weapons (1d10+2), 50% chance of Weapon (1d6+9), 1d6 suits of Armor (1d10+3), 1d6 TL2 Spare Parts, 1d4 x 20 rounds of ammo
G4	Armory, Rebel	1d6 Weapons (1d10+10), 50% Chance of 1d4 Energy Weapons (1d8), 1d6 suits of Insurgent Combat Shell, 1d6 TL3 Spare Parts, 1d6 x 20 rounds of ammo
G5	Camp, Small Raider	1d3 Weapons (1d10+2), 1d4 Random Loot+3, 1 Random Loot+10, 50% Chance of 20 rounds of ammo, 50% chance of 1d4 Type A Power Cell
G6	Camp, Small Tribal	1d3 Weapons (1d10), 1d4 Random Loot+3, 1 Random Loot+5, 25% Chance of 20 rounds of ammo, 25% chance of 1d4 Type A Power Cell
G7	Enclave Plunder, TL1	2d6 Weapons (1d10), 2d6 Armor (1d8+2), 2d6 Random Loot, 1d6 Random Loot+5, 1d4 x 20 rounds of ammo, 1d4 Type A Power Cells, 10% chance of one Rare Item, 1d10x10 rations
G8	Enclave Plunder, TL2	2d6 Weapons (1d6+8), 2d6 Armor (1d10+4), 3d6 Random Loot, 1d6 Random Loot+10, 3d6 x 20 rounds of ammo, 2d6 Type A Power Cells, 25% chance of one Rare Item, 1d20x10 rations
G9	Enclave Plunder, TL3	2d6 Weapons (1d6+8), 2d6 Armor (1d10+4), 3d6 Random Loot, 1d6 Random Loot+10, 3d6 x 20 rounds of ammo, 2d6 Type A Power Cells, 25% chance of one Rare Item, 1d10x20 rations
G10	Enclave Plunder, TL4	2d6 Weapons (1d6+14), 2d6 Armor (1d10+10), 3d6 Random Loot+5, 1d6 Random Loot+15, 3d6 x 20 rounds of ammo, 2d6 x 5 Type A Power Cells, 1d4 Rare Items, 2d20x20 rations
G11	Medical Cache, Major	1d10+10 Stims, 1d4 Medkits
G12	Medical Cache, Minor	1d6 Stims, 50% chance of a Medkit
G13	Ruin, Large Structure	5d6 Random Loot, 1d10 Random Loot+10, 1d4-1 Rare Items, 2d6 TL4 Spare Parts
G14	Ruin, Single Building	3d6 Random Loot, 1d4 Random Loot+10, 20% chance of Random Loot+20, 1d6 TL4 Parts
G15	Survival Cache, Enclave	1d10 Old Terran Rations, 1d6 Random Loot, 50% 1d4 x 20 rounds of ammo, 50% 1d6 Type A
G16	Survival Cache, Ancient	3d8 Old Terran Rations, 1d6 Uncommon Items, 1d6+4 Type A Power Cells
G17	Tech Cache, Major	1d10+10 Spare parts of each TL from 3 to 5, 50% chance of Metatool, 50% chance of one Rare
G18	Tech Cache, Minor	1d10+10 Spare Parts of TL 1d4+1, 50% chance of Random Loot+10
G19	Trader Caravan	1d4 Weapons (1d6+9), 1d4 Armor (1d10+4), 1d6 x 20 rounds of ammo, 1d4 Type A Power Cells, 2 Random Loot+10, 25% chance of Rare Item
G20	Workshop, Old Terran	75% chance of TL4 Toolkit, 25% Chance of TL5 Toolkit, 1d10+15 TL4 Spare Parts, 1d8 TL5 Spare Parts, 2 Random Loot+15 which are Broken
G21	Workshop, Scrounger	TL2 Toolkit, 75% chance of TL3 Toolkit, 25% chance of TL4 Toolkit, 1d10+15 TL2 Spare Parts, 1d10+5 TL3 Spare Parts, 1d6 TL4 Spare Parts, 2 Random Loot which are Broken

Roll	Random Loot
1-5	Nothing
6-14	Common Item
15-19	Two Common Items
20-26	Uncommon Item
27-29	Two Uncommon Items
30-34	Rare Item
35+	Two Rare Items

Roll	Weapon
1	Knife
2	Club
3	Spear
4	Spear
5	Sword
6	Axe
7	Breechloading Rifle
8	Spear
9	Sword
10	Revolver
11	Revolver
12	Semi-Auto Pistol
13	Semi-Auto Rifle
14	Shotgun
15	Monoblade
16	Submachine Gun
17	Combat Rifle
18	Monoblade
19	Combat Rifle
20	Combat Shotgun
21	Huge Monoblade
22	Combat Rifle
23	Mag Pistol
24	Mag Pistol
25	Mag Rifle
26	Mag Rifle

Guns include a full magazine and 1d10 additional rounds. By default, all items are in Worn condition when found.

Roll	Armor
1	No Armor
2	No Armor
3	Shield
4	Shield
5	Hide Armor
6	Hide Armor/Shield
7	Hide Armor/Shield
8	Old Terran Clothing
9	Old Terran Clothing/Shield
10	Scrap Mail
11	Scrap Mail/Shield
12	Scrap Mail/Shield
13	Harmony Armor
14	Harmony Armor
15	Harmony Armor/Shield
16	Terran Explorer Suit
17	Scrap Plate
18	Scrap Plate/Shield
19	Insurgent Combat Shell
20	Insurgent Combat Shell
21	Insurgent Combat Shell
22	Powered Armor
23	Powered Armor
24	Executive Protection Field
25	Executive Protection Field
26	Storm Plate

Roll	Energy Weapon	Roll	Energy Weapon
1	Laser Pistol	8	Thermal Pistol
2	Laser Pistol	9	Thermal Pistol
3	Laser Pistol	10	Plasma Projector
4	Laser Pistol	11	Plasma Projector
5	Laser Rifle	12	Shear Rifle
6	Laser Rifle	13	Shear Rifle
7	Laser Rifle	14	Neutron Blaster

Energy weapons include a fully-charged magazine and one spare Type A power cell. They are in Worn condition when found.

1d100	Common Items
1-5	Ammunition, 20 rounds
6-10	Backpack, TL1
11-15	Bedroll, TL1
16-18	Binoculars, TL2
19-21	Bonding Tape
22-23	Climbing Kit
24-26	Compass, Magnetic
27-31	Crowbar
32-33	Firebox
34-35	Firestarter, TL1
36-39	1d4 Grenades
40-44	Glowbug
45-47	Lantern
48-50	1d4 Oil Flasks
51-55	Power Cell, Type A
56-58	1d4 Rations, Dirty
59-62	1d4 Rations, Normal
63-65	Rope, 20m, TL1
66-70	1d6 TL1 or 2 Spare Parts
71-75	1d6 Stims
76-77	Tent, TL1
78-80	Toolkit, TL1
81-84	Toolkit, TL2
85-86	Water Filter
87-88	Thermal Flare
89-90	Utility Tarp
91-95	Weapon (1d10+2)
96-00	Uncommon Item

1d100	Uncommon Items
1-5	+1 Blueprints, TL 1d3+1
6-8	Binoculars, TL4
9-13	Backpack, TL4
14-16	Bedroll, TL4
17-19	Compad
20-24	Dataslab
25-26	Geiger Counter
27-28	Generator, Solar
29-36	2d4 Stims
37-38	Link, Prosthetic
39-43	Medkit
44-48	Metatool
49-50	Navcomp
51-55	Power Cell, A+
56-60	Power Cell, B
61-64	1d6 Rations, Old Terran
65-66	Rope, 20m, TL4
67-68	Solar Cell
69-73	1d6 TL3 Spare Parts
74-78	1d6 TL4 Spare Parts
79-80	Tent, TL4
81-83	Toolkit, TL3
84-87	Toolkit, TL4
88	Toxin Detector
89	Vacc Suit, Pretech
90-92	Weapon (1d10+10)
93-97	Energy Weapon (1d8)
98-00	Rare Item

1d100	Rare Items
1-3	+2 Blueprints, TL3
4-6	+2 Blueprints, TL4
7-9	+2 Blueprints, TL5
10-15	+3 Blueprint, TL1d4+1
16-17	+4 Blueprint, TL4
18-19	+4 Blueprint, TL5
20-22	Broadcast Power Mod
23	Generator, Nanofusion
24-29	Power Cell, B+
30-45	1d20 TL4 Spare Parts
46-65	1d6 TL5 Spare Parts

1d100	Rare Items
66-70	Toolkit, TL5
71	1d10 Rage stims
72-73	1d10 Purge stims
75-76	Microfac
77	Portable Expert System
78	Invasive Crosslink
79-80	Neural Patterning Web
81-83	Bot Override Tag
84-89	Weapon (1d10+16)
90-95	Energy Weapon (1d6+8)
96-00	Armor (1d8+18)

1d100	Item Quirks
1-10	**Busted**. The item is in Broken condition.
11-60	**Damaged**. Roll on the Condition chart.
61-70	**Shoddy**. The first time this item loses a level of condition, it becomes Destroyed.
71-90	**Enigmatic**. The item is strangely-shaped and must be puzzled out.
91-98	**Tough**. Weapons are damaged only on a 1, armor only on a 20, and gear only on a natural 2.
99-00	**Indestructible**. The item becomes TL5 and impervious to all but intentional damage.

1d20	Equipment Wear	
1	Perfect	No penalty to use
2-10	Worn	No penalty to use
11-14	Light Damage	-1 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item
15-16	Moderate Damage	-2 to hit, damage, -1 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 10 chance to fail.
17-18	Heavy Damage	-3 to hit, damage, -2 to skill checks using the item, 2 in 6 chance of failing
19	Broken	The device is inoperable or unusable.
20	Ruined	The device is beyond repair and fit only for salvage.

Enigmatic Item Traits

1d12	Hand-Held Item	Worn Item	Decorations	Effectuators
1	Arm-long tube	Bracer	Corrugated surface	Cloud of nanites
2	Sphere with finger grooves	Bandoleer	Colored banding	Hyper-precise gravitic manipulations
3	Bracer	Belt	Transparent elements	Chemical catalysis and nanite restructuring
4	Torc-like necklace	Chain of links	Power availability bar	Pretech material beyond modern reproduction
5	Glove	Glove	Smooth curved surfaces	Metadimensional energy beams
6	Gripped cylinder	Straps	Sharp, angular design	Inertial manipulators
7	Hoop	Paint-like liquid	Struts	Chronon bursts that flex the local flow of time
8	Eyeball-sized sphere	Torc necklace	Grooves	Biological interface with wearer to augment them
9	Scepter	Contact lenses	Patterned inlay	Limited neural influence over others' minds
10	Chain of links	False nails	Sharp edges	"Hard light" nano-holograms
11	Tube with a grip on one side	Tunic	Glowing elements	Focalized sonics
12	Several small geometric solids	Bodysuit	Hot or cold parts	Kinetic taps and redirectors

1d12	Optional Side Effect from Using Item
1	Brilliant glow around user
2	Shrill, maddening whine when in operation
3	User appears twelve cm distant from their actual position
4	User bleeds slightly from pores after use (1 HP damage)
5	Halo of fractal distortion around device
6	Radiation exposure on use.
7	Creates geometric bands of light around device
8	Overpowering tang of ozone while in use
9	Gives user leukemia; needs stims or death in one month
10	Blinds user for 1 round after use
11	Ear-splitting roar when used
12	Loses one step of condition after each use

1d6	Activation Method
1	Button
2	Trigger
3	Dial
4	Toggle
5	Voice
6	Slider

1d6	Data Output Method
1	Projected holoscreen
2	Voice
3	Colored dials
4	Radio transmission
5	Skin-transferred direct neural feed
6	Thermal patterns

Random Belongings

There are times when a GM needs a quick answer for determining what trifles might be in a raider's pockets or on the shelves of an Old Terran closet. For quick inspiration, roll 1d100 on the following table. If a result of 100 obtains, pick some item that you know would be uncommonly useful to the PCs in their current situation. Few items are very valuable, but almost all should function for something.

Roll	Random Belongings	Roll	Random Belongings	Roll	Random Belongings
1	Tarnished tableware	34	Self-repairing work gloves	67	Very unstable stun grenade
2	Family holoportrait	35	Bat, helmet, or other sport gear	68	Commpad keyed to black Net
3	Sturdy pair of shoes	36	Broken toaster with a key in it	69	Blackmail holos
4	1d4 meters of fiber-optic cable	37	Carefully-folded love letter	70	Fanciful dance shoes
5	Jeweled ring, bracelet, or anklet	38	Apartment or home keycard	71	Book of terrible poetry
6	1d10 large plastic sacks	39	Brightly-colored shirt	72	Gnawed mummified jerky
7	Small religious figurine	40	Keycard to rebel base	73	Forcefield umbrella
8	Handwritten diary of trivia	41	1d8 likely-worthless cred chips	74	Self-mending "leather" attache
9	Container of preserved spices	42	2d10 meters of pretech rope	75	Nanite mud facial
10	Gauzy lingerie	43	Hand mirror	76	10m coil of ultra-strong wire
11	Pretech ration of snack food	44	Illicit microfac exotic artifact	77	Dusty prosthetic Link
12	Wallet with ancient ID card	45	Phosphor marker that writes on any surface, glows 10m	78	Encrypted rebel data crystal
13	Pair of fashion eyeglasses	46	A lock of hair in a locket	79	Perpetual nightlight- 3m glow
14	Logo that can stick to anything	47	Holos of a distant city	80	A box that preserves food
15	Hidden flyer for a rebel group	48	Dried flower from lunar forest	81	Necklace of animal skulls
16	Musical instrument	49	Fist-sized artificial jewel	82	Vial of Martian springwater
17	Folded self-cleaning bedsheets	50	30m roll of jewel-bright ribbon	83	Fleet recruitment holoflyer
18	Travel permit keycard. Expired?	51	1d4 unbreakable crystal goblets	84	Self-powered food chopper
19	Set of art supplies	52	Souvenir lunar city leafglobe	85	Long synthsilk cape or robe
20	Holocrystal for a hit movie	53	Model spaceship	86	Long-lasting body dye spray
21	1d6 kg of gold for craft use	54	Anthem-playing music box	87	Spraytube of breath freshener
22	Type A power cell	55	Box of 1d6 lifestyle stims	88	Illegal mag pistol w/ammo
23	Map related to nearby ruin	56	5m of slightly adhesive cordage	89	Ultralight cerasteel crowbar
24	Illegal recreational stim	57	Always-cold cocktail shaker	90	Remote-control toy GFV
25	Hygiene kit	58	Retro phonograph	91	Ultra-sharp wire cutters
26	Old-fashioned wristwatch	59	Windchimes made of gems	92	Dance instruction holovid
27	Flask of still-drinkable hooch	60	Heavy platinum jewelry	93	Lump of eternal chewing gum
28	2d10 meters of perfectly transparent plastic tubing	61	Leash and adjusting dog collar	94	A dial always pointing to a ruin
29	Fist-sized prism box that is invisible when closed	62	Antique-style oil painting	95	Whimsical cat holo
30	Link-interfaced sensory record	63	Statue in once-precious metals	96	Pocket fire extinguisher
31	Framed work award	64	Self-cleaning plush doll	97	Obscure religious symbol
32	A Destroyed handheld device	65	Fingertip laser pointer	98	Sonic scrubber, needs A cell
33	Functional metatool	66	Illegal plasma pistol w/ammo	99	1d6 disguised frag grenades

DEATH

Characters die in *Other Dust*. They die very easily compared to those in many other games. Some players with experience in other role-playing games are going to have issues with this, and you yourself may not be so enthusiastic about such fragile characters. There are several ways to deal with this situation.

The first way is to just play it straight. It's true that PCs are extremely mortal, but pretech pharmaceuticals can revive a freshly-expired character provided someone can get to them in time. In practice, provided the group has a supply of stims and not everyone is killed in an engagement, the rest of the group can be revived after a fight. Permanent death usually only happens when a character dies away from the help of his friends, or when they're torn to bloody gobbets by some horrific source of damage.

This sense of risk and the very real chances of death serves a valuable purpose at the table- it makes PC accomplishments all the more impressive and meaningful. Even those games that use much sturdier characters often try to give the impression of death's nearness in order to get that frisson of excitement that comes from knowing your character might die. Some games do better or worse at this, but there's no substitute for actual peril. Experienced wasteland adventurers in an *Other Dust* has survived dangers which could have easily seen them dead. Their good judgment, luck, and teamwork have pulled them through situations that can and have claimed the lives of their comrades. They've accomplished something, and that sense is very rewarding in play.

But even if you play things straight, there are ways to quietly tilt the table. You can make sure that the players discover substantial caches of pretech stims, so they're never out of luck when a downed companion needs to be revived. You can ensure that monstrous mutants and enemy raiders split their attacks among healthy PCs rather than focus-firing a wounded PC into a gory mess. You can silently edit the damage dice done by traps and unstable pretech so that it becomes less likely to erase a victim from existence in a single blast. Provided you don't meddle with the actual rolls and the players can see that their characters really are subject to the dice, you can keep the tension while substantially lessening the fatality rate.

Other groups just don't like easy death in any form. They want to make specific characters and they want to continue playing these characters until they're finished with them. This is a perfectly valid way to play, and if it's the style you and your players prefer, there's no reason that you shouldn't do it this way. You simply need to replace death with a different painful consequence to maintain a degree of tension to conflicts.

When a character hits zero hit points under this model, they're simply knocked unconscious or otherwise left for dead. Their possessions might be looted, the friendly folk they were protecting might be killed, their base of operations might be destroyed or plundered, or they might suffer a loss of experience as they recover from their wounds. It's best to avoid applying serious permanent injuries or more-than-decorative scars to the characters as that can change the fundamental concept of the victim, which defeats the point of character continuity. Losing a fight should be something the players fear, but for reasons aside from any loss of their character.

Some groups prefer a middle ground between these two states, perhaps allowing characters to hit -10 hit points before actually expiring, or giving characters a few minutes of grace in which medical aid can save them, or giving characters a limited pool of "luck points" that can be spent to avert doom. Any system can work perfectly well so long as you and the players all agree on it. Whatever you do decide should be clearly understood by the participants before play begins. If you use the default model, you should be especially careful to ensure that the players understand it and are willing to use it before the game begins; it can be an ugly shock to the veterans of some other games when they discover that a half-starved raider with a scavenged butcher knife is a real threat to the life of their freshly-made PC.

If and when a character does die, get their replacement in as quickly as possible. Don't hesitate to bend the situation a little to facilitate this end. Suddenly-discovered prisoners, wasteland wanderers that happen to be in the right place, lone survivors of other exploratory groups, and other convenient plot twists can all serve to insert a fresh PC with utmost speed. A player should never be left sitting idle for longer than it takes for them to roll up a new character.

Some hard-line GMs insist that replacement characters should be first level. This actually works better than one might expect, because the exponential nature of experience point rewards means that a first level PC in the company of hardened veterans is going to very rapidly rise to equal them. By the time the rest of the group gains one level, the newbie will have reached their former level- and before they gain a second level, the newbie will be equal with them. Still, not every GM likes to deal with the fragility of such novices when the rest of the group is so much more durable.

Other GMs simply let the PC create a character of the same level and experience point totals, ones with any ordinary equipment they might find fitting and maybe an rarer artifact or two if they're particularly experienced. This may require a few more minutes to spend the skill points that higher levels grant, so players may want to create these backup PCs before the game starts.

However you handle death, make sure that your entire group understands the chosen policies. Any system can work perfectly if everyone agrees on it, and any game can go south in a hurry if the players end up feeling cheated by consequences they didn't fully understand.

COMBAT

Combat is a mainstay of adventure gaming, and this fact of life is no less the case in *Other Dust*. With no rule of law, a vast wilderness teeming with hostile life, and enclaves where even the most reasonable locals sometimes resolve their issues with knives, combat is very likely to happen to characters. Still, there are some guidelines

you should follow as a GM to avoid things getting out of hand for your group.

First, be very careful about forcing groups into combat. Combat can be deadly, and if you force a group of novice adventurers to draw steel three or four times every session, no one is going to live long enough to become an experienced adventurer. If you're dropping a fight on the group because you need some immediate action and a breather in which to think about their latest plan, make it a fight that the PCs can be expected to win with minimal risk, or a fight they can run away from, or a fight that involves allies that can take the brunt of the bloodshed. When designing adventures, avoid inescapable fights or brawls that can't be avoided by prudent parties.

Telegraph a fight well in advance whenever possible. Let the players understand when combat is likely and let them make the conscious decision to risk it or avoid it. When players engage, it should be because they've chosen to engage and are willing to deal with the risks. Letting them sidestep a fight or evade combat allows them to feel all the more involved when they finally do decide to pull out their pistols and heft their spears. Ambushes are always possible, but they can be absolutely lethal to a low-level party and should be used with great discretion.

Pay attention to enemy morale. The barren wastelands of post-apocalyptic New Earth are not populated by Spartans. Most enemies will not stick around once their friends start dying, and even high-morale warriors are going to start thinking about tactical withdrawals once it becomes obvious that the PCs are dangerous. When an entire group of intelligent enemies stands and fights to the last man, it should be something bizarre and disturbing- a sign of superlative training, crazed zeal or the doomed valor of a group convinced it has no hope of escaping death. One of the main advantages the PCs have over other combatants is that their morale is unshakable, and they can stand the gaff far longer than most of their foes. Attackers may well break off if they're taking heavy casualties even if half the PCs are dead, and then the PCs can apply stims to their downed comrades.

Skill Checks

It can be tempting to reach for the skill check dice every time a character wants to accomplish something even remotely difficult. Resist the temptation. Skill checks should be reserved for significant challenges that have meaningful consequences for failure.

You should use concept successes to simply hand automatic success to characters who are doing something related to their concept that isn't unusually difficult. For instance, rather than compelling a noble to roll her Perception or Culture skills to identify the influential locals in an enclave, you might simply tell her. As a noble, recognizing local power brokers is just naturally part of her shtick. A known paladin of a local faith might not have to make any rolls to acquire shelter and food from clergy of the same religion. Novice characters aren't action-hero supermen, but even a first level character is unusually skilled and competent compared to most denizens of the New Earth. Let them be good at their chosen focus.

For more experienced characters, a good rule of thumb is that if a character could make a skill check by rolling a 6 or better, just let them have it. Even if you follow this rule, you don't need to do so religiously, but it gives you a good guideline on checks you can skip without cheapening a character's investment in their skills.

There are a few rolls where you should be more inclined to bring out the dice. If you allow characters to automatically succeed at hunting and foraging rolls, you're going to effectively eliminate food as a resource they need to manage- they'll always be able to find what they need to survive. This may be your preference, but you should make that choice with understanding of what you do. Rolls that push the edges of a character's concept and known skills should also usually be diced out, or else players who have invested their limited skill points in relevant skills are apt to be annoyed that what they paid for, other characters are getting for free.

When you do call for skill checks, let a single roll indicate only the general course of failure or success. Often, when a PC blows

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Handling Investigative Skill Checks

One special case that crops up regularly at the table is the investigative skill check- some attempt on the PCs' part to use their skills to pry loose a useful bit of information. They might be trying to search an area with Perception or attempting to use their Persuasion skill to cozen out a fact from a close-mouthed native.

The skill check should always be secondary to what the PCs are actually doing. If there is a combat rifle hidden atop a hut rafter and the PCs explicitly check the rafters, they're going to find it. If they've got a revolver pressed to the temple of the bandit's brother, he's probably going to tell them whatever they want to know. Make the players specify what they're searching, saying, or doing before they roll; if they don't specify anything useful, then let the roll determine whether or not their characters think of it.

Then, after they make the skill check, *make something happen*. The absolute worst answers you can give in those situations are "You find nothing." or "You learn nothing." Why? Because you've given the players nothing new to work with and the frustration is likely to provoke them into even less fruitful courses of action, potentially building to outright idiocy in an attempt to get *somewhere* with their goals. Remember that even blowing up a GM's campaign is more fun than flailing around in it.

Even if their attempt was doomed from the start because there was nothing there to find, at least advance the clock and think about the consequences of the time they spent at it. Ideally, you want to give them some event or consequence they can react to, something that will move the game along rather than leaving them to stumble around uselessly.

Maybe a failed check means that they get the information, but it's garbled and missing some important fact. Perhaps it comes at a higher price than they meant to pay. Maybe their investigation has alerted an enemy, even as they learn what they need to know. Just give them something and see what happens from there.

a roll, it can be more useful to let them make choices about how they fail rather than dictating a particular course of events. When a rafter fumbles his Vehicle/Sea check trying to navigate the crude vessel down a stretch of rough water, tell him he's losing control and heading for the rocks. He can either heave wildly in an attempt to steer past them or cling to the logs and pray. The former choice might give him a second chance but expose him to being thrown overboard if he fails, while the latter might result in a smashed raft but the player safely riding to shore on the log. A failure result that consists of "You try it and nothing happens." is a profoundly *boring* result, and should be avoided whenever possible. Set off alarms, blow a gasket, outrage a chieftain, break a spear, or otherwise make the character's life more interesting when they fail.

Finally, only call for a skill check when failure means something. If there's no time limit and an act is within a character's capacity to eventually accomplish, then just let it happen. It doesn't matter if they screw up a few times if they've got all the time in the world to get it right. If there's a resource cost for failure, either in precious time, spare parts, or food, then make the roll.

Wealth

PC wealth works in a different way in *Other Dust* compared to most fantasy and sci-fi games. In most other settings, PCs can accumulate a huge store of value in the form of hoards of golden coins or massive electronic bank accounts. There may be some logistical issues in carrying around fifty thousand gold pieces, but most PCs are assumed to be able to accumulate a great deal of wealth with few practical limits.

This is not the case in a post-apocalyptic world. Food is the default medium of exchange, and it's bulky, perishable, and steadily wasting. A character who loads himself down with grain might be able to carry one or two months worth of provender on his back, while the average fantasy or sci-fi adventurer has that much buying power in their loose change. A determined wastelander might be able to trade their food for objects of practical value, but even a pouch full of medical stims or a sack loaded with pretech rations is limited in what it can buy, particularly if the locals are too poor to produce much worth buying.

Even if the PCs do discover some vast trove of plunder, how are they going to protect it? There are no banks to take the deposits, and usually not enough local surplus to exchange it for smaller and more portable items of value. Most PCs will eventually be forced to find local allies and friendly communities simply so they have some place they can store their wealth where it won't be swiftly pillaged by strangers. "Gifts" and other exchange can also be used to buy land and acceptance with local enclaves. Once the party ingratiates themselves sufficiently, they can usually rely on the locals to keep their belongings safe- assuming the locals don't need them for their own survival.

The latter is likely to be an issue if the group starts to accumulate truly vast caches of wealth. The PCs can't simply unload a dozen pack mules worth of semi-automatic rifles into the village strong-house and then expect the locals to keep their hands off of them. Most enclave natives respect the idea of personal property and private wealth among the community's members, but there comes

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a point beyond which the community simply won't stand for an accumulation of unused goods. An owner who is using his relics and artifacts is one thing, but strangers who are simply mounding up heaps of untouched wealth is another entirely. The PCs can expect to get a great deal of status and importance in the community if they bring back great sums of plunder, but they can also expect that whatever the locals view as "excess" will be put to practical use. This effect will kick in at whatever point you think is reasonable, and if the PCs don't like it, they're advised to pull together their own community where their excess property might be viewed as somewhat more sacrosanct.

As a GM, you don't need to worry too much about controlling the influx of wealth or valuable commodities into a campaign. There's a certain built-in limit on how much the PCs are going to actually be able to use, and it doesn't matter how much of a commodity the PCs find if they can't carry it or protect it. If the players do find a useful way to capitalize on it, it probably involves making deals with local enclaves and in that case it's just one more potential adventure hook that you didn't have to create yourself. There may be markets in your campaign where this wealth could be converted to artifacts and other high-utility items, but this is not the default situation for the game, and you shouldn't feel obligated to give PCs that opportunity. Finding such a place and earning the right to participate in its markets may well be an adventure in itself.

One thing you do need to monitor, however, is the presence of high-tech artifacts in your game. These items can give major boosts to a character's individual power, and a character kitted out in the latest pretech Old Terran hardware can waltz through challenges

that would otherwise leave him eighty to one hundred percent dead. You should never feel obligated to allow PCs to buy hardware like this- if they want it, they can go and find it.

You should be fairly open-handed about allowing the discovery of spare parts, or else the PCs will have great difficulty keeping their gear in repair and building new devices. The game assumes that tech-savvy PCs will be building equipment for their teammates, and for a group with a particularly skilled scrounger this may be the major means of acquiring new tech. Dropping blueprints and tech helps for particular devices can allow you to introduce them into the game even if the party scrounger isn't otherwise skillful enough to build them.

Whatever your policy on wealth, you should be very careful to allow PCs to get their hands on medkits or stims. As deadly as combat can be, denying a party these lifesaving medical tools can result in a degree of character mortality that many players find jarring. There's no obligation to load them down with pretech pharmaceuticals, but the party should be able to get their hands on vital first aid gear if they're trying to find such things..

Henchmen and Minions

It's a common tradition in many games of this type to pad out a party with a half-dozen minions or hirelings. Some players are enthusiastic about getting meat shields between them and an enemy spear while others find them distracting encumbrances. Still, you shouldn't be surprised if somewhere along the line the party decides it would be a good idea to bring friends. The Equipment and Artifacts chapter covers several different types of hirelings and their average costs. Their availability will depend on the size of a settlement, but there are usually at least 2d6 brash young warriors in any given village willing to go along on an expedition.

As a rule of thumb, the employer of hirelings should be the one calling their actions and making decisions for them. If the employer starts making demands beyond the usual scope of a minion's duties, you might step in to tell the player that the henchman declines the order, or require a Cha/Leadership check to see if the employer has the presence to pull it off. Most hirelings willing to sign on for a wasteland expedition are brave, but they're not suicidal and they have no intention of taking any risks that their employer isn't also willing to take.

Most minions will expect to be fed and receive the wages given in the Equipment chapter. Most have the basic tools and weapons of their trade, but will gladly accept gifts of superior gear. Minions won't leave the territory of their home enclave for very long under most circumstances, and their willingness to enter ruins and other zones of unusual danger hinges largely on having at least a half-share of any plunder found- for every two relics or items of plunder taken by each PC, the minion would expect to choose one item for his own.

You should have no compunction about using minions as red shirt casualties. In most cases, that's what the PCs hired them for. Let them soak up their share of enemy gunfire, sinister traps, and the clawings of hideous beasts. So long as the peril is fairly shared between PCs and minions the game won't suffer for it. You should put a cap on minions, however, as beyond a certain point you don't have an adventuring party so much as you have a mobile army. One minion per PC is usually a good limit, or two if the PC group is very small. If the PCs try to recruit larger groups, the local elders are apt to take an unfriendly interest in such a demand on local manpower.
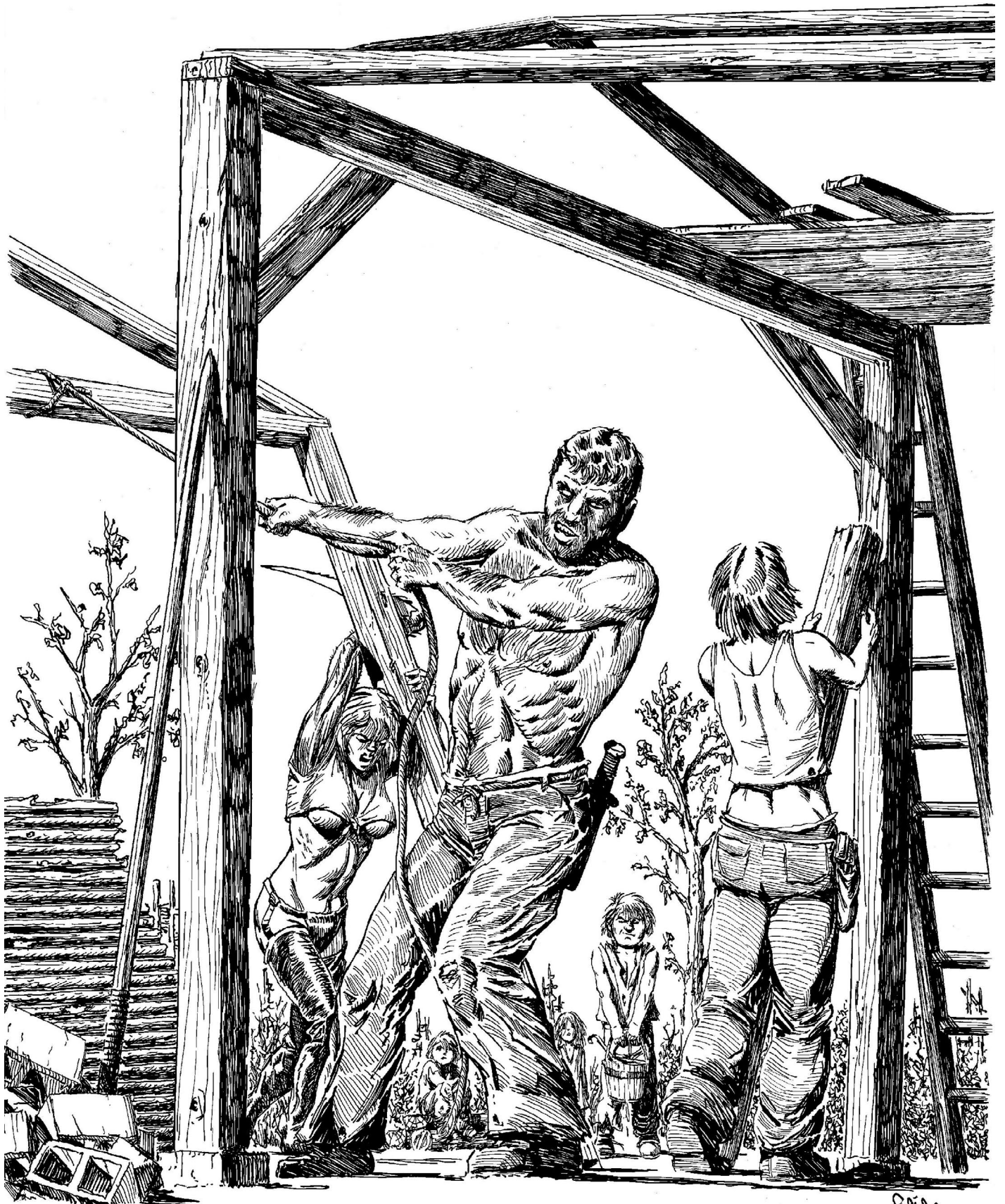
Groups and Enclaves

Groups are organizations, settlements, cults, families, noble houses, or any other distinguishable collection of people with roughly complementary interests. In any campaign, it's inevitable that the GM is going to be dealing with a lot of these associations, and using them in a constructive fashion can be difficult without some tools for managing them. This chapter will provide you with ways to characterize these groups so as to provide both easy adventure hooks for your game and a sense of progress and change for the campaign. Not every cabal or wasteland hamlet needs to use these guidelines, but they can make your life as a GM much easier when it comes time to juggle the intrigues of half a dozen important organizations.

The Purpose of Groups

A GM can expect to deal with numerous associations, cults, settlements, and raider bands over the course of a campaign. Some of these are necessary only as background color or a brief mention, and you'll feel no inclination to develop them beyond their short moment in play. Other groups will be more interesting to you or the players, and you'll want to put more thought into their abilities and problems.

There are some questions that players naturally tend to ask about a group. How can they be helped? What if we want to hurt or destroy them? What kind of problems plague the group, and is it thriving or being driven under by its troubles?

The group system provides a quick, simple way to give answers to all of these questions, and allows a GM to track events with a group using minimal bookkeeping and attention. When you have an entire region full of these actors, you can't really afford to spend a vast amount of mental energy on every one. You need to get crucial answers quickly and with a minimum of accounting.

As a GM, you can turn any selection of people into a group, whether or not they started out that way. The ragged survivors of a ravaged village might be mere scene dressing in one game, but if the players take a real interest in their troubles, you might retroactively turn them into a group in order to more easily handle the PCs' attempts to alleviate their distress. Groups are simply an organizational tool for you as a GM, and you should feel free to use them whenever they seem convenient for your needs.

Group Basics

Groups come in several different types: Creeds, Raiders, Polities, Families, or Cabals. Creeds are religious or philosophical organizations determined to spread and maintain their particular beliefs. Raiders are marauder bands or wasteland warlords, bent on plunder and the parasitic ravaging of others. A polity is a community, governmental body, ethnic grouping, or other affinity group based on a sense of shared membership and mutual responsibility. Families range from tribal clans to illustrious noble houses and are focused on the advancement and prosperity of a specific bloodline. Cabals might be businesses, secret societies, dark conspiracies, lurking mad scientists, or any other group that is attempting to influence the world around them with tools that aren't so vulgar as brute force.

Every group has a *tier*. Tiers range from 1, for a very small or local group, up to 3, for a group that has major influence over the entire campaign region. A tier 1 family might be a simple clan of hunters up in the Laychan Mountains, while a tier 3 family might be the royal house of Nwark, who have ties of blood and marriage to the ruling classes of half the human settlements of Joizy. As a rule of thumb, a tier 1 group is important in their immediate locality, a tier 2 group is either the dominant power in their location or influential in the region as a whole, and a tier 3 group is a major power of the entire campaign region. The tiers can be expanded further if an even larger scope is desired, but 1-3 is usually a serviceable range for the kind of foes and allies a group of PCs will meet during most campaigns.

Every group has certain amounts of five different *resources*: Food, Tech, Morale, Influence, and Security. The more points they have in a given resource, the stronger and more prosperous they are in that regard. If you look at the group type templates listed in this chapter, you'll see that each group has a particular threshold for each type of resource. If they can accumulate enough resource points to equal or exceed that threshold, they gain 1 point of Progress.

Progress is a measure of the group's overall success, prosperity, and effectiveness. Depending on how many resource thresholds the group has passed, their Progress might range from 0 to 5. A group that hits all five thresholds might expand to a higher tier, becoming more powerful and influential. Once they go up a tier, their thresholds increase, resetting them back to 0 Progress but giving them a much broader scope of power. Losing resources might drop them back beneath the threshold, costing them their hard-won Progress.

Ruin measures the forces arrayed against the group's success, whether outside troubles or internal quarreling. Each individual problem is worth a certain number of Ruin points- "The lowland nomads raid us: 2", "The Nakamotos and Jonsons are feuding: 1", "The Still Lady personally hates us and wants to turn us all into screaming immortal cancer trees: 17". If the group's Ruin total reaches a certain threshold, the group will collapse from the weight of its problems. The threshold for tier 1 groups is 6, for tier 2 groups it's 12, and for tier 3 groups it's 20. Bigger, more powerful groups can handle more problems before they go under.

Some groups will have *Perks*, representing particularly useful assets, traditions, circumstances, or other benefits to the group. These Perks usually modify die rolls or give a special bonus to the group's actions.

Creating a Group

Groups can be generated whenever you find them useful. If you're building one from scratch, here's how you go about doing it.

First, pick a type for the group and decide on its membership. It might be a sub-faction of a larger and more powerful organization, or it might be a free-standing band of villagers, plotters, mad scientists, or religious zealots.

Next, decide what kind of resources it possesses. If you haven't any particular opinions on the matter, just roll 1d4 for each resource type. If building a tier 2 group, multiply the result by 10, and multiply it by 100 for a tier 3 group.

Then figure the group's Progress. If the number of resources of a given type is equal or greater than the tier's threshold, the group gains 1 point of Progress. Particularly desperate, impoverished, or recently expanded groups might not have matched any thresholds at all, creeping along at 0 Progress.

Choose sources of Ruin next. Think about the top two or three problems that the group is facing that might result in its destruction or splintering. Assign each a point or two and mark the group's Ruin total as being equal to the sum of its problems. If you aren't sure how hard-pressed the group might be, you can roll to see how many Ruin points it's dealing with right now- 1d4 for tier 1 groups, 1d10 for tier 2 groups, and 2d8 for tier 3 groups. Once you have a total Ruin score, just divide it into however many problems seem interesting to you.

Finally, decide whether or not the group has any Perks. Many groups have none, and most groups shouldn't have more than four or five or else it can be unwieldy to keep track of them. This is purely an administrative consideration and not a hard-and-fast rule.

The above guidelines cover creation rules for GM-created groups. If the players take it into their heads to form a cabal out of their NPC allies or establish a newly-colonized mountain village, you should simply use the above guidelines to figure out the new group's starting condition and then let game events shape further results. Most such fledgling groups will have little more than what the PCs can bring to them.

Group Actions

There are times when you'll want the groups to perform their own actions, separate from whatever purposes the PCs might be pursuing. A world that goes on without PC action helps add verisimilitude and flavor to a game, and gives the players a feel of operating in a world that has its own internal logic. Group actions are a quick shortcut for resolving these struggles and alliances between the organizations in your campaign.

Actions take place during a "group turn" that usually occurs between sessions. Giving groups one action per game month is usually a good baseline, though some times of high excitement may make for faster responses.

Some GMs have no particular use for group actions- if they're all NPCs, the thinking goes, why bother to dice anything out? Just decide on some reasonable actions and outcomes and go with it. This is a perfectly rational way of doing things, and you shouldn't feel obligated to dice the actions out if you have a logical conclusion in mind. Still, one of the great pleasures of running a sandbox campaign is that even you, the GM, can still be surprised by the turn of events. Dicing out group actions gives you room to be met with unexpected outcomes and surprising consequences, and it can help provoke your imagination in ways that wouldn't otherwise happen.

A list of sample actions is provided below. If a group is being controlled by a PC, you should let them go first, and then go down the rest of the list in whatever order you prefer. Each group can take one action per turn, and most of them are described abstractly. It's up to you to flavor them with specifics and describe just how a successful Attack resulted in the Iron City of Pitz launching a brutal assault on Nwark that shattered its ancient defensive batteries.

Progress Checks are required by several actions. Each party involved rolls a die and adds the group's Progress score, with ties going to the defender. Tier 1 groups roll 1d6, tier 2 groups roll 1d12, and tier 3 groups roll 1d20.

Ruin Checks are made when a group has to determine whether its internal problems have stymied one of their actions. The group rolls a die and compares it to their Ruin score. If the roll is higher, the check is passed. If lesser or equal, one of the group's Ruins has interfered. Tier 1 groups roll 1d6, tier 2 groups roll 1d12, and tier 3 groups roll 1d20.

After every Progress or Ruin check, the group must roll 1d10. On a 1, something happened that caused fresh problems or exacerbated existing difficulties. One new point of Ruin is gained or an existing Ruin is increased by one point.

For example, the hard-pressed village of Hollow needs to make a Ruin check. It's a tier 1 Polity that has a total Ruin of 5- flatlander nomad troubles worth 3 points and local feuding worth 2. The GM rolls a 3, which means the check fails- those damn nomads interfered. A roll of 4 would suggest that it was the feuding that got in the way, and a roll of 6 or better would mean the check was passed. After they make the check, they roll 1d10; if it comes up a 1, then their efforts actually made things worse for them, and they either add a new source of ruin at 1 point or increase an existing one.

Damage is done by Attack actions. The defender can choose to take damage either to resources or to add to Ruins: One point of damage removes one resource point from the target. Optionally, up to 4 points of damage can be converted into one point of Ruin- a group hit for 10 points of damage might sacrifice 2 resources and take 2 new points of Ruin, for example. Ruin points can be added to existing problems if the situation makes them worse, or entirely new afflictions might be created. The defender can mix and match consequences as they desire or are compelled. For example, if a fragile, impoverished village takes 3 points of damage from a nomad attack, they might not have enough resources to spare to take the hit. In that case, they'd be forced to add a point of Ruin.

Group Expansion and Collapse

Groups grow, prosper, and fall under the pitiless assault of the savage world around them. Progress and Ruin totals provide a quick way to determine when it's time for a group to expand its influence and when it's time for it to die.

Each group template has a threshold on the number of units of a given resource it can profitably use at a given tier. It can still acquire more of the resource if available, but these extra points give no direct benefit. Most organizations try to barter them away in exchange for

more important needs, or keep them as a buffer against hard times and enemy action.

When a group's Progress score reaches 5, with each type of resource supplied up to its threshold, it ceases to grow. If you think the situation is appropriate and the group might reasonably qualify as a more influential power, its tier increases by one. Its thresholds immediately rise to the next tier, which means that all but the best-supplied groups are probably going to drop back to 0 Progress as they enter a new level of power. By the same token, all Perks are lost, and their purchase cost is refunded at the new conversion rate. The organization still has those assets, but they need to be expanded and reinforced before they are meaningfully useful at its new scale of existence.

If a group loses all of its resource points, it collapses and ceases to exist as a meaningful force. Once it attains a given tier, it will not lose it- it is possible to be an impoverished city-state lacking even the available food and salvage of a prosperous mountain hamlet.

If a group's Ruin score rises to its tier's threshold, a similar collapse occurs as the group crumbles under the onslaught of its troubles. This threshold is 6 for tier 1 groups, 12 for tier 2 groups, and 20 for tier 3 groups. You can roll a correctly-sized die to determine what Ruin deals the mortal blow to the organization, though the trigger was probably provided by whatever Ruin was responsible for the final increase.

AWARDING RESOURCES IN PLAY

As a GM, you can use resources as an additional reward mechanism in your adventures, planting useful goods and favors in the course of the party's journeying. The players might barter these supplies with groups for aid and services, or they might use them to bolster allies in the face of hardship. They can also serve as flashpoints for conflicts between groups, as two or more factions want the resources and the players find themselves in a position to determine who ends up holding them.

As a rule of thumb, a given adventure site or session might include points of rewards equal to the average level of the characters involved in its resolution. Extremely dangerous ruins that would challenge a renowned band of 9th-level wasteland warriors would thus deserve 9 points of resources, while a minor backwoods contretemps that can be resolved by a novice group of 1st level wanderers would merit 1 point. When in doubt, just eyeball it to something that feels right to you.

These resources can be divided up into different types and placed in the area as is appropriate for the situation. Excavating relics from an Old Terran chapel might provide a substantial number of influence points with the pious locals, while a battered pretech microforge might be worth several points of tech. They might also be spent towards lowering the Ruin of a particular threat- wiping out one of Boh's raiding camps near Hollow may eliminate the warlord as a source of Ruin for the moment. The party may not actually acquire all the points of resources available in an area, as some might be overlooked, destroyed, or wasted in the course of events.

Group Action List

Acquire Perk: The group tries to enlist or create a particular Perk from the list later in the chapter. The group must pay the listed cost in resources and then makes a Progress check against the listed difficulty. On a failure, the attempt is unsuccessful but can be repeated next turn without further expenditure. If the group stops using this action in favor of doing something else, it must pay the cost a second time before it can again attempt to acquire the perk. There's no technical limit on the number of perks that a group can acquire, but a perk can be taken only once.

Perk costs are based on the group's tier. Putting in an advanced irrigation system for a small hamlet is much easier than establishing farmlands for a coastal city. If a group rises a tier due to success and progress, it loses all its Perks but is refunded their purchase costs. They must expand and re-establish them to regain their benefits.

Attack: The group launches a direct physical assault on its rival. Families are unable to Attack anyone but other Families, and some small Creeds or Cabals might likewise be incapable of mustering sufficient warriors to resort to warfare. Both attacker and defender make Progress checks. If the attacker beats the defender, it inflicts damage: tier 1 groups roll 2d6, tier 2 groups roll 2d12, and tier 3 groups roll 2d20. The defender may choose how to absorb it

Find Resource: The group tries to find usable stocks of a particular resource. Roll a Ruin check for the group. If it passes, it finds some of the desired resource, usually in a form too unwieldy or dispersed to be converted into equipment or supplies useful to PCs. Tier 1 groups find 1 point of the resource, tier 2 groups find 1d6 points, and tier 3 groups find 1d10.

Influence: The group tries to bribe, seduce, or force another group's leadership to act as they see fit. If the aggressor wins a contested Progress check, the defender acts as they direct on their next turn. The action can't be obviously self-destructive. If the aggressor gains Ruin from this action they cannot try to Influence the target again for 1d6 group turns. If multiple groups Influence a target, only the last one's directives are obeyed on the victim's next turn.

Sabotage: The group tries to wreck or despoil resources held by an enemy. Both attacker and defender make Progress checks. If the attacker wins, the defender takes damage that can only be absorbed in lost resources of a type chosen by the attacker: tier 1 groups roll 1d6, tier 2 groups roll 1d12, and tier 3 groups roll 1d20 for this damage. If the defender doesn't have enough resource points to pay for the loss, the excess damage is ignored.

Solve Problem: The group tries to deal with one of its problems. Make a Ruin check. On a success, one of the group's Ruins is decreased by 1 point as they somehow resolve the situation.

Subvert: The group tries to engineer problems and strife for an enemy group. Both attacker and defender make Progress checks. If the attacker wins, the defender takes damage that can only be absorbed in fresh Ruin: tier 1 groups roll 1d6, tier 2 groups roll 1d12, and tier 3 groups roll 1d20 for this damage. One point of Ruin is added, plus one more for each 4 full damage points.

Trade: Groups try to work out a mutually-beneficial exchange. Any number of resource points can be exchanged between groups, provided that there is a plausible way to do so. Any side receiving Resources must make a Ruin check after the exchange; on a failure, the trouble claims half the resources received, rounded up.

There will be times when the players take it into their own heads to help a community, resolving their ruinous problems with plans of their own. If the value of the outcome isn't obvious to you, simply credit them with a number of points of help equal to half the party's average character level if their plans turn out to be a success. The aid of renowned and experienced adventuring groups can be a powerful resource for groups in dire need of assistance.

You should always feel free to adjust the situation based on the events of the game. Don't be too tightly bound to the points model of resources. It exists only as a convenient GM tool to give you an easy guideline for those occasions when you don't have some more obvious outcome in mind. If the PCs sneak into Boh's mountain fortress and hurl the warlord from the roof of his own crumbling office tower, his raider band is likely to disintegrate regardless of its current Ruin score. Any local groups suffering from his attentions will see those Ruin points vanish. In time, his squabbling lieutenants may pull together fresh bands of marauders, but for now, the region will be free of their cruel exactions.

Player Use of Resources

The party has just discovered 1 point of food resources in the ancient Old Terran supermarket. You know exactly what that means for groups that obtain the plunder, but what if the players decide to use the resources themselves? How do these points translate into a particular number of rations or a specific number of rounds of ammunition? Or conversely, what if the players accumulate a vast store of goods of their own, and want to give them to a group- how do you convert between points and specific items?

Some resources just can't be effectively converted by the PCs. A storehouse full of bitter neo-cassava is inedible until it's been processed to remove the natural cyanide, and an Old Terran scrapyard might require the muscle power of dozens of workers to pry and hammer the usable scrap away from the trash. Other resources might be valuable, but vastly more than any party can ordinarily use, such as a bunker full of barrels filled with sulfuric acid. In particular, you may want to place these unconvertable resources when you want to give them something valuable to their allied groups without simultaneously giving the PCs a huge cache of valuables.

At other times, you'll want to place resources that are directly useful to the PCs. You shouldn't be surprised if they immediately turn around and use them for their own ends, however, and so you should keep in mind the potential consequences to the campaign if your hidden cache of mag rifles gets repurposed for mutant-hunting rather than handed over to the PCs' home enclave.

This isn't to say that you shouldn't do it, or that you'll break your game if the PCs suddenly get their hands on vast riches. Most PCs will promptly trade away or expend everything they can't immediately use themselves, and the sheer physical difficulty of protecting large sums of wealth almost requires them to make friends with a group capable of protecting assets too heavy to carry. There are no convenient banks in the New Earth, and respect for other people's property is remarkably limited. If they're not carrying it on their backs or surrounding it with friendly warriors, it's probably not going to be there when they come back. With those caveats in mind, here are some general guidelines for converting resource points into specific items.

For food resources, one point equals approximately five hundred rations. The actual cache may be significantly greater, but by the time processing, spoilage, waste, and the sheer aggravation of getting the food in order is sorted out, players can turn one point of food resources into five hundred standard rations. If the source is a cache of Old Terran provender instead of more contemporary foodstuffs, they can extract about 50 pretech food rations instead. Of course, actually transporting large stocks may be rather difficult for a group short on pack animals or cargo vehicles.

For tech resources, the value of one point varies depending on the source of the tech. If the source was TL 2, 200 units of spare parts can be obtained. TL 3 sources grant 100 units, TL 4 units give 50, and TL 5 units give 25. Less sophisticated materials are so common or primitive that they don't really count for purposes of being useful tech resources. If you prefer to place the resources as specific objects rather than a general amount of salvageable scrap, simply convert the units of salvage above into individual items, using the normal ratios of spare parts for creating goods as given in the Systems chapter.

Security resources are often a matter of fortifications, defensible wells, scouting patrols, good communications, or platoons of skilled warriors. As a rule of thumb, 1,000 rations worth of heavy military equipment or fortification construction qualifies as one point of security.

Morale, and influence resources tend to be either intangible diplomatic benefits or the result of valiant deeds performed to embolden allies. Aiding a group in obtaining more of these resources could well earn the PCs substantial favors or assistance, but such deals should be the consequences of play rather than simple conversion.

Founding New Groups

New groups come into being whenever the GM thinks it appropriate and useful. Tier 2 organizations might throw off a number of lesser tier 1 subgroups that may or may not cooperate well with their superiors, with individual cult cells, refugee groups, or military orders all following their own interests while providing more or less respect for the hierarchy. A tier 1 group might be created out of a random piece of the gaming session that catches the interests of the GM or the players: that plucky market-town business family, that crazy scrap-savant lab out in the badlands, those desperate survivors of the Red Dog nomad attacks... any of them can be turned into groups, if it fits the needs of your game. Most of them will start

with a few points of resources and 1d4 Ruin points in some likely problems.

PCs should be allowed to found their own groups, if the situation seems reasonable. A capable adventurer with a large stock of resources is precisely the sort of leader-figure that many wasteland dwellers want to follow, and success and proven capability are bound to attract interest. By 9th level, most PCs will be renowned heroes of the wastes and will almost certainly be able to summon this kind of enthusiasm, but even novice PCs can become the leadership nucleus of a resolute band of colonists. The more resources and allies the PCs can accrue, the more likely they are to be counted as chiefs, prophets, and warlords by the dwellers of the New Earth.

PCs as Group Leaders

There are certain practical benefits associated with leadership of a group. Most tangibly, the PCs have access to the goods, services, and assistance of their people and can expect their cooperation with any reasonable commands. Most enclave-dwellers are willing to give over equipment and labor to their leaders' needs so long as their own requirements are satisfied, and the harsh life of the wastes leaves them accepting of risks that a softer people might fear to essay. Suicidal commands or orders that defy their customs will be resisted, however, and even if successful the resentment will often create fresh Ruin for the group.

If specifics on goods are needed, you can consult the section above on converting resources to see how much of a particular item the group can provide to the PCs. Most groups can provide any personal equipment of TL 2 or less that the PCs might require without the need to convert resources. Groups with the Perk of higher tech levels might be able to do better still.

Services and raw manpower are somewhat murkier, but a good rule of thumb is to give PCs the use of 10 capable warriors, laborers or artisans from a tier 1 group, 100 from a tier 2, and 1,000 from a tier 3. If the group's template is that of a polity, this manpower total can be multiplied by ten, as communities can provide far more support than hidden cabals or single bloodlines.

PC leaders can also expect to have the best housing, servants, food, and honors of the group, and a safe place to cache their less portable possessions. Of course, if the group is overrun by an enemy, such wealth will doubtless be plundered.

This esteem comes at a price. PCs will be expected to protect and aid the group, fighting its enemies and resolving its internal problems. In most cases, they'll do this by means of adventures and cunning plans rather than sitting back with group actions. Simple die-throwing is good when you want a quick resolution for a question, but if the group is to serve as something really useful in your campaign, its travails should be a source of adventure hooks and motivation for the party. In the same way, you should let player adventures have a practical effect on the group's scores and health rather than compelling the players to accomplish everything through the group action system. Always prefer adventures to simple die actions- the former will make your life as a GM much simpler as the players formulate their own adventures and plans for you.

Problems with Groups in Play

Groups are excellent sources of vitality and adventure hooks for your campaign, but they also come with a number of perils. Particularly when PCs have an important role in a group, you're going to have to deal with certain issues that are likely to crop up in any group of players with varying tastes in entertainment.

The basic danger to watch for is that of players with varying degrees of investment in the groups. It's not at all unlikely that you'll have one player who's fascinated with a particular community or organization and another who just wants to get out into the wastelands and see newer sights. Many of these more wanderlust-prone players are perfectly happy to go on missions and jobs that help a group, but they don't want to sacrifice their own goals just to shepherd a companion's allies to greatness.

Don't chain the PCs to a group, not even ones they're responsible for leading. Give them trusty lieutenants and loyal regents, and place the focus of the group's needs and dangers outside the group itself. A session or two of unraveling internal strife can be a fun thing, but if everything starts taking place within a single community or cabal, you run the risk of frustrating those players who want more variety.

Listen to what the players are saying about their desires and make it clear that the PCs do *not* have to hover over their allies or charges in order for things to stay stable.

Don't destroy important groups without giving the PCs a chance to do something about it. The dice might indicate that the Iron City is certain to smash the Laychan mountain folk of Hollow, but if Hollow has been an important place to the PCs, don't let it happen until the adventurers have had their say. Let the players discover the impending doom and formulate their own plans for response. Maybe their cunning heroics will avert the destruction and throw back the attacker's foul plans- or maybe they'll just be able to save a scant remnant of the people they care about.

Don't make yourself a slave to the dice. The group system is simply a GM aid, one meant to simplify your tracking of the significant groups in your campaign. It provides a spice of unpredictability to events and gives you an easy way to measure PC impact on the various organizations around them. If you don't need it, don't use it. An action with an obvious consequence will have that consequence, and you don't need to worry about justifying it with die rolls.

GROUP PERKS

Perk	Food	Influence	Morale	Security	Tech	Difficulty*
Cunning	-	5	3	1	1	6/9/16
Fierce Loyalty	2	-	5	3	-	7/11/19
Expert Farmers	5	-	-	2	3	6/9/16
Expert Traders	5	3	-	-	2	6/9/16
Fortifications	3	-	-	5	2	7/11/19
Guerrilla Warriors	-	3	2	5	-	6/9/16
Independent	-	2	5	3	-	6/9/16
Influential	3	5	2	-	-	6/9/16
Leadership Cells	-	5	-	3	2	7/8/9
Persuasive	2	5	3	-	-	6/9/16
Religious Zeal	-	2	5	3	-	7/11/19
Schooling	2	-	3	-	5	6/9/16
Seductive	-	5	2	-	3	6/9/16
Tech Base/TL 2	3	-	2	-	5	6/9/16
Tech Base/TL 3	6	-	4	-	10	7/12/20
Tech Base/TL 4	12	-	8	-	20	8/16/24
Valorous	-	-	5	3	2	6/9/16
Vast Army	5	-	5	3	2	7/12/20
Warlike	2	-	3	5	-	6/9/16
Wary	-	-	3	5	2	6/9/16

Perk costs are multiplied by 10 for tier 2 groups, and by 100 for tier 3 groups.
* Difficulties are shown for tier 1, 2, and 3 groups attempting to establish the perk.

PERK DESCRIPTIONS

Cunning: The group has a knack for sinister schemes and under-handed plots. They can roll twice on all Progress checks for the Sabotage group action and take the better result, whether attacker or defender.

Fierce Loyalty: The members of the group have a determined and unflinching dedication to one another. They can add Ruin points they incur into "Our Loyalties are Tested", a separate pool that does not add to Ruin and that can be decreased by normal Solve Problems actions rolled against Ruin or by PC deeds that confirm the wisdom of faithfulness to the group. The maximum pool size is by tier: 1, 2, or 4.

Expert Farmers: The group is either gifted with excellent farmland, Old Terran agricultural tools, or a natural knack for growing crops. Any Find Resources actions in search of Food can double the amount found.

Expert Traders: The group is supplied with far-traveled merchants and an expert eye for profit. As a group action, they may trade one resource for another at a 2 spent for 1 received exchange. Tier 1 groups can exchange up to 2 points per action, tier 2 can exchange 10, and tier 3 can exchange 20. A Ruin check is necessary after each exchange; if failed, something interfered with the deal and half the acquired resources are lost, rounded up.

Fortifications: The group has unusually strong defensive emplace-ments. Against Ruin incurred by an Attack action, they can add points into "Our Fortifications Crumble", a separate pool that does not add to Ruin and that can be decreased by normal Solve Problems actions rolled against Ruin or by PC deeds that reinforce their walls or military equipment. The maximum pool size is by tier: 2, 4, or 8.

Guerrilla Warriors: This group has expertise in dodging the min-ions of mightier foes. The group gains a +4 Progress roll bonus when defending against Attack, Sabotage, or Subvert attempts made by an enemy of a higher tier. Polities cannot take this perk, as they lack the requisite mobility and elusiveness.

Independent: The group is hard to control- and not just for its legitimate leaders. They can roll twice for all Progress checks to resist the Influence action and take the better result.

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Influential: The group is skilled at swaying others to act in useful ways. They can roll twice on all Progress checks for the Subvert group action and take the better result, whether attacker or defender.

Leadership Cells: The group is very hard to wipe out entirely. If utterly destroyed, it pops up again as a tier 1 group with 5 points of resources and 3 points of Ruin in a matter related to their former destruction. They also lose this perk, though they can purchase it again if given time.

Persuasive: The group knows how to convince people that cooperation with their cause is advantageous to them. Any Find Resources actions in search of Influence can double the amount found.

Religious Zeal: The group members have a burning devotion to some faith or philosophical creed that gives meaning to their suffering. They can add Ruin points they incur into "Our Faith is Tested", a separate pool that does not add to Ruin and that can be decreased by normal Solve Problems actions rolled against Ruin or by PC deeds that confirm the favor of their god or the wisdom of their cause. The maximum pool size is by tier: 1, 2, or 4.

Schooling: The locals have an unusual tradition of formal education and respect for knowledge. Most adults in the group are literate. Any Find Resources actions in search of Tech can double the amount found.

Seductive: The group knows how to make a rival organization's leadership appreciate the benefits of close cooperation. Whether by bribery, intimidation, seduction, or persuasive lobbying, they may roll twice on Progress checks when making Influence attempts against another group. Such delicate manipulations require a small, tightly-controlled group; polities and raiders cannot take this Perk.

Tech Base/TL 2: The group has sufficient expertise and resources to equip its members with TL 2 gear, including firearms. Such modern amenities as running hot water, biogas lighting, and basic steam power are available to the members, though not all may be wealthy enough to afford them. This tech level is uncommon in the wastes, but not unknown in areas rich in scrap or social cohesion.

Tech Base/TL 3: The group is one of the rare enclaves that have managed to maintain a fairly advanced technological base. Sophisticated firearms, electricity, basic computing, electrical vehicles and other tools appropriate to TL 3 are all available. This tech level is more common among small groups than large polities, but it is rare under any circumstances. This perk requires and replaces the Tech Base/TL 2 perk with no refund of its purchase cost.

Tech Base/TL 4: For some special reason, this group still has access to standard Old Terran technology. Energy weapons, gravitic vehicles, advanced computing tools, basic stim production, and sophisticated hydroponics are all available to them. Only a handful of groups in an entire region might retain this technology, and usually only because they're a small group with access to a hidden Mandate base or Old Terran vault. This perk requires and replaces the Tech Base/TL 3 perk with no refund of its purchase cost.

Vast Army: The group has access to more than the usual smattering of warriors and militia. Families and other small groups that acquire this perk have somehow made a pact with a standing army, while polities and other large groups have mustered organized troops of their own. Small groups may use the Attack action, and any resource losses inflicted by Attack actions are doubled.

Valorous: The group is brave and determined, beyond even the usual courage of those who dare to survive the wastes. Any Find Resources actions in search of Morale can double the amount found.

Warlike: Almost every group has some degree of martial inclination, but these people are violent even by the standards of the New Earth. They can roll twice on all Progress checks for the Attack group action and take the better result, whether attacker or defender.

Wary: The group has an acute awareness of the dangers that surround them, and they have a knack for preparing for the worst. Any Find Resources actions in search of Security can double the amount found.

Cabals

Cabals are relatively small groups composed of conspirators, reclusive isolationists, or secret society members. A mad scientist and his band of henchmen might qualify as a Cabal, as could a band of secret plotters that scheme to rule a larger polity. Cabals aren't always secretive in nature, but their small numbers often encourage a certain discretion about exposing themselves to potentially unfriendly outsiders. Those Cabals that aren't secretly buried within the heart of a larger community are usually found in some remote, inaccessible location beyond the casual reach of bandits and warlords.

Some Cabals are content to simply survive, shepherding the last remnants of a broken enclave or faded religion. The usually lack the ties of blood to be found in a nomad Family, so their connection is based more on a shared history or common belief. Not all of these beliefs are necessarily salutary toward outsiders, and some Cabals can be cold-blooded about stripping interlopers of everything of value before permanently ensuring their silence.

Other Cabals are the products of oppression and disenfranchisement. Wherever there is a recognizable underclass or oppressed group some secret Cabal of plotters is almost certain to be found among them. Even when a group is incompetent or utterly outmatched, the same bitter privations that birthed them will create their replacements in time. These rebel Cabals might fight for appealing causes of freedom and equality, but they can be absolutely ruthless in sacrificing people for the sake of their glorious cause. In time, as with any revolution, the violence and treachery of the struggle encourage the rise of violent and treacherous schemers. The new era that follows their ascent may be every bit as bad as the one that came before.

	TIER THRESHOLDS		
RESOURCE	*1*	*2*	*3*
FOOD	1	10	100
INFLUENCE	7	70	700
MORALE	5	50	500
SECURITY	4	40	400
TECH	3	30	300
SCIENTIFIC CABALS SHOULD SWAP INFLUENCE AND TECH THRESHOLDS.			

Ambition also births Cabals. If there is a powerful polity or influential group in the region, it's not at all unlikely that at least one Cabal exists to subvert its rulers. These groups often make use of the Influence action in an attempt to shift their target's goals- a half-dozen successful attempts at Influence might be enough to completely subvert the target organization, assuming it doesn't realize its peril. Such a Cabal might vanish, then, its resources added to the target group as its leaders become the masters of their host enclave.

A few Cabals are dedicated to science and learning... often of a kind less than appreciated by their neighbors. A few such scholarly Cabals hide only to prevent local warlords from seizing them and their research, but others conceal their doings in order to prevent enraged war parties from descending upon their sanctums.

The detail and trait table below offers some possibilities for your cabals should you want a little inspiration in building your sinister bands of conspirators. The assumption is that most such cabals are going to be antagonistic toward the PCs and their causes, but that need not be a certainty. Some cabals might be working toward more appealing ends, and even morally dubious ones can have purposes sympathetic to a band of adventurers.

CABAL DETAILS AND TRAITS

1d12	*Secret Headquarters*	*Favorite Methods of Evil Cabals*	*Enemies of the Cabal*
1	Brothel in a large enclave	Bribery in favors	Adventurer they betrayed
2	City hall or local palace	Bribery in tech	Aspiring cabal leader with his own plans
3	Guildhall or fraternal order hall	False friendship	Betrayed local politician or elder
4	Hidden caverns in nearby hills	Framing others	Cabal scion who refuses to join
5	Hot zone with a safe path in	Hostage-taking	Crusading religious leader
6	None- their old one was just exposed	Lying	Disillusioned former member
7	Powerful family's fortified manor	Personal intimidation	Internal reformer of the cabal
8	Ruin in the near wilderness	Poison	Mole from another cabal
9	Ruined subway tunnels	Remote spy drones	Overthrown former leader
10	Ship or huge vehicle	Seduction	Relentless investigator
11	Taboo place forbidden to locals	Telepathic spying	Spouse of a cabal victim
12	Temple to a local faith	Threats to loved ones	Thought-dead former victim

CREEDS

TIER THRESHOLDS			
RESOURCE	1	2	3
FOOD	4	40	400
INFLUENCE	6	60	600
MORALE	6	60	600
SECURITY	2	20	200
TECH	2	20	200

The bright flames of belief can light a path through the worst that the New Earth can offer. Some groups are tied together by a fierce, uncompromising faith that sustains them in their darkest hours. Such creeds provide the vital ties of cooperation and trust that are often all that stands between a community and the howling ruin that lurks in the wilderness outside.

Most Creeds are built around a root belief derived from some Old Terrain religion or ideology. These fundamental beliefs are often twisted or reinterpreted in ways that might seem utterly wrongheaded to their original holders, but they are almost always interpretations that work in the context of the New Earth. Creeds of tempered pacifism and unworldly indifference rarely last long enough to make an impression on a region.

Creeds can exist alongside most other groups and enclaves. In the absence of some other powerful set of beliefs, a Creed likely represents the most common belief system in the community in which it exists. Even if the Polity or Cabal is torn apart by its enemies, the Creed can still persist in the scattered survivors- and in the absence of any other social structure, it might even grow stronger on the disasters of others.

People do not follow a Creed simply because it's there- not in any way that would make them meaningful members of the organization. People follow Creeds because they offer specific answers to deep conundrums in the human condition. Why am I here? What purpose do I have in life? How can I know what is right and what is wrong? How can I deal with loss, suffering, and my inevitable death? Even those Creeds derived from fundamentally secular ideologies often have answers for these questions, even if the more spiritual worries might be met by the calm assurance that there is no existence beyond death and no foundation for morality beyond natural reason or tribal custom.

Creeds grow with success and evangelization. A small, tier 1 Creed might be the dominant religion of a local market town, or it might be a monastery of fierce believers up in the surrounding hills. With time and proselytization, these modest bands of believers can spread their influence to reach tier 2 and the existence of multiple congregations in the surrounding enclaves. A mighty faith of tier 3 is a power that the entire region is obliged to respect, and possesses an authority based on more than raw numbers and brute physical compulsion.

Don't worry too much about accuracy in forming the beliefs of a Creed. The Mandate warped numerous faiths into more "socially harmonious" versions, and between their heavy-handed interference and the frustrated searching of traditionalist defenders of the old ways, most major religions were a confused hash by the time the Scream swept over the world. Some Creeds might not even realize their relationship with their progenitor faith. Do be careful not to create "gag" versions of a religion unless you want to add a comic tone to your campaign, and try to avoid making Creeds that simply serve as GM mouthpieces for some perceived failure or virtue in religion. Few tables prosper by provoking arguments over religion.

CREED DETAILS AND TRAITS

1d12	Root Ideology	Most popular among...	Possible Negative Traits
1	Ancestor worship	Criminals and outcasts	Brutal initiation rites
2	Buddhism	Farmers	Decadent and corrupt in ideology
3	Christianity	Hidden believers and adepts	Extremely intolerant of other faiths
4	Communism	Local elites and rulers	Involves human sacrifice
5	Ethnic supremacy	Mutants	Justifies conquest of neighboring enclaves
6	Hinduism	Nomads	Prefers to convert by the sword
7	Islam	One particular local enclave	Requires harsh sacrifices of goods or labor
8	Mutant superiority	Poor and common folk	Slavishly obedient to an enclave's rulers
9	Pursuit of technical knowledge	Primitive enclaves and tribals	Tyrannical priesthood or cadres
10	Rejection of Old Terran tech	Raiders	Unbelievers have no rights
11	Worship of the Crazed	Sages and scrapsmiths	Violent hatred of another creed
12	Xenophobia	Warriors and soldiers	Wastes effort on elaborate rites and temples

Families

Perhaps the first and most stable form of human association, the Family type of group represents everything from a clan of nomad wanderers to a wide-spread noble house with representatives in dozens of regional enclaves. The united characteristic is that of blood ties, or of emotional bonds similar to those between kindred.

The Family is durable because it works. In the primitive, treacherous world of the New Earth, it's one's kindred and blood relations that can be trusted. Your survival is a victory for your elders, and an assurance that they might yet see their grandchildren thrive. Even the intimate hates and volcanic resentments that can build up within a family are contained and restrained by the presence of others of the same blood.

That same unified strength can become a liability when it becomes necessary to seek out cooperation beyond the limits of the clan. The habits of mutual trust and support can leave them reluctant to put their faith in outsiders or to believe in men and women who owe them nothing and have no ties of blood. Such groups often need to be cozened along carefully, gradually persuaded that faith in an outsider will not be invariably repaid in theft and treachery.

Families differ from Polities in that they are rooted in blood ties rather than more nebulous feelings of unity. Within that scope, they take many different forms- clan homesteads housing several generations of the same extended family, hamlets occupied by a single lineage of natives, powerful trading clans that travel from enclave to enclave, and dueling noble houses within a single major settlement.

The scope of a Family's influence depends on their tier. At tier 1, the family may be dominant or deeply influential within their own community, but are unlikely to have ties beyond that area. Tier 2 families have spread out, either in the form of cadet branches in more distant enclaves or a powerful economic pull with the elites

	TIER THRESHOLDS		
RESOURCE	1	2	3
FOOD	4	40	400
INFLUENCE	10	100	1,000
MORALE	1	10	100
SECURITY	2	20	200
TECH	3	30	300

of neighboring communities. Tier 3 Families are the equivalent of royal houses or legendary bloodlines, revered and dreaded throughout the region. They have their fingers in everything that matters, and while they may not have the raw numbers and brute military force of a Polity, they can often control larger groups through sheer force of influence and cunning.

In play, Families can represent both patrons and enemies to the PCs- occasionally at the same time. Families share an identity and usually are united in their purposes, but factions exist in any sizeable clan. The goals of one branch may not be in perfect alignment with those of another grouping, and while kinsmen might be reluctant to shed each others' blood, the lives of hirelings are less perfectly protected.

The realities of life in the New Earth force Families to accept pragmatic necessities. Traditions and familial roles can shift based on immediate needs or offered resources, and drastic alterations in a clan's leadership can happen rapidly when an old leader is proven incompetent or insufficient to meet a crisis. The table below offers some details in generating a Family for those GMs who want an extra dose of ideas, with negative traits provided for those Families that aren't intended to be overly sympathetic to the players.

FAMILY DETAILS AND TRAITS

1d12	Source of Influence	Current Problems	Possible Negative Traits
1	Alliances with local raiders	A branch has sold out the others	All authority concentrated in few hands
2	Control of fortified holdings	Assaulted by an enclave's ruler	Badly inbred bloodline
3	Control of manufacturing facilities	Badly failed an important ally	Constantly scheming against each other
4	Fear of their ruthlessness	Branches have different interests	Favors nepotism over competence
5	Ferocious familial unity and devotion	Divided familial leadership	Flawed members are cast out in exile
6	Ferocious warriors	Family leader is going senile	Obsessively self-interested in attitude
7	Marriage alliances with local rulers	Family leader recently died	Preys on weaker families
8	Religious importance to the locals	Feud with another family	Prone to producing feral psychics
9	Substantial agricultural resources	Pushed an ambition too far	Suffers heritable negative mutation
10	Technical expertise	Ravaged by raider attacks	Tendency to casually betray allies
11	Traditional respect and importance	Serious political mistake	Too rigidly traditional to adapt
12	Wealth in scrap and salvage	Source of influence is waning	Treats the younger generation as fodder

TIER THRESHOLDS			
RESOURCE	*1*	*2*	*3*
FOOD	6	60	600
INFLUENCE	3	30	300
MORALE	4	40	400
SECURITY	4	40	400
TECH	3	30	300

The Polity is the classic enclave, a group of men and women who have gathered together to build a community based on mutual trust and a unity of allegiance. Some are simple wasteland farming hamlets or deep-hidden refuges, while others might rise to the glory of a true post-apocalyptic city. Whatever their numbers, the Polity is an organization built on a shared sense of loyalty.

The smallest polities are tier 1: farming hamlets, fishing villages, possibly small market towns that supply artisan skills to the surrounding farmsteads. Such Polities might be important to their immediate surroundings but their influence rarely extends more than a day's march from their palisades. Tier 1 Polities can be inserted wherever they are wanted without disturbing the regional political balance, and players are unlikely to have their suspension of disbelief damaged by the sudden appearance of such a small settlement in their wandering.

Tier 2 Polities are more important, being substantial market towns, tight federations of healthy villages, or primitive city-states that lay claim to a significant stretch of land. At this level, the Polity is important to the local political economy. Distant enclaves can get away with ignoring such powers, but neighboring communities must take such communities into consideration. The tensions of scarcity and the unrelenting pressure of the wastes often make such relations a zero-sum game of skirmishes and deniable raids. Even distant enclaves are likely to have heard of such Polities, though they may know little more than their name and general direction.

Tier 3 Polities don't exist in every region, as they are fully-developed proto-nations with a capital and several subsidiary settlements. The confusion and untamed dangers of the wastes limit the practical size and cohesion of such Polities, but the locals have an impressive sense of shared identity over the breadth of its territory. Tier 3 Polities shape the political landscape of the entire region. Any other significant settlement must have some sort of answer to such a community's power, whether that is grudging cooperation or outright enmity. Such powerful Polities usually have at least one or two advantages in natural resources or old alliances to explain their remarkable success.

When sketching out a Polity, it's often most important to give it its own flavor, the better to distinguish it from all the other hamlets and market villages scattered around the wastes. If the enclave is being created as part of the region creation process, it will naturally have one or two Tags to help define it. If you haven't bothered to roll Tags for the place, you can use the table below to dice up a few quick elements that can stick in the PCs' minds.

Simple, clear, quickly-noticed qualities are best for such purposes, as they can be presented without relying on the PCs to take much interest in the enclave's doings. The riverside community with reed-bundle huts, ochre clay streakings on their bodies, and an eagerness to entice outsiders into marrying into their population is far easier to remember than simply one more minor fishing village.

POLITY DETAILS AND TRAITS			
1d12	*Symbols of Belonging*	*Architectural Style*	*Habits Toward Outsiders*
1	Food or behavioral taboos	Bundled reed huts	Actively seek alliance with strong outsiders
2	Hairstyles or body paint	Caves and underground rooms	Casual arrogance toward "primitives"
3	Heritable mutation common in group	Crude rubble huts	Elite use them as catspaws against rivals
4	Land owned within the polity	Fieldstone buildings	Fearful and mistrustful of them
5	Particular article of dress	Floating water-borne structures	Hard-eyed pragmatism about their use
6	Particular songs, dances, or artwork	Large scrap-fashioned buildings	Hesitant curiosity about their ways
7	Personal patronage from polity elite	Mud brick and adobe	Looking for marriageable new blood
8	Scarification or tattoos	Poured cement and concrete	Rapacious swindlers of the unwary
9	Specific language	Refurbished ancient ruins	Ritual avoidance until proven friends
10	Symbolic jewelry or adornment	Stacked log construction	Seek to form trade relationships
11	Unbroken ancestry in the polity	Tents and yurts	Treat them as expendable mercenaries
12	Uniform religious membership	Wattle and daub structures	Want to convert them to their faith

RAIDERS

Nobody loves Raiders except PCs, and that's because they can shoot these bandits without any need for tedious reflection. Raiders are a scourge on the New Earth and a major reason for the desperate condition of so many of its enclaves. Too lazy or bloodthirsty to make a living in a constructive way, Raiders are the entropic embodiment of the chaos of this immiserated world.

There are as many different kinds of murderous parasitism as there are raider bands. Some prefer blunt assaults on small communities, killing anyone who resists, stealing everything they can carry, and burning what they can't take. Others are sufficiently disciplined to harvest their victims like a farmer might shear his sheep, leaving the luckless villagers enough to survive on. Given the limited surplus the unfriendly earth provides, this margin is often not enough.

Raiders are loyal only to their own, and often not even that. Some bands are large and powerful enough to become self-sustaining, replenishing some of their losses through the children of their slaves and wives- a distinction often invisible to outsiders. Most raider bands are forced to recruit from exiles, the remnant survivors of destroyed communities, and slaves kidnapped from their former lives. After a few months of enforced participation in Raider rites and atrocities, the new recruit knows that return is impossible for them.

Tier 1 Raiders are constantly appearing and disappearing, often as shards of some broken Polity or shattered clan. These bandits-by-necessity may start as simple survivors taking only what they require for their needs, but the temptation of violence and theft is usually enough to turn them into outright reavers in a short time. These small bands can be a misery to nearby neighbors, but they usually stay well away from more powerful communities. Raiders want loot, not an honest fight.

	TIER THRESHOLDS		
RESOURCE	1	2	3
FOOD	4	40	400
INFLUENCE	1	10	100
MORALE	5	50	500
SECURITY	6	60	600
TECH	4	40	400

Tier 2 Raiders usually have a central base of operations in a ruin or a community that they've entirely broken to their will. The numbers they muster need vast areas to support them, and their numerous foraging bands are a scourge on neighboring enclaves. Their sheer numbers make them formidable foes on the battlefield, and a careful warlord can go for years between reprisals simply by ensuring that his "taxes" are cheaper than the cost of dislodging him.

Tier 3 Raiders are entire parasite states or region-tormenting hordes. Those without an enslaved city-state of their own are usually forced on long circular journeys throughout the region, stripping communities bare like a swarm of two-legged locusts. It's unlikely that any other enclave in the region can hope to stand against them, and only an alliance of desperate and courageous groups has any chance of breaking their reign of terror.

Raiders are almost invariably antagonistic groups to the PCs. Even the more amoral bands of adventurers rarely have any use for competition. The detail table below offers a few possibilities for quick differentiation of raider bands and some potential problems that can be used to catch the attention of PCs.

	RAIDER DETAILS AND TRAITS		
1d12	Favorite Methods	Insignia and Symbols	Current Problem
1	Ambushing small groups of victims	Brutal scarification or tattooing	A faction schemes with their enemies
2	Cannibalizing unfortunate victims	Favored specific weapon	A powerful enclave wants revenge on them
3	Corruption of enclave informants	Flag of an Old Terran group	Food supplies are uncomfortably low
4	Disciplined sieges of enclaves	Flaunted trophies of war	Gear is wearing out too quickly to replace
5	Extorting tribute in exchange for peace	Human bones	Raider leadership is divided
6	Hire them as mercenaries- or else	Mandate security uniforms	Rivals have pushed them off their usual turf
7	Kidnapping children as forced recruits	Matching clothing colors	Slaves plot a bloody rebellion against them
8	Nomadic travel from enclave to enclave	Medals for victorious "battles"	The leader just finished a bloody purge
9	Ruthless, formalized slave-taking	Preserved body parts of foes	The raiders are wildly overconfident
10	Taking hostages to ensure cooperation	Skins of their victims	The rank and file are angry and frustrated
11	Terrorizing with spectacular atrocities	Specific chants or songs	They've been losing fights lately
12	Use of madness-inducing combat drugs	Totemic beast	Zealous belief in a bizarre, impractical cult

Equipment and Artifacts

The wastelands of the New Earth would be uninhabitable by humanity were it not for their armory of tools and technical expertise. The great majority of its dwellers make do with the handicrafts they and their neighbors can construct, but the prize of Old Terran salvage always draws hungry interest. Adventuring groups often become some of the best-equipped and technologically sophisticated groups in the region, but every wasteland wanderer needs to start somewhere. Often as not, that starting point is a scrap-metal spear and a reckless ambition for glory.

Tech Levels and Lost Knowledge

Gear and devices in *Other Dust* are divided up into six different *Tech Levels*. These levels provide an easy shorthand for describing the complexity of a device and the difficulty of building or repairing it. Most enclaves are capable of creating TL0 and TL1 fabrications out of local resources, but more sophisticated gear often requires salvaged parts and an unusual level of technical expertise.

Tech Level 0 represents very basic objects fashioned from easily-obtained raw materials. Pottery, woven cloth, weapons of wood and stone, and most other Neolithic handicrafts fall under this heading. Substantial skill may be involved in knapping a good flint knife or firing a clay pot, but the materials for making such goods are so common that almost any enclave can preserve their crafting techniques with minimal effort.

Tech Level 1 represents items involving basic metalwork, unsophisticated chemistry, or exceptional precision in handcrafting. Most objects created before and during the Renaissance fall under this heading, such as crossbows, wheeled carts, ships, and metal objects. Most enclaves can craft objects requiring this level of sophistication, but they often require metal scrap, Old Terran salvage, or other premade parts as vital elements of the craftwork. Very few enclaves have the necessary understanding of mining, smelting, or chemical refining to manufacture their own raw materials.

Tech Level 2 covers items up to the early Industrial Age, including gunpowder, basic firearms and steam-powered vehicles and engines. It's not uncommon for an enclave to have an expert artisan capable of crafting objects at this level, but such a crafter almost always requires some Old Terran scrap to reassemble into the desired device. Precision machining, control of alloy compositions, and difficulty in creating pure chemical inputs make it a struggle for any enclave to manufacture these goods without outside salvage.

Tech Level 3 includes items up to the early twenty-first century, including basic computers, internal combustion engines, sophisticated firearms, and powered tools. Finding artisans capable of assembling these goods out of scrap is never trivial outside of the largest and most prosperous enclaves.

Tech Level 4 represents the standard civilian tech level of Old Terra. Energy weapons, grav vehicles, Link implants, robots, holographic displays and interfaces, and sophisticated medical gengineering are all found at this level. Only the rarest savants are capable of constructing this equipment without the help of extensive engineering data and a vast supply of Old Terran salvage. Finding someone capable of building this gear is often an adventure in itself.

Tech Level 5 objects are the peak of human technology at its Old Terran height. AI cores, nanotech, biomedical stims, metadimensional energy manipulation, force fields, immortality treatments, and even wilder feats of creation were accomplished at this level. Building or repairing items at this level requires the Tech/Pretech skill rather than Tech/Postech, and most adepts have the sense to keep quiet about their abilities lest they be kidnapped and "encouraged" to work for some local warlord. Those few who have mastered the secrets of the lost world are often hampered by a lack of vital components.

Most enclaves lack artisans capable of constructing anything more sophisticated than TL1 gear. The ubiquity of salvage over the past two centuries has acted to cut human technological redevelopment off at the knees- it's just easier and more efficient to plunder some long-lost cache of Mandate tech than try to painstakingly recreate the basic industries necessary to manufacture a rifle out of iron ore and a stand of trees. Those few enclaves that struggle to rebuild a tech base are always at risk of some less scrupulous neighbor sweeping in with a score of salvaged mag rifles to enslave the entire community.

This carelessness comes at a price. As more and more of the easily-accessible salvage is plundered and used up, it becomes more difficult to find the basic tools and weaponry necessary to survive the New Earth's dangers. Eventually, the scattered human enclaves will run out of the relics of their forebears. They will be left to face the wasteland with nothing better than sharpened sticks and the vague memory of ancestors who could build with lightning and steel. The remnants of humanity need heroes and leaders to protect them while the old secrets are relearned, or mankind itself may gutter out in a score of increasingly desperate generations.

Encumbrance

In the perilous world of the New Earth, it's often safest to keep your belongings close to hand. Nomads and wanderers of the wastelands rarely own more than they can sling on their own backs or pack animals. After all, there is a limit to the amount of equipment a single adventurer can haul around.

A character can have ready a number of items equal to half their Strength score, rounded down. Ready items include those that the character is using or wearing at all times, or that they have conveniently to hand in sheaths, holsters, or belt pouches. Suits of armor count as readied items, but the normal clothing and jewelry that a character might wear does not. A character can draw or produce a readied item as part of any action they may take during a turn.

A character may have a number of stowed items equal to their full Strength score. Stowed items are carried in backpacks, in carefully balanced leg or arm pockets, or otherwise packed away where they will least encumber the character. If a character needs to get out a

stowed item in a hurry, it will take one round to dig it out of their pack or pockets.

Very small items carried in small numbers do not count against encumbrance limits. Other small items can be packed together into bundles to simplify their carriage, though getting at them then takes an additional round of fumbling with the packaging. Exactly how many of a given small item can be packed into a single item bundle is up to the GM, though as a rule of thumb up to six Type A energy cells, three rations of food, or three magazines of bullets can be bound into one packed item. A quiver of twenty arrows or loose bag of twenty bullets also counts as one item.

Characters can burden themselves with more gear if they're willing to sacrifice some fleetness of foot to do so. Up to two additional items can be carried ready or four additional ones stowed at the cost of becoming Lightly Encumbered, and having their base movement slowed from 20 meters per round to 15 meters per round. A further two items can be carried ready or four stowed at the cost of becoming Heavily Encumbered, with base movement reduced to 10 meters per round.

On the equipment lists, some items are given an encumbrance value higher than 1. These items count as multiple objects for encumbrance purposes, being heavy, clumsy, or unwieldy to carry.

THE APOCALYPTIC ECONOMY

Possessions are precious on New Earth. Most dwellers in an enclave are forced to spend their waking hours tending crops or hunting for food, and lack the luxury of surplus required to support an elaborate system of commerce and manufacturing. Virtually every object in daily use is either a plundered relic of Old Terra or the result of laborious crafting by a skilled artisan.

Shops and commercial markets exist only in the richest and most powerful enclaves. Elsewhere, buying goods requires a painstaking round of the local inhabitants to find the skilled crafters and then convincing those artisans to leave aside their usual farming or hunting and take the time to actually make you what you need. In many settlements, there simply won't be anyone who has the skills required to make sophisticated equipment, and no amount of food or plunder can buy it.

Occasional trade caravans move from enclave to enclave on a seasonal or yearly basis, exchanging portable valuables or scrap salvage with the locals. These caravans can be sources of exotic goods or Old Terran relics, but they charge according to their risks- and their risks are immense. Few traders live to die in their beds, and the wilderness is littered with the bones of merchants who have fallen prey to mutants, raiders, or drifts of Black Dust. Goods bought from a trade caravan are usually at least twice as expensive as they would be if bought from a local seller.

Adventurers are advised to keep their belongings within reach at all times when among strangers or foreign enclaves. Theft is a commonplace in the wastelands, and any object left unattended is unlikely to be there when the former owner returns.

BARTER AND TRADE

The basic unit of barter in this desolate world is a meal of clean food. Gold is a shiny adornment, tech is an enigmatic luxury, even weapons and tools are of secondary concern. The one overriding passion of most denizens of New Earth is finding something to eat. Traders can almost always find someone willing to trade goods and services for a supply of clean, uncontaminated foodstuffs.

One kilogram of nutrient-dense edibles amounts to a day's ration of food for most people, and goes by the general denomination of a "rasher", "ration", or "rat". Three of these rations can be bundled into one item for encumbrance purposes. Even contaminated food is worth something to most people, allowing them to stretch their limited supply of clean provender further. A ration of contaminated food usually trades for only a quarter of the value of a ration of clean food, and is often called a "bite". Above both, however, are the sealed Old Terran food packages hotly desired by all. Not only do they sustain the body, but they also heal minor injuries and can cleanse contamination. A ration of pretech foodstuffs is worth ten times its weight in ordinary provender in most places, and is usually called a "platter" or "plat" after the serving trays usually packaged with the comestibles.

BARTER VALUES		
1 kg of pretech rations	=	10 kgs of clean rations
1 kg of clean rations	=	4 kgs of dirty rations

Food's value as a medium of exchange is limited in that most fresh food will eventually go bad, though pretech food will remain fresh and edible for as long as the seal is intact. For the amounts of food usually carried by PCs, it's not normally worth tracking this decay. Still, trying to trade a person or community more food than they can eat before it goes bad is not usually going to meet with success unless the buyer is confident they can trade the excess on before it rots. Fortunately, most properly-preserved foodstuffs can last for months before succumbing to mold, rot and vermin.

More wealthy, sophisticated cultures might use a less perishable medium of exchange. Some city-states rich enough to concern themselves with luxuries mint their own coinage from precious metals or use specific varieties of Old Terran credit chips. These chips vary widely in denomination, mint location, and decoration, and most cities accept only chips from their own surrounding area. It's quite possible for PCs to discover a massive trove of old credit chips that are of value only in a city a month's march away. When relevant, a character with Business skill or a Culture skill in the relevant enclave can usually determine if a given type of chip is worth anything in nearby lands.

When recording coinage or credit chips, players should note down the issuer as well. Thus, a character's sheet may note the possession of 57 Pitz gilt slugs and 117 Deesee credits. Each unit of coinage is usually worth a quarter-kilo of fresh food from someone with spare to sell. Coinage weight can usually be ignored for encumbrance purposes, but for truly huge hoards, each 500 coins can be counted as one encumbrance item when determining how much of it the PCs can pack out.

Local Prices

In any barter economy, the value of a given good is going to depend on how badly the buyer needs it, or how certain he is that he can move it along later to someone who will need it more. A little focus on this can be an enjoyable dose of verisimilitude in the game, but most groups won't be interested in haggling over every flint knife and fresh power cell they want to buy. As such, the equipment tables in this chapter give baseline prices in rations for goods and services.

If a GM plans on sticking to these baseline prices, it's worth having the players note down the value of their gear on their character sheets. When it comes time to trade for something new, it will save them time looking up the individual value of their barter goods. Often, they'll be obliged to offer something with a higher value than whatever it is they want to acquire, simply because they don't have "exact change" for it. Most sellers won't be offering to make up the difference. As a general matter, GMs should always feel free to just eyeball an exchange- "A combat rifle for a half-dozen patch stims? He decides that it sounds fair if you throw in twenty rounds of ammo."

However the GM decides to do it, he or she should be careful to pay attention to the wishes and preferences of the group. Some groups want a fairly static and reliable scale of value, one where they can expect a certain amount of goods to be worth a certain value in trade. Other groups enjoy more emphasis on the capricious and unreliable nature of barter economies, and might make a point of moving goods that are common in one location through dangerous territory to a place of scarcity elsewhere. It's up to the GM to decide where a particular game should place itself on this economic continuum.

Armor

Armor	Armor Class	Encumbrance	Cost	Tech Level
Normal Clothing/Unarmored	9	0	5	0
Shields	-1 bonus	1	5	1
Hide Armor	6	1	10	0
Old Terran Clothing	7	0	40	4
Scrap Mail	5	2	40	1
Harmony Armor	4	1	80	3
Scrap Plate	3	3	100	2
Terran Explorer Suit	4	0	250	4
Insurgent Combat Shell	3	1	500	4
Executive Protection Field	2	0	1,500	5
Powered Armor	1	2	1,000	4
Storm Plate	0	1	5,000	5

Hunters, adventurers, and warriors of the New Earth are almost always found in some kind of protective clothing. Most have nothing better than the tanned hides of the creatures they kill, but some lucky or skilled souls are able to obtain better protection. The thick hides of mutant creatures provide some defense even against bullets and energy beams.

Heavily-armored characters are effectively immune to unarmed attacks. Those with AC 3 or less cannot be injured by an unarmed combatant unless the attacker has the advantage of a mutant's natural attacks, the Combat/Unarmed skill at 2 or better, or augmentation devices such as kinesis wraps. Most of the savage beasts of the wasteland have sufficiently impressive natural weaponry to overcome even heavy armor.

Primitive armor tends to be heavy, and adds a significant amount of encumbrance. Characters with mutations that leave them with additional limbs or drastic physical alterations cannot use armor that hasn't been modified for their physiognomy. Crafters can do this as part of making a suit for them, and characters with the appropriate Tech expertise can refit existing suits. Refit attempts require one day

and three units of the appropriate spare parts per tech level of the armor.

Some powered armor requires the use of energy cells. Such armor immediately drains whatever cell is inserted and remains powered for the full duration given- it's not possible to "turn it off" between combats in order to save energy.

Unarmored: Such people might be half-naked tribals or enclave villagers wearing only their common daily dress. While the homespun and soft leathers of normal clothing is relatively cheap, it provides no real protection in a fight.

Shields: Most shields are of modern construction, barring a few ancient Old Terran riot shields. Most are composed of transparent composite cut and shaped to a serviceable form, though the most primitive are nothing more than thin sheets of metal or planks of wood bound together. Shields grant an armor class bonus to the wearer against melee weapons or primitive missile attacks. Multi-armed mutants can benefit only from one shield.

Hide Armor: The hides and scales of the mutants of the New Earth are often far tougher than the soft leathers of a gentler age. Many enclaves lack the skills and resources to make any better armor than this, though some examples can be quite intricately worked.

Old Terran Clothing: These fabric comprising these colorful outfits never fades, rots, or stains, and it has a toughness that makes it a popular armor choice for those scavengers fortunate enough to find a full outfit. As ubiquitous as this cloth was in the years before the Scream, hard use, environmental nanite contamination, and the gnawing of mutant vermin has transformed most pretech cloth into tattered rags. Intact clothing is somewhat rare and remains a valuable article.

Scrap Mail: Tough pretech fibers and textiles are woven together around Old Terran credit chips and other sturdy fragments of ancient plastic, usually with an undersuit of thicker padding to absorb the impact of incoming blows. Some scrap mail resembles patched and studded clothing, while other has a more overtly armored appearance to it. Working with pretech cloth is difficult, and manufacturing an effective suit of scrap mail requires expertise, good tools, and patience with the stubborn fabric.

Harmony Armor: The sight of the mirrored helms and snug black armor of the Harmony Bureau was meant to provoke a clammy dread among Old Terra's rebels. Most security officers died soon after the Scream, either lynched by panicked citizens, slaughtered by the engines of the Crazed, or killed while trying to contain the countless local disasters that occurred during the catastrophe. Every so often, however, an adventurer finds a suit stored away in a usable condition.

Scrap Plate: These suits of articulated plate and woven mail are painstakingly assembled from fragments of Old Terran ceramic shielding and reinforced composite. Working such tough material with the tools available to most scrapsmiths is laborious and difficult, and finding the right plates and curved surfaces requires a rich trove of parts for the basic components. Such armor is the best that most enclaves can produce, though the weight and inevitable imperfections of fit can be cumbersome to a wearer. Those wearing scrap plate take a -1 penalty to skill checks involving movement.

Terran Explorer Suit: Restrictions on movement and population growth left wide swaths of Old Terra in a relatively pristine state. Many Mandate citizens enjoyed outdoor activities in these natural preserves, and clothing designed to facilitate this recreation was widely available before the Scream. Most such outfits appear to be snug civilian clothes, often with metafabrics fashioned to resemble leather, canvas, or wool in assorted styles of "rustic durability".

Explorer suits are very tough and subtly padded against impacts. All keep their wearer comfortable, clean, and dry under any normal Terran climate range. Small nano-imbued pads in the cloth can be pressed to foodstuffs or water- if the pads turn red, the substance is tainted, poisonous, or otherwise dangerous to eat, thus granting a +1 bonus to Survival checks when foraging. Glove and boot nanites can be triggered to cling to otherwise smooth surfaces, giving a +2 bonus on checks to climb an object, and integral spark elements allow the wearer the benefits of a firestarter. With the collapse of the

global positioning system, many of the suit's navigational elements are no longer useful, but its inertial locator can be locked to the user's location, thereafter giving a constant bearing and distance back toward that designated point.

The explorer suit is designed to run off of the trace power provided by a wearer's movement and body heat. The suit must be worn for at least an hour before any of its special functions are usable, but afterwards it will continue to operate until it is removed.

Insurgent Combat Shell: Most Mandate-era rebels and malcontents lacked access to advanced Old Terran military technology. However, they did have the use of numerous less sophisticated shaping and molding devices. Combined with high-impact composites and advanced civilian metafabrics, these rebels were able to produce a significant amount of light, durable armor for their more zealous operatives. These combat shells were built for use under circumstances when power, maintenance, and support were unlikely to be readily available. Most have similar qualities, as the basic plans for the suits were widely available on the black Net.

In addition to the protection provided by the shell, photomimetic materials embedded on the exterior surfaces allow the wearer to blend in with their surroundings, granting a +1 bonus to Stealth checks. The shell contains passive thermal and humidity regulation elements that keep the wearer comfortable under any normal Terran climate range, and it's even possible to sleep in the shell without undue harm to the wearer's rest. The suit is unpowered and requires no energy source.

Executive Protection Field: One of the more advanced products of Mandate technology, this force field system was designed to provide discreet but thorough protection for high-ranking Mandate bureaucrats and important security officials. The shield emitters themselves take the form of wristbands and anklets that project an invisible, largely intangible thermokinetic dispersion field. It automatically detects and shunts dangerous incoming objects and energies, flaring a pale blue when triggered. The kinetic dampers also negate all falling damage the wearer might otherwise incur. Operating the field requires a type A power cell for 24 hours of use.

Powered Armor: These sophisticated shells of composites, ceramics, and advanced alloys were uncommon on Old Terra, with most security needs filled by more conventional measures. Something more was needed to handle hardened rebel cells and maltech outbreaks, and the rare remaining suits of powered armor often bear the marks of rebel weapons and the eldritch energies of forbidden science. Operators without at least a level-0 skill in Exosuit suffer a -4 penalty to hit rolls and move at only half speed while cumbered with the heavy suit. Those with greater expertise can move so as to lessen the suit's restrictiveness, subtracting their skill from its Encumbrance rating.

Powered armor can sustain a full environmental seal indefinitely, providing the user with oxygen and protecting them from most hostile environments. The wearer gets a +4 bonus to save versus radiation, and is immune everything short of military-grade invasive combat gases. The wearer can pack an additional 2 readied and 4 stored items with no additional encumbrance thanks to the

suit's augmented joints. One type B power cell fuels the armor for 24 hours of use. The armor can be used even when power is unavailable, but the environmental seals and joint augments will no longer work, and the suit will then count as 4 items worth of encumbrance. The same burden applies if an unpowered suit is to be carried by a character.

Storm Plate: Most of the surviving Old Terran suits of storm plate were never intended for actual use. They were intended for the ceremonial guard of elite Mandate officials, for demonstrative displays of military strength among restive locals and the intimidation of troublesome malcontents. The masters of Old Terra shipped most of these suits offworld to supply Mandate Fleet operations against hardened alien fortifications and recalcitrant planetary governments. Operators without at least a level-1 skill in Exosuit suffer a -4 penalty to hit rolls and move at only half speed while dealing with the suit's neural interface. Those with level-2 skill or greater can treat the suit as if it had no Encumbrance cost.

Storm plate is composed of intricate, interlocking plates of nanoreinforced composites and psitech-created alloys. Injuring its wearer is a matter more of luck than raw firepower, as the suit subtracts 6 points of damage from any injury source that isn't a Gunnery-type weapon or similar massive trauma. The suit's environmental seals can be maintained indefinitely, and it can ignore up to 2 dice of environmental damage per round, wading through caustic chemicals and bulling through bonfires without harm. Radiation is ignored unless the radiation save is required once per minute or more. Integral blades give the user the benefits of a monoblade in melee combat, allowing either Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Primitive for hit rolls. The wearer can bear their full Strength in readied items and twice their Strength in stowed gear.

The suit is an insatiable energy hog, however, and requires one type B energy cell for every eight hours of operation. Unpowered suits are immobile and count as 8 items of encumbrance for those carting the dead suit.

PRIMITIVE WEAPONRY

Weapon	Damage	Range in Meters	Cost	Attribute	Tech
Unarmed Attack*	1d2	-	-	Str/Dex	-
Knife or Club	1d4	6/9	1	Str/Dex	0
Spear	1d6	10/20	2	Str	0
Sword	1d8	-	10	Str/Dex	1
Great Weapon	2d6	-	10	Str	1
Bow, Primitive	1d6	50/75	20	Dex	1
Bow, Advanced	1d6	100/150	100	Dex	3
Grenade, Fragmentation	2d6	10/30	20	Dex	3
Grenade, Stun	2d4	10/30	20	Dex	4
Grenade, Sticky	Special	10/30	40	Dex	4
Stun Baton	1d8*	-	50	Str	3
Monoblade	1d8+1	6/9	200	Str/Dex	4
Huge Monoblade	2d8+2	-	300	Str	4
Proton Axe	3d10	-	600	Str	5
Kinesis Wraps*	1d2+2	-	25	Str/Dex	4

Ranges are expressed in normal and maximum ranges. Firing at a target past normal range applies a -2 hit penalty.
* These weapons use the Combat/Unarmed skill, and the user may add their skill level to the damage done.

Virtually every inhabitant of the New Earth has some kind of primitive weapon near to hand, usually a knife, club, or spear. Primitive weapons include all those tools of murder that rely on a strong human arm for operation, though some can gain exceptional benefit from a dextrous wielder. Each weapon has an associated attribute listed for it, and that attribute's modifier is used to determine hit and damage bonuses. If two attributes are listed the better of the two may be used. Attacks can be made with ranged weapons up to the listed maximum distance. Attacks over the first increment given suffer a -2 penalty.

Weapons count as one item for encumbrance purposes. Weapons that require two hands to use, such as great weapons or rifles, count as two items.

Knife: Whether chipped stone, glass-edged wood, or sharpened metal, almost every denizen of the New Earth has at least this much of a weapon available near to hand. Statistics for knives can also be used for clubs, staves, and other light and simple weapons.

Spear: The spear is the universal weapon of hunters and warriors alike on the New Earth. Its simple manufacture, ease of use, and versatility as a hunting weapon make it the weapon of choice for most tribals and denizens of the less advanced enclaves. Most spears require only one hand and can be thrown; larger pikes qualify as a Great Weapon.

Sword: Most swords on the New Earth have a greater resemblance to machetes than to elegant dueling weapons, many of them de-

signed to serve both as brush-clearing tools and weapons of war. The statistics for swords can also be applied to fighting axes, maces, and other one-handed weapons designed specifically for combat.

Great Weapon: Some mighty-thewed warriors fight with massive steel blades or two-handed hammers of scrap and pounded rebar. Whatever their specific appearance, great weapons require two hands to use and can be devastatingly injurious to those unlucky enough to get in their way.

Bow, Primitive: Expertise in the bow requires extensive training and practice, and many enclaves lack a tradition of bowmanship. Those that do have the knowledge often make a jealous point of passing it on to their sons and daughters, as even those simple bows fashioned from modern wood and sinew have a vastly superior range to a thrown spear.

Bow, Advanced: Some bows are fashioned out of Old Terran composites and counterweights, allowing for superior range and ease of use. Constructing such a device requires expertise and a careful scavenging for parts with just the right elements of stiffness and resilience.

Grenade, Fragmentation: Most fragmentation grenades found on Old Terra are makeshift devices built by ancient rebels or modern scavengers. While crude, they remain deadly against foes without cover. Grenade users always roll to attack AC 9. On a miss, the grenade lands 1d10 meters away from the target in a random direction. Hit or miss, the grenade then explodes for 2d6 damage to all unsheltered targets within 5 meters. Victims are allowed a Luck save for half damage. Targets take 1 less point of damage for each point of AC below 6, applied after the save.

Grenade, Stun: These non-lethal grenades were popular among Mandate security forces, and detonate with a stunning blast of sonics and electrical force. They operate just as fragmentation grenades do, but do 2d4 damage. If a victim is reduced to 0 hit points by a stun grenade, they do not die, but are instead rendered unconscious for 1d4 minutes before waking with 1 hit point.

Grenade, Sticky: Nanite-based adhesives cause the grenade to stick to a surface once it lands or is placed by the user. These grenades can be fused to detonate as much as five minutes after placement

Their highly focused explosions make them almost useless against mobile targets, but a hit against AC 9 will allow the grenade to be thrown against a door, object, or stationary vehicle within range. When the grenade detonates, it will blast a man-sized hole in most doors, wooden walls, or unarmored barriers. These grenades are useless against armored military vehicles, but can disable most civilian models with a single use. The blast is always aimed directly along the line of the grenade's throw and extends in a cone 3 meters beyond the barrier; any victims in that blast zone are treated as if they'd been hit by a fragmentation grenade.

Monoblade: Whether a nanite-edged brush cutter, a microfusion-powered chainsaw, a fractal-edged Old Terran dueling sword, or simply an industrial cutting bar, monoblades cover the wealth of advanced Old Terran tools and artifacts that can be used as lethal weapons. These tools are almost always unpowered or self-powered and require no energy cells. Very few of them require more than one hand for effective use, and the smaller ones can be thrown short ranges.

Given an undisturbed minute or two, most of them can cut their way through any primitive wood or wattle construction without damage to the monoblade.

Stun Baton: Once popular among the more pacific members of the Mandate Security apparatus, these short batons can jolt a non-lethal surge of electricity through a victim. A type A power cell will fuel a stun baton for up to forty successful hits. The batons themselves are flexible and ineffective as bludgeons. A target brought to 0 hit points by a stun baton is rendered unconscious rather than dead, and will recover any hit points lost to the baton within an hour, waking up once they're restored. Batons can be used to kill, but it requires extensive beating of an already-unconscious target.

Huge Monoblade: These advanced weapons don't necessarily all have sharp edges, but their statistics can be used for all Old Terran devices that can be used as two-handed melee weapons. Exceptionally large laser cutters, finishing saws, and oversized monomolecular cutting bars fall under this heading, as do powered splitting mauls, breaching hammers, repurposed sheet cutters, and other two-handed implements of ruin.

Proton Axe: Electromagnetic ripples of force waft from the edge of this Old Terran implement of destruction. Requiring both hands to wield it, the proton axe was often used by Harmony agents in need of fast entry to a rebel redoubt. When powered, it is treated as a Gunnery weapon for the purposes of ignoring vehicle armor and the toughness of walls and doors. Proton axes require type A power cells, and the cell must be swapped after ten successful hits with the axe. An unpowered proton axe does only 2d8+2 damage and does not ignore toughness.

Kinesis Wraps: Commonly appearing as gloves or otherwise innocuous clothing, kinesis wraps focus the impact of a punch or kick into a knife-narrow wedge of force. Kinesis wraps are indistinguishable from ordinary gloves or boots without close inspection, and allow an unarmed combatant to harm heavily armored enemies. Attackers use the Combat/Unarmed skill when fighting with kinesis wraps.

Projectile Weaponry

Weapon	Damage	Range in Meters	Cost	Magazine	Attribute	Tech
Breechloading Rifle	1d12	25/50	30	1	Dex	2
Revolver	1d8	30/100	50	6	Dex	2
Semi-automatic Pistol	1d6+1	30/100	75	12	Dex	3
Semi-Automatic Rifle	1d10+2	200/400	75	6	Dex	2
Shotgun	3d4	10/30	50	2	Dex	2
Submachine Gun	1d8 *	30/100	200	20	Dex	3
Combat Rifle	1d12 *	100/300	300	30	Dex	3
Combat Shotgun	3d4 *	10/30	300	12	Dex	3
Mag Pistol	2d6+2	100/300	600	6	Dex	4
Mag Rifle	2d8+2	300/600	800	10	Dex	4

Ranges are expressed in normal and maximum ranges. Firing at a target past normal range applies a -2 hit penalty.
* These weapons can use burst fire. A burst gains +2 to hit and damage and uses up three rounds of ammunition.

The careful control of parts for advanced energy weapons led to a renaissance of the gunsmith's arts during the last years of Old Terra. Many rebel groups were led to prefer "slugthrowers" by the difficulty of obtaining powered weapons and the relative ease of converting civilian machine tools to gun crafting purposes. Some modern enclaves retain enough expertise to fashion basic firearms, provided they have sufficient supplies of scrap for their construction.

For ease of play, ammunition for the various firearms is assumed to be interchangeable. Any warrior of the New Earth who plans to use firearms often will soon master the arts of hand-loading and recycling brass, and most groups don't care to track individual bullet calibers. A pouch of 20 loose bullets counts as one encumbrance item, as does one full magazine or revolver speedloader. These items can be bundled together for easier hauling, with three of them counting as one item. Some advanced firearms are able to fire in burst mode. Each burst expends three bullets and grants a +2 bonus to the hit and damage roll for the attack.

Breechloading Rifle: Most breechloaders are modern artifacts, crafted out of parts and scrap by New Earth artisans. While far more powerful than a bow, it's much harder to find or fashion ammunition for them, and reloading takes longer than simply nocking an arrow. A few extremely primitive enclaves might even use muzzleloaders that require several rounds to reload, but most gunsmiths have enough scrap and expertise to skip the most clumsy stages of firearm development.

Revolver: Revolvers haven't the range or power of a long arm, but they can fire six shots before they require reloading. They're also substantially easier and more comfortable to carry, which can be a significant consideration to men and women who go armed at all times.

Semi-automatic Pistol: Somewhat more sophisticated than a revolver, and requiring more elaborate and finely-shaped components, the semi-auto pistol is beyond the limits of most enclave gunsmiths'

expertise. Repair is more difficult than with a revolver, but some owners are willing to accept that for the larger magazine.

Semi-automatic Rifle: Similar to the single-shot breechloading rifle, this model takes a magazine of six rounds, cutting down on the time necessary to reload the weapon during combat. While sharing the same TL2 tech level as its simpler cousin, plans for the weapon tend to be much more jealously guarded than crafting helps for the breechloading model. Few gunsmiths have the expertise to craft precision firearms without additional construction guides, so semi-automatic rifles remain relatively rare.

Shotgun: Simple, sturdy, and effective, the double-barreled shotgun is a popular tool for taking down the toughest mutant raiders. Slug rounds can be used when necessary, giving the shotgun a range of 50/75 and a damage of 2d6.

Submachine Gun: These cut-down weapons are no more powerful than most pistols, but they can fire in burst mode for better odds at hitting and downing a target. They remain most popular with ruin explorers who expect to engage enemies in tight quarters.

Combat Rifle: Very few gunsmiths have the necessary skill to build these automatic weapons, and their relative lack of usefulness as hunting tools also limits their appeal to any but the wealthiest and most bloody-handed warriors. Combat rifles can fire in burst mode.

Combat Shotgun: A complex and murderous device, the combat shotgun eats up ammunition at a ferocious pace in exchange for a remarkable capacity to shred its targets. Combat shotguns can use burst fire, and slug ammunition can be made with a range of 50/75 and damage of 2d6.

Mag Weaponry: Mag weaponry represents the peak of Old Terran rebel ingenuity. Most surviving mag guns are relics of the time before the Scream, devices built in secret rebel redoubts. Both pistols and rifles use magnetic accelerators to launch shaped metal flechettes at supersonic speeds. Due to the advanced tech, mag weaponry does not require a separate power cell to fire its ammo.

Energy Weaponry

Weapon	Damage	Range in Meters	Cost	Magazine	Attribute	Tech
Laser Pistol	1d6	100/300	75	10	Dex	4
Laser Rifle	1d10 *	300/500	150	20	Dex	4
Thermal Pistol	2d6	25/50	200	5	Dex	4
Plasma Projector	2d8	50/100	400	6	Dex	4
Shear Rifle	2d8 *	100/300	600	10	Dex	5
Whip Beam	2d6	30/60	600	6	Dex	5
Blackout Rifle	2d6	100/300	300	6	Dex	5
Neutron Blaster	2d8	30/30	1,000	6	Dex	5
* These weapons can use burst fire. A burst gains +2 to hit and damage and uses up three rounds of ammunition.						

Almost all energy weapons are Old Terran relics, as only the very finest scrapsmiths and scavengers of the New Earth have the expertise and raw materials necessary to build these weapons. Among Old Terran rebels, a modest number of laser pistols and rifles were cobbled together by hidden gunsmiths.

Energy weapons all operate using Type A power cells. Due to the lack of recoil or disorienting noise, energy weapons grant a +1 bonus on hit rolls. Most of them are also effectively silent in operation. Repair can be an issue, however, as even the simplest laser pistol requires TL4 spare parts for maintenance. Salvaged energy weapons that originated in Mandate armories or from core world munitions factories are also very likely to be Enigmatic items as per the guidelines in the Systems chapter.

Laser Pistol: Small and relatively simple, many rebel laser pistols were patched together out of cutting tools or salvaged focal elements from decommissioned holo units. Both laser pistols and laser rifles suffer when the air is full of particulate matter such as smoke or dust, suffering as much as a -4 penalty to hit rolls.

Laser Rifle: A larger beam crystal and bigger passive cooling elements allow laser rifles to be significantly more energy-efficient than their smaller brethren. Not only are its beams more powerful, but it can also fire in the electromagnetic equivalent of burst mode, expending three charges and gaining +2 on the hit and damage roll for the attack.

Thermal Pistols and Plasma Projectors: More focused weapons than the prosaic flamethrower, thermal pistols and their two-handed plasma projector cousins launch bubbles of superheated plasma at a nearby target.

Shear Rifle: The few remaining examples of this lethal energy weapon are Old Terran relics of elite Mandate security forces. Shear rifles use miniaturized gravitic engines to set up a lethal repulsor field within a target. Unlucky victims simply fall apart. Shear rifles can fire in bursts.

Whip Beam: An unusual breaching weapon used to crack barricaded rebel lairs, the whip beam gouts a pencil-thin beam of plasma
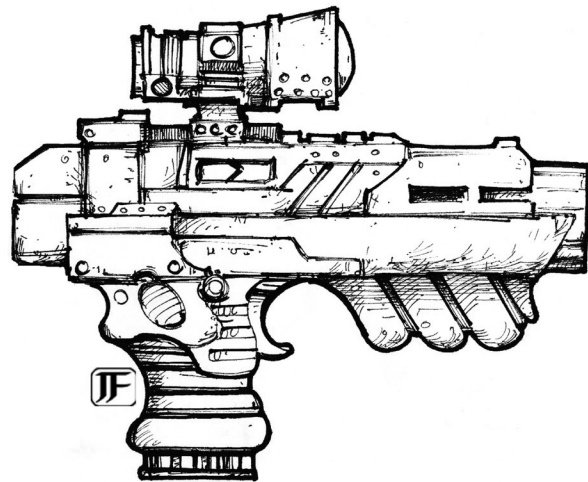
at its target. The beam persists long enough to be used as a cutting tool, and ignores up to 5 points of wall or door armor as described on in the real property section of this chapter.

Blackout Rifle: A non-lethal energy weapon much in favor with Mandate security officers, blackout rifles fire an electrical charge that temporarily disrupts a living target's nervous system. Damage done by a blackout rifle is tracked normally, but if a shot would bring the target to zero hit points or lower, the victim makes an immediate saving throw versus Tech at a penalty equal to the shooter's Combat/Energy skill. If the throw is successful, the hit does no damage. If the save fails, the victim collapses alive but unconscious for five minutes, waking up afterwards with 1 hit point remaining.

Neutron Blaster: These radiation-emitting energy weapons were usually built by rebels hoping to kill Mandate security officers without damaging their valuable equipment. The gouts of high-energy neutrons they emit are largely harmless to inanimate objects, but wreak havoc on living tissues. By their nature, Neutron Blasters are somewhat indiscriminate weapons and automatically target all subjects in a one-meter-wide line out to the limit of the weapon's range, allowing a hit roll against each. The radiation will penetrate multiple organic targets and will only be stopped by a wall, door or other solid barrier.

Gunnery Weaponry

Weapon	Damage	Range in Meters	Cost	Magazine*	Attribute	Tech
Catapult	3d8	90/180	50	-	Wis	1
Ballista	3d8	250/500	50	-	Wis	1
Heavy Machine Gun	3d6 #	500/2,000	500	10	Dex	2
Rocket Launcher	3d10	2,000/4,000	400	15	Dex	3
Railgun	3d8 #	1,000/2,000	1,200	20	Dex	4
Suppressor Cannon	4d6	50	1,000	6	Dex	4
Flamethrower, Primitive	2d8	20	400	6	Str	3
Hellgun	3d10	40	800	6	Str	4
Vortex Cannon	5d12	1,000/2,000	N/A	5	Dex	5
# These weapons can use suppressive fire. *Reloading anything but HMGs and rocket launchers takes three rounds.						

These heavy weapons are most often found mounted aboard vehicles or bolted into fixed positions on an enclave's wall. As a general rule, any weapon too big for a single person to use without a firing rest will qualify as a gunnery weapon, whether it uses bullets, power cells, or javelin-sized bolts. A few mobile gunnery systems do exist, however, including special grav-stabilized heavy weapons platforms and certain man-portable weapons such as flamethrowers and rocket launchers.

Most enclaves lack the resources to create effective gunnery weapons, though some have the expertise necessary to create the more primitive varieties. Many of the existing weapons are relics of Old Terra or retrofitted salvage turned into an implement of destruction. Gunnery-class weapons require twenty units of spare parts to build.

Energy-based gunnery weapons use Type B power cells. HMGs fire 20 rounds of ammo per shot, while rocket launchers require individual rockets, each of which cost 4 units of spare parts to build. Railgun ammunition takes 2 units of spare parts per round. Flamethrowers and hellguns require their own ammunition built from the appropriate spare parts, each 6 charges of fuel costing 8 units of spare parts. Exotic gunnery ammo is almost never available for sale.

Some heavy guns can be fired to suppress. Double the usual ammunition is fired in one round, and every target in front of the weapon that is not under hard cover is automatically hit for half normal damage. A successful Evasion or Luck saving throw eliminates this damage.

Catapult: A wooden arm under tension is the best heavy weapon some enclaves can build. Catapults are most effective against fortifications, but they can be loaded with smaller stones to pelt a general area. With a crew of four men, one shot can be gotten off every three rounds. For each man missing, the interval increases by one round, with a minimum of two required for operation. The crew captain applies his modifier to the attack roll. When loaded with a large stone, the catapult can only effectively target stationary obstacles. When loaded with smaller shot, they are fired and do damage as per a very long-range fragmentation grenade that misses by 1d20 meters on a failed attack roll against AC 0 and harms all within a 5 meter radius.

Ballista: Some enclaves face hulking mutant dangers that are best answered by crossbows built to a matching scale. Ballistas require a two-man crew and fire at the same rate as catapults, but gain a +4 bonus to hit creatures larger than man-sized. They can target only single enemies within range.

Heavy Machine Gun: These weapons are usually modern, enclave-built guns that range from crude gatling arrays to sleek mag-augmented bullet hoses. HMGs require a vehicle mounting or emplaced firing position for best results. Attempting to fire one without bedding it down properly on a tripod or other secure mount inflicts a -6 on all hit rolls and makes effective suppressive fire impossible.

Rocket Launcher: Most rebel-built rocket launchers were designed for bringing down Mandate security vehicles and cop bots rather than for use as wide-area explosives. They suffer a -4 hit penalty when attempting to target something as small as a human, but unlike most gunnery weapons they can be fired from the shoulder without a proper emplacement to support them. Alternate rockets exist that hit as do very long-range fragmentation grenades.

Railgun: Railguns resemble oversized mag rifles, and are sometimes found on heavy warbots or Mandate assault craft intended for cracking rebel fortifications. Their lethal spray of large metal flechettes can scythe down entire platoons of enemy troops in moments, and their flight-stabilized munitions give them excellent range.

Suppressor Cannon: An Old Terran anti-riot weapon, suppressor cannons use a combination of sonics and electrical discharges to incapacitate living subjects. Suppressor cannons can only fire in suppression mode- they cannot discharge single shots, and must use two charges and do half damage with every attack. Those who would be reduced to zero hit points by a suppressor cannon hit must make a saving throw versus Tech at a penalty equal to the shooter's Combat/Gunnery skill. Those who save automatically avoid the damage. Those who fail fall unconscious for half an hour before waking up with 1 hit point. A suppressor cannon has an area of effect equal to a cone fifty meters long and fifty meters wide at the far end.

Flamethrower, Primitive: Most primitive flamethrowers are crude pump devices that spout flaming streams of jellied petroleum distillates. Each shot from a primitive flamethrower is made against AC 9. On a hit, the intended victim can make an Evasion saving throw to dive clear, otherwise suffering an automatic 2d8 damage each round. The victim can use their action to try to stifle the flames, succeeding on a successful Tech saving throw.

On a miss, the flamethrower hits a location 1d6+1 meters away in a random direction. In either case, the location hit by the flamethrower is covered by a one-meter diameter pool of burning liquid that will inflict 2d4 damage to anyone who enters it or ends their turn in it. The pool burns for the duration of an ordinary fight.

Despite the best efforts of their creators, such devices are prone to dangerous malfunctions, especially in the face of thermal-based energy weapons. Whenever the wearer is hit by a natural 20- or on a 16+ by a laser, plasma weapon, or other heat-based attack- the wearer must make a saving throw versus Tech or the flamethrower drops to Broken condition. The user must then also make a Luck saving throw; if that fails as well, the flamethrower explodes, each remaining fuel charge in the tank inflicting 1d8 damage to the wearer, setting them aflame as above, and creating a pool of flame one meter in diameter for every 5 remaining charges.

Hellgun: These advanced flamethrowers played a limited role in guerrilla skirmishes in the last years of the Terran Mandate, but had some use in clearing out fortified bunkers of rebels. Most of them emit streams of spectacularly combustible chemicals, spewing streams of blazing liquid with a volatility to make chlorine trifluoride seem like mouthwash. These devil's brews could set a bucket of ice water on fire, let alone mere sand, glass, and robot armatures.

Hellguns operate in the same way as their more primitive cousins, but do more damage on a hit and can be used to burn through solid obstacles as well, eroding one meter of anything short of armored Old Terran construction plating every five rounds. Most of the chemicals are designed to become inert and harmless within 30 rounds of application, but their gaseous byproducts can be lethal in small spaces. Anyone in an interior area when one of these weapons is used must have their own oxygen apparatus or suffer 1d6 damage per round from caustic fumes until they escape the enclosed space.

Hellguns are susceptible to damage and explosion in the same way as their more primitive brethren, but do 2d8 damage per remaining fuel charge.

Vortex cannons use controlled gravitic shear planes to cause a target to simply fall apart into component fragments. The cannons are silent in operation, but so heavy that they can only be mounted on specialized fighting vehicles such as battlewagons or GFVs. A vortex cannon requires four vehicle hardpoints to mount.

ADVENTURING EQUIPMENT

Item	Cost	Enc	Tech
Ammunition, 20 rounds	20	1	2
Backpack	3/50	1/*	0/4
Bedroll	3/50	1/*	0/4
Binoculars	10/100	1/*	2/4
Blueprints, TL2	25	*	2
Blueprints, TL3	50	*	3
Blueprints, TL4	200	*	4
Blueprints, TL5	N/A	*	5
Bonding Tape	70	1	4
Broadcast Power Mod	N/A	4	4
Climbing Kit	50	1	4
Compad	150	1	4
Compass, Magnetic	10	1	1
Crowbar	5	1	1
Dataslab	100	1	4
Firebox	2/50	1	1/4
Firestarter	1/50	1/*	1/4
Geiger Counter	100	1	3
Generator, Nanofusion	N/A	1	5
Generator, Solar	10,000	20	4
Generator, Steam	4,000	-	2
Glowbug	1	*	4
Lantern	2	1	1
Link, Prosthetic	500	1	5
Low-Light Goggles	100/500	1/*	3/4
Medkit	100	1	4
Metatool	150	1	4
Navcomp	50	1	4

* These items weigh a negligible amount.
N/A - These items are almost never traded.

Item	Cost	Enc	Tech
Oil Flask	1	1	0
Power Cell, Type A	10	1	4
Power Cell, Type A+	50	1	4
Power Cell, Type B	50	1	4
Power Cell, Type B+	250	1	4
Ration, Dirty	0.25	1	0
Ration, Normal	1	1	0
Ration, Old Terran	10	1	4
Rope, 20m	5/50	3/1	1/4
Solar Cell	100	1	4
Spare Parts, TL0	0.25	1	0
Spare Parts, TL1	1	1	1
Spare Parts, TL2	4	1	2
Spare Parts, TL3	15	1	3
Spare Parts, TL4	60	1	4
Spare Parts, TL5	250	1	5
Telescoping Pole	20	1	2
Tent	10/200	4/1	0/4
Thermal Flare	20	1	3
Toolkit, TL1	10	2	1
Toolkit, TL2	40	3	2
Toolkit, TL3	150	4	3
Toolkit, TL4	N/A	4	4
Toolkit, TL5	N/A	1	5
Toxin Detector	100	1	4
Utility Tarp	50	1	4
Vacc Suit, Pretech	200	*	5
Water Filter	50	1	4

* These items weigh a negligible amount.
N/A - These items are almost never traded.

Ammunition: New Terran gunsmiths have proven remarkably ingenious in finding replacements for conventional gunpowder and brass, but ammunition remains precious and expensive. Most dedicated gunslingers either learn to compound their own or make friends with a skilled scrapsmith.

Backpack: Some tribals are lucky enough to have scavenged Old Terran camping gear. Such metasilk backpacks are effectively weightless, fireproof, environmentally sealed, and resistant to tears and punctures that do less than 6 points of damage. Most make do with more primitive packs fashioned of leather or woven plant fibers. Characters without packs or other hauling gear may have difficulty stowing all the items their Strength would normally allow them to carry.

Bedroll: Advanced versions of this gear are fashioned of sophisticated Old Terran smart fabrics and self-adjusting inflatable padding. More primitive versions are little more than a roll of furs or blankets. Characters without a bedroll or the equivalent may find it difficult to get sufficiently restful sleep in some environments, preventing them from recovering System Strain.

Binoculars: Advanced Old Terran binoculars allow for an image clear enough to read printed text at 1,000 meters distance and recognition of outlines at 2,000 meters. The advanced models have a built-in rangefinder and can be used in any light brighter than that of a moonless night. More primitive varieties are fashioned of salvaged lenses and hand-crafted prisms, and allow for clear view of objects at half those distances.

Blueprints: Blueprints are the rare hardcopy printouts or handwritten scrapsmith notes used to assist in building particular devices. Every blueprint is intended for a specific device and grants a +1 bonus to the user's effective Tech skill when attempting to build it, as per the item creation rules in the Systems chapter. More thorough blueprints exist that grant higher bonuses; +2 schematics cost ten times as much, and full Old Terran manufacturing blueprints capable of granting +3 cost at least fifty times as much when they're available at all.

Even illiterate techs are familiar enough with materials and notations to make use of low-tech blueprints, but TL3+ items require literacy or a literate teammate to make use of their construction helps.

Prices for blueprints assume that the design in question is fairly common among the local scrapsmiths. Designs that are unique or rare in an area will almost never be willingly sold, though a scrapsmith might reveal the lore in exchange for an important favor or a design of greater value.

Bonding Tape: A silvery tape that can bond to even the grimiest surface, bonding tape is a mainstay of many scrapsmiths of the New Earth. Objects fastened together with bonding tape can only be separated by doing 4 points of damage to the tape. Those attempting to burst the tape with brute strength must succeed on a Str/Athletics skill check at difficulty 10. A roll of bonding tape usually has 30 meters of the substance on it. Using up a roll grants +1 to any Tech/Postech check.

Broadcast Power Modulator: Advanced metadimensional transposition taps allow this backpack-sized device to beam power directly to remote equipment. The modulator is wired into whatever electrical generator is available, and then emits power over a one kilometer radius. Provided a technician knows the correct tuning codes for the modulator, any TL4+ device can be adjusted to draw power through the metadimensional tap feeds. Assuming enough power is being generated for all the devices that draw on the modulator, it effectively amounts to a constant charge for the device. A TL4 converter device can be constructed to provide a lower-tech connection in a remote location. If someone changes the modulator codes, any device that draws power from it will go inert until supplied from another source or retuned to the correct frequencies. Military installations using BPMs usually keep the modulator codes secret to prevent a hostile actor from remotely connecting a massive power sink to the converter.

Climbing Kit: These gloves and boot sheaths are Old Terran relics originally designed to aid in outdoor climbing. Microscopic bonding elements allow the wearer to ascend even sheer surfaces so long as the surface is relatively dry and solid. If the wearer moves slowly and carefully at a rate of only 10 meters a minute, they will always succeed at ordinary climbing checks and fail extremely difficult ones only on a natural 2. If climbing at a faster rate, they simply gain a +3 bonus to any climbing skill check.

Compass, Magnetic: Large deposits of ferrous wreckage and Old Terran magnetic anomalies make a standard magnetic compass somewhat less reliable than might be desired, but it still grants a +2 to any Survival check made to avoid getting lost.

Compad: The Net of Old Terra functioned almost exclusively through ambient nanite relays and personal Links. There was no need for a specific device for communicating, and so the chaos of the Scream left many people helplessly isolated and unable to call for help. Modern compads are little more sophisticated than handheld radios boosted to overcome the electromagnetic static of the Highshine nanites. Shortwave radio and other long-distance communication modes are almost impossible through this channel noise, but two compads tuned to the same frequency can reach up to ten kilometers under most conditions. A compad's power drain is relatively minimal- a single type A power cell will keep it operating for months under normal use conditions.

Crowbar: Primitive, but effective as a tool for smashing up salvage, prying open ordinary Old Terran doors, and handling the sort of abuse that would quickly destroy a weapon. Crowbars can be used as one-handed clubs for 1d4 damage, or two-handed for 2d4 damage, using Strength as the relevant attribute in both cases.

Dataslab: Dedicated computers were almost unknown in Old Terra, as the integral Link possessed by the citizenry served all the purposes of a handheld computer. Some rebels found it better to keep their information off of the Net, however, and so some independent dataslabs were created, along with the cruder efforts of those modern scientists who still remember how to build computing hardware. In the absence of a Link, a dataslab is usually necessary for hacking or interfacing with any Old Terran computing hardware that doesn't have a functioning interface of its own. Dataslabs can also perform any of the usual functions of a handheld computer- recordkeeping, mathematical work, audiovisual recording, and so forth. A type A power cell will keep a dataslab operating for a week.

Firebox: A good fire improves any camp and can sometimes make the difference between survival and death by frost. Primitive fireboxes are a set of metal and ceramic plates that can be quickly assembled into an efficient wood-burning stove. Ultra-light Old Terran camping models can also burn wood for extra authenticity, but a single type A power cell will provide 24 hours of ample heat. If wood must be packed in, a small load of charcoal is enough for 8 hours of heat and counts as 2 items of encumbrance.

Firestarter: These small devices range from purpose-built Old Terran camping implements to scrap-rigged fire pistons and waxed phosphor matches. All of them create a small, fiercely-burning flame capable of igniting most flammable material in one round. TL4 versions will function indefinitely, while TL2 models are expended after 20 uses.

Geiger Counter: Prized tools among wanderers, most geiger counters are relatively crude scrap-built devices. One Type A cell will power it for 48 hours, during which it will alert the bearer if they cross into a radioactive zone by indicating the strength of the field.

Generator, Nanofusion: A cutting-edge example of Old Terran science, nanofusion cells use a combination of microscopic metadimensional tap nanites and conventional cold fusion tech to produce

enormous amounts of power. Most cells are no larger than a man's fist, but they can be used to power hundreds of homes or recharge A+ and B+ power cells in unlimited numbers. Even greater outputs are possible with the correct regulating hardware and power infrastructure.

Generator, Solar: Small and hyper-efficient, solar electrical generators are usually constructed out of advanced Old Terran absorption panels and photonic bend composites. Provided the generator gets at least 8 hours of direct sunlight per day, it can maintain a steady power output for several dozen homes and recharge type A+ or B+ power cells. Setting up the generator requires an hour to calibrate it properly, but it can be broken down for transport.

Generator, Steam: Steam-powered generators are bulky, inefficient, and cantankerous, but they are also the easiest kind of generators for a community to build. Even so, few enclaves have scrapsmiths ingenious or talented enough to keep such generators in operation. The generators are always at least room-sized and require 80 units of spare parts for construction.

Steam generators can refuel type A+ or B+ power cells or provide equivalent power to several dozen homes. Steam generators require a constant supply of fuel for operation.

Glowbug: A simple, palm-sized Old Terran trinket, glowbugs can be activated to cast a clear, bright light in a 10-meter radius, and can be set to lightly adhere to any solid surface. A focal adjustment can direct their light up to 20 meters in a particular direction. Their light lasts for 24 hours, and they can be daisy-chained together to recharge up to a hundred of them from a single Type A power cell.

Lantern: A low-tech lighting solution, these lanterns cast light in a 10 meter radius, or 20 meters if focused in a particular direction. A flask of oil will fuel a lantern for 4 hours.

Link, Prosthetic: Virtually every citizen of Old Terra was implanted at birth with a Link- a nanite-grown communications link that kept them in perpetual contact with the Mandate and the rest of their community through the ambient mesh known as the Net. Augmented reality visuals, contextual signage, and virtual reality environments were all commonly available to every citizen. Still, some were unable to use Links, either through natural biological incompatibility, damaged hardware, or by virtue of being an offworld visitor from the frontier. These artificial Links are meant for such unfortunate souls, and operate off the wearer's body heat.

Prosthetic Links usually take the form of a thick torc, with a transduction pad that presses against the wearer's nape. The user can issue commands to the Link by thought alone, and no training is required to use one. Information is provided through visual or auditory overlays, and the Link is equipped with an integral expert system to assist in its use.

Of course, with the Net gone, the Maestros fleeing the wrath of the Bender, and the air clouded with berserk Highshine nanites, most prosthetic Links have little to show a user. A few wispy ghosts of crippled augmented reality or garbled data displays are all that are visible in most ruins. Use of a prosthetic Link does allow a person

to communicate with certain sophisticated pretech equipment that was never intended for manual operation. Prosthetic Links also have all the functionality of a normal dataslab or compad.

Most significantly to most modern possessors, wearing a Link allows thought-actuated audiovisual contact with any other willing Link wearer within a five kilometer radius. Such contact must be accepted by both parties, but allows either of them to perceive each other's environment and relative location perfectly and communicate in any shared languages.

Low-light goggles: These goggles might come as elaborate eyewear or as a simple pair of Old Terran contact lenses, both operating without need for external power sources. Users have full normal vision in any environment with any ambient light whatsoever.

Medkit: These advanced healing kits are usually pieced together out of Old Terran pharmaceuticals, mutated healing plants, and assorted gear for staunching wounds. Medkits grant a +1 bonus to all Tech/Medical rolls. If used on a mortally wounded PC, the medic may check Int/Tech/Medical at difficulty 8, with a +1 difficulty penalty for each round's delay since the victim was downed. On a success, the victim is stabilized and restored to 1 hit point, and may act normally after ten minutes of rest. No System Strain is accrued from being stabilized by a medkit. Medkits cannot help a victim if more than six rounds have passed since they were mortally injured.

When a user rolls a natural 2 on a skill check involving a medkit, it runs out of some critical component and becomes useless. Characters with the ability to reroll skill checks can still reroll the check, but the medkit remains depleted afterwards.

Metatool: This small polymorphic hand tool was popular throughout Mandate space for its versatility and compact nature. Its memory composite construction allows it to function as any small hand tool that might be required. Metatools aren't a replacement for advanced tool kits, but they can be used for spot work and jury-rigging gear. A metatool is also able to perform any work that might normally require a TL0 or TL1 toolkit, and can be used to repair up to TL4 items.

Navcomp: A few of these devices were in use as camping and orienteering tools in the days before the Scream, but more of them have since been built by scrapsmiths who had a more pressing and practical need for their benefits. Navcomps use inertial recorders and gravitic assay devices to precisely trace the user's current position. The navcomp's owner can key in up to twelve sets of geophysical coordinates, and the navcomp will point the user directly toward them. Those owners who lack cartographic savvy can register a location for tracking simply by pressing a lock key while present there. Old Terran navcomps usually have a host of other location and mapping tools, but almost all of them have been made useless since the collapse of the Net.

Oil Flask: Most oils used for illumination are inedible, but quite effective as a light source. A flask of oil will fuel a lantern for 4 hours. If poured out in a pool and lit, it will form a one-meter wide pool that inflicts 1d4 damage on anyone who enters it. The pool will burn for 1d4 rounds before guttering out.

Power Cell, Type A: These small cylindrical power cells were ubiquitous before the Scream and served to power most hand-held equipment and personal devices. Old Terran power cells are not rechargeable- the Mandate didn't want to simplify the logistics for malcontents and rebels, and so fresh cells had to be obtained through Mandate-monitored sources. Once fully discharged, these cells are worthless even as scrap. Six Type A cells can be bundled as one item for encumbrance purposes.

Power Cell, Type A+: A few canny rebel techs and modern scrap-smiths were able to reverse-engineer the Mandate power cell specs and build cells that could be recharged off any standard current. Recharging the cell from a live power line requires 30 minutes, level-0 expertise in a Tech skill, and a metatool or other TL3+ toolkit to make the connection.

Power Cell, Type B: As large as a human fist, these power cells usually fueled vehicles and other large items of equipment. Like their smaller brethren, they cannot be recharged.

Power Cell, Type B+: Much like their smaller relations, B+ cells can be recharged from a live power source in the same fashion as A+ cells. Charge time for a cell is six hours.

Solar Cell: For those scrapsmiths and rebel techs not skilled enough to reverse-engineer conventional Mandate power cells, the solar cell is an alternative. The cell itself is permanently attached to a palm-sized solar collector which can be unfolded and set to absorb sunlight. Eight hours of sunshine will charge the attached cell, which can then be spooled out of the device and inserted into an object in need of a type A power cell. The need to keep the device tethered to the solar cell can occasionally be cumbersome, but most users simply sling the cell at their belt and then holster the weapon or device it powers.

Ration, Dirty: "Dirty" foodstuffs resemble ordinary dried meats and vegetables, but all have subtle traces of nanite taint, decay, or natural toxins. Provender of this kind is available in many places as a cheap way of stretching a person's available clean foodstuffs. Eating a dirty ration adds 1 Toxin point to the eater's total.

Ration, Normal: Consisting of roughly a kilo of nutrient-rich edibles, most rations are composed of dried meats, hard bread, parched vegetables, and other food that keeps well.

Ration, Old Terran: Old Terran foodstuffs were inevitably packed in sealed bags and trays capable of keeping the contents fresh and wholesome for centuries. In addition to providing a day's nourishment, the medical nanites pervading the food remove 1d4 Toxin points from the consumer and heal 1d6 lost hit points. A person can benefit from only one Old Terran ration per day

Rope, 20 meters: Old Terran metafiber rope is pencil-thin and extremely difficult to cut without specialized tools. Metatools or toolkit implements can trim or splice it freely, but otherwise it absorbs 8 points of edged damage before snapping. More modern rope of woven plant fibers absorbs only 4 points of damage and is substantially heavier.

Spare Parts: Usable scrap and salvage comes in innumerable forms in the wastelands, and all of them are treated simply as general "spare parts" of a given tech level. Up to four units of spare parts may be bundled together for encumbrance purposes.

Telescoping Pole: Retracting to a 30-centimeter baton, this pole extends and locks into a 3.048-meter extension that can bear as much as a thousand kilograms of weight. In a pinch, it can also serve as a club.

Tent: Wanderers often have need of a tent if they're to find any rest in a rainy clime or contain precious heat in the cold. Desert-landers use them to shelter from a hostile sun and the scourge of windblown sand. This particular leather tent is large enough for two friendly people and can be split into two encumbrance loads if needed. Pretech camping versions are much lighter.

Thermal Flare: If triggered in one mode, the flare burns with a bright white light for two hours, illuminating up to twenty meters around the holder. If the guidance fins are extended first, the flare launches up to 200 meters and explodes in a bright white flash. A launched flare does 1d6 damage to anyone it hits, though the clumsy flight gives a -4 penalty on any attempts to hit something.

Toolkit, TL1: This primitive toolkit consists of little more than a knife, hammer, saw, and a few other essentials. A craftsman can use it to build or repair any TL0 or TL1 object, provided they have the expertise and spare parts. No special workshop facilities are required.

Toolkit, TL2: Largely identical to a TL1 kit, this toolbox includes files, measuring devices, and hardened alloy tools for working to finer mechanical requirements than are necessitated by more primitive technologies. Constructing TL2 devices out of scrap will require a larger workshop, however.

Toolkit, TL3: To the basic ingredients of a TL2 toolkit are added cutting tools and electrician's gear. The toolkit can be used to repair or help build any device of TL3 or less, though creating TL2 or 3 objects from spare parts usually requires a more fully-equipped workshop.

Toolkit, TL4: Advanced Old Terran hand tools include basic equipment for nanite manipulation and reprogramming and can serve when working on any device of TL4 or less. Building TL4 devices out of spare parts normally necessitates an Old Terran workshop that is powered and intact.

Toolkit, TL5: These toolkits are often little more than glistening silvery spheres of neuroresponsive nanites colored with the logo of the Mandate department that commissioned them. A trained tech can mentally mold them into almost any hand tool that could be required, allowing the repair of any object. Actually building TL5 devices from spare parts is an undertaking that requires access to one of the classified, high-security development centers that served the Mandate elite.

Toxin Detector: A Type A cell powers this device for one month, allowing it to identify poisonous or tainted foodstuffs and granting a +1 bonus to Survival checks when foraging.

Utility Tarp: This paper-thin sheet of opaque, waterproof composite measures a little over three meters on a side, with a small three-state control strip along one edge. In its first state, the tarp is limp and can be folded into a fist-sized bundle. In its second state, the tarp becomes semi-rigid and can be molded into any desired shape. In its third state, the tarp hardens to support as much as five hundred kilos of weight and cannot be shaped. Anyone able to reach the control can change the tarp's state. Eight points of damage will break a utility tarp and render it useless.

Vacc Suit, Pretech: These suits are uncommon, as most trans-stellar traffic with the core worlds took place through the orbital habitats. Still, some have been found in equipment dumps intended for interstellar shipment.

The suits are effectively skin-tight and transparent by default, though they respond to Link commands to change colors and outlines. The wearer's head is bubbled by an unseen tension field that maintains pressure while allowing eating and drinking. The suits can be worn beneath armor and normal clothing without difficulty, and are quite comfortable to wear for extended periods of time. So long as they remain powered, they recycle air and water for the user and render them immune to gases, contact toxins, and radiation weaker than once-per-minute saves. The suits self-seal if torn. A single type A power cell fuels a vacc suit for one day.

Water Filter: Every hunter worth his spear knows the usual tricks for purifying tainted water with charcoal and certain types of Old Terran cloth, but a proper Old Terran water filter is far more reliable. A single filter can clean up to 10 rations of dirty water per day.

STIMS

Stim	Cost	TL
Cure	100	5
Cyst	50	4
Lifestyle	30	4
Patch	25	4
Morph	100	5
Purge	100	5
Rage	100	5
Rush	50	5
Stims weigh a negligible amount.		

Stims were ubiquitous in the world before the Scream. These small skin-spray applicators were sold over the counter and in unwatched corners, elaborate cocktails of exotic bioactive nanites and alien pharmaceuticals used to soften the rough edges of a day, provide quick physical adjustments, or handle medical problems. Stims and related medical tech were some of the few examples of cutting-edge Mandate technology that were commonly allowed among the populace. The following are just a handful of the more common varieties found in ruins and long-lost caches.

Many stims are found in their original packaging, giving even illiterate characters a good idea of their function. Those characters with active Link implants can always identify a stim and its function. Other stims are found loose and can only be identified by the same methods used to identify Enigmatic devices.

Almost all stims were designed around a basic, reliable medical core. Developers found it easier to simply reuse this common framework as the vector for whatever special effect they wished to produce- not only was it predictable in its effects, but it also helped ensure that the user would be treating any drastic medical emergency even if they didn't realize their danger. Only a few black market or experimental combat stims omitted this basic framework.

All stims require an action to apply, either to oneself or another, and a character can only use one stim per round. Every stim heals 4 hit points of damage plus the subject's Constitution modifier. If the subject has been mortally wounded within the past six rounds, the stim will wake them with 1 hit point, and they will be able to act normally on their next turn.

Using a stim to heal or revive a mortally wounded character adds 1 point of System Strain to the user, as explained in the Mutations chapter. If the strain would exceed the target's Constitution score their body simply cannot handle the stress of additional medical modifications and the stim has no effect. If a character simply applies a stim while having no need for healing this cost is not incurred.

A subject can be under the effect of multiple stims at once, but the bonus from any given stim is only applied once.

Cure Stim: A broad-spectrum panacea for almost any illness, a Cure stim application adds 1 additional System Strain point and immediately cures any conventional disease. Against gengineered bioweapons, a Cure stim simply allows for an automatic reroll on the next failed save to throw off the sickness. A Cure stim will also repair 1d4 points of Constitution lost to radiation damage. Cure stims were common in the world before the Scream. Unfortunately, they were also some of the most widely used stims, resulting in their rapid depletion and modern scarcity.

Cyst Stim: These large red stims were uncommon, usually kept in emergency first aid kits or in the equippage of Old Terran security staffers. They augment the standard medical framework with a number of boosted repair protocols and stabilization subroutines. When applied to a subject, the target immediately falls into a coma as a crusty, translucent amber cyst forms around them. The cyst remains for 12 hours before crumbling away and awakening the subject with all hit points restored. Any injury done to the subject before that time is up will awaken them immediately and negate the benefits of the stim. Use of a Cyst stim is stressful to a subject's body, and adds 2 additional System Strain points. The stim only works on cooperative or unconscious subjects.

Patch Stim: The Old Terran equivalent of aspirin, these simple stim tabs were favored for every headache, minor laceration and surge of dyspepsia that a citizen might experience. They provide the usual effects of a stim along with a mild sense of well-being for six hours.

Lifestyle Stim: These relatively common stims served as vectors for a host of lifestyle-oriented products. Most of them have minor effects that are difficult to predict without the History or Business skill and knowledge of long-lost advertising campaigns and popular product lines. When it matters, the GM might choose or roll an effect from the following table.

LIFESTYLE STIM EFFECTS	
1d10	*Result*
1	All body hair falls out, and won't grow until a Purge stim is taken.
2	Nanite scrubbers leave the character perfectly clean and fresh, and maintain this state for a week.
3	Brightly-glowing political or social affiliation tattoos form. They last for a week and emit light out to a 10 meter range when uncovered.
4	The character is wreathed in a subtle but exquisite fragrance for a week.
5	Head hair grows one meter in under a minute.
6	The character can comfortably ignore any Terran temperature or climate for a week
7	The character is put in a subtle but noticeable good mood for a week
8	Roll 1d6; on 4+ it's a contraceptive that lasts until a Purge stim is used. On a 3- it's a fertility stim that will automatically induce conception in the user or partner after their next encounter. The user is unaware of these effects unless they are equipped with a Link.
9-10	The stim has no noticeable additional effect

Morph Stim: Popular among the more decadent members of Old Terran society, morph stims were meant to allow the user to temporarily experience life in a very different shape. Depending on the brand and original marketing of the stim, it is loaded with the humanoid shape template of a pop culture figure, anthropomorphic animal, alien species, or more exotic figure. On taking the stim, the user must remain still for ten minutes as the nanites produce rapid alterations in the user's physical form, temporarily endowing them with the shape templated on the stim.

The appearance is purely cosmetic and does not alter the user's attributes or statistics. The alteration adds 3 System Strain points to the subject and does not work on an unwilling user. The new shape lasts for 72 hours. Those with a TL5 toolkit and at least level-2 expertise in Tech/Medical or Tech/Pretech can reprogram a morph stim with DNA taken from a particular subject, granted a day's time to perform the tweak.

Purge Stim: Originally intended to cure accidental nanite poisoning, negative pharmaceutical interactions and other forms of intoxication, use of a Purge stim counts as 2 successful saving throws against any toxin currently affecting the user. If their total successful saving throws equals or exceeds the toxin's Virulence, its effects end. It also immediately cures hangovers, drunkenness, and 1d6 Toxin points for those who have eaten contaminated food. Purge stims also automatically end the effects of any current lifestyle stims.

Rage Stim: A few tabs of this illicit combat stim sometimes slipped out of the Mandate's security apparatus and could be found in the hands of rebels and black market dealers. Rage stims drive the user into a relentless, focused fury. For each round a Rage stim is in effect, the user may roll twice on all attack rolls and take the better result. Their armor class suffers a +4 penalty while this fury is in effect, though, as they grow heedless of their own personal safety. NPCs gain a Morale of 12 while under the effect of Rage. The stim lasts for 2d6 rounds and adds 1 additional point of System Strain to the user.

Rush Stim: While ostensibly intended for use in sporting events and for personal recreation, the effects of a Rush stim are also useful in combat. The stim induces an immediate feeling of euphoria and unflinching confidence. This vivid determination helps the character fight through pain and panic, granting 10 bonus hit points and a +1 bonus on all social skill checks. These benefits vanish after the stim wears off in ten minutes. If the loss of the temporary hit points would bring the character below 1 hit point, they fall unconscious for five minutes before waking up with 1 hit point left. NPCs under the effect of a Rush stim gain a +2 Morale bonus.

Exotic Artifacts

Artifact	Cost
Bot Override Tag	100
Clone Vat	N/A
Invasive Crosslink	1,000
Microfac	1,000
Neural Patterning Web	2,500
Portable Expert System	1,500
All exotic artifacts are TL5	

The Mandate took care to keep most ultra-advanced technological devices firmly in their own hands. They had no desire to hand their unruly charges the kind of power that could be perverted into a disruption of the natural order of things. Still, some devices were adjudged to be either harmless enough to be released into general circulation, or too useful to go unstolen by rebels and acquisitive citizens. These exotic artifacts can be difficult to recognize, and many of the models produced qualify as Enigmatic devices as per the guidelines in the Systems chapter. Other such exotic devices doubtless exist, and the following are but a small sample of the possibilities.

Bot Override Tag: A small adhesive slab, this device can be slapped onto the casing of a robot to temporarily take control of it. Against a hostile bot, the user must either succeed in a hit roll to connect it, or else wade right in and allow the bot to hit him before automatically attaching it. Once affixed, the bot must save versus Tech or begin obeying the user's verbal commands for 1d4+4 rounds. The bot will not perform self-destructive activities, and the tag will not function against bots under the direct or remote control of an AI. A tag burns out after one use.

Clone Vat: Remarkably rare and usually part of a full-scale Mandate medical facility, cloning vats were strictly illegal on Old Terra- which meant they were reserved for the Directorate elite. Assuming the device can be coaxed into operation, it can take genetic samples and full neural scans of a living subject, growing a perfect duplicate in 1d6 months. The duplicate will have the memories and experience of the subject at the time of their scan, though the scan can be updated in one hour, and subjects with an active Link can maintain a constantly-updated clone.

Had these vats worked perfectly, they would doubtless have led to eternal and invincible Directors. Unfortunately for such aspirations, the clone vat is highly unreliable. Every clone automatically has one mental debility rolled from the Mutation chapter. There is a 25% chance that the clone dies within 1d6 minutes after decanting, and every time the vat is used to clone a subject, the chance increases by 25% as calibrations shift and elements wear down. Resetting the failure chance requires 10 units of TL5 spare parts, a week's work, and a successful Tech/Medical skill check at difficulty 12. Failure wastes the parts. Vats can hold or grow only one clone at a time.

Invasive Crosslink: This device was originally intended for a number of decadent indulgences, bypassing the standard Link buffers to allow for a direct neural connection between the two users. Such intimate mental entanglement allowed for the exchange of memories and thought patterns at a level far deeper than standard Link communication. It could also result in permanent mental damage if sustained too long.

Both subjects must have Links, either implanted or prosthetic. An unwilling subject must be restrained, and the crosslink must be physically connected to both users. For each round that the crosslink is maintained, each party may ask one question of the others' memories. On a successful save versus Mental Effect, the subject cannot be interrogated on that topic for a week. On a failed save, a short but perfectly truthful answer is provided.

At the end of every round of crosslink use, any user who asked a question gains 1d4 System Strain points. If the total is enough to knock them unconscious, they must save versus Mental Effect or permanently lose 1d4 points of Wisdom. Characters that drop below a Wisdom of 3 are permanently catatonic.

Microfac: Often taking the form of a fist-sized cylinder, a microfac requires a Link for immediate interface. Lacking that, a user with Tech/Pretech-1 skill can patch through with a standard dataslab. The microfac uses an integral nanite reservoir to transform itself any single object with an Encumbrance value of 2 or less and a Tech Level no greater than 4. Objects encoded with unique data cannot be duplicated- the microfac could become a keycard, for example, but not a keycard programmed to open a particular door. The transformation takes one round and is permanent; a microfac can only be used once.

Neural Patterning Web: A replacement for tutors of flesh and blood, the neural patterning web was never terribly popular. It required a properly-prepared mind and the information imparted was unstable until it integrated properly with the user's existing talents. The web itself usually took the form of a complex headwrap with multiple electrode prongs. Assuming a user has available Skill Points, he can use the patterning web to learn any skill up to level-3 expertise over the course of one week per skill level. At the end of the training, roll 1d4; if the result is not higher than the level of skill learned, the web burns out and becomes useless.

Skills gained with a neural patterning web need to be "seated" through active use. Whenever the skill is used in a stressful situation after a NPW training session, the subject must roll a saving throw versus Tech. On a failure, they blank on the skill- they are treated as completely unskilled in it for the next hour. This susceptibility remains until they make a number of successful saves equal to their new skill level +1. Thus, after gaining Tech/Postech-3 from an NPW, the subject would need to succeed in four stressful situation saving throws before they completely integrated their new knowledge.

Portable Expert System: These small devices require only a trickle of solar power to function, fueling an integral expert system with a built-in vocal interface. When activated, the expert system can walk a user through basic tasks related to the skill implanted in the system. Provided that there's no time pressure and the user is willing to take at least ten minutes interacting with the expert system, he can roll the skill as if he had level-0 expertise in it. Portable expert systems do not exist for physical skills such as Athletics or Stealth.

Vehicles

Vehicle	Cost	Speed	KPH	Armor	HP	Crew	Cargo	Hardpoints	TL
Sailboat	100	-1	20	6	40	15	3,000	2	1
Powerboat	500	0	40	6	40	15	3,000	2	3
Motorcycle	1,000	3	30	4	10	1	40	1	3
Groundcar	5,000	1	20	6	30	5	250	2	3
Hovercycle	5,000	3	40	3	10	1	30	1	4
Gravcar	10,000	2	40	4	25	5	150	2	4
Crawler	7,500	-1	30	8	40	8	2,000	3	3
Battlewagon	15,000	-1	10	10	50	6	250	6	3
Utility Tractor	10,000	-1	10	8	25	1	8,000	2	4
Mandate GFV	N/A	3	100	*	50	20	1,000	6	5
* Mandate GFVs cannot normally be damaged by anything that doesn't require Combat/Gunnery to fire.									

Personal vehicles were uncommon in the years before the Scream. The Mandate preferred to maintain a tight control on the movements of its citizenry, and systems of mass transit and public transportation were sufficient for almost all ordinary needs. A personal gravcar was a perquisite belonging to important bureaucrats; ordinary men and women took the levitrain.

In the years since, scrapsmiths and scavengers have reassembled some Old Terran vehicles and jury-rigged modern equivalents. Both current and Old Terran vehicles are almost always powered by electrical cells; a type B cell will keep a vehicle in operation for six hours.

Wheeled, tracked and waterborne vehicles operate much as do their present-day equivalents. Grav vehicles float a meter off the ground and can boost up to twenty meters in altitude for short distances. They can cross liquids or treacherous terrain without slowing, but rough seas can swamp them.

True aircraft are almost unknown. The Bright Mirror orbital defense array has been twisted to identify airborne vehicles as threats, and long-distance air travel is an invitation to sudden sublimation into superheated metallic vapor. Living creatures that fly at high altitudes do not provoke this defense response. Rumors persist of ships or aircraft that have been whitelisted by the defense array, however, and that might allow their possessors to cross whole continents in a matter of minutes.

Vehicles are described by certain special statistics.

Speed is an abstract measure of the vehicle's speed and agility. When vehicles chase each other, the opposing vehicle's Speed should be applied as a penalty to Vehicle skill checks to close or escape. Speed may also be used as a modifier when attempting difficult maneuvers.

KPH lists the average kilometers-per-hour travelled by the vehicle under normal overland conditions. Exceptionally fast vehicles may be lacking in this if they're poorly suited to negotiating natural hazards, while tracked crawlers with low speed on the straightaway might plug away reliably through swamp and jungle alike. Normal overland movement speed modifiers for terrain are applied to this number, though grav vehicles can ignore terrain penalties for anything but heavy forests, jungles, and mountains.

Armor is subtracted from all weapon damage done to the vehicle. Armor does not apply to damage done by Gunnery weapons; heavy weaponry is often designed to take out vehicles. Actually hitting the vehicle is automatic if the vehicle is stationary and within 10 meters. Hitting a vehicle from beyond that range requires an attack against AC 9. If the vehicle is moving, subtract its Speed from the hit roll, and if the attacker is in a moving vehicle as well, also subtract that conveyance's Speed.

Hit Points indicate the amount of damage a vehicle can take before it is destroyed. Speed is reduced by half when the vehicle is at half hit points, and flying vehicles must land at the first opportunity. Vehicles are subject to the same wear-and-tear experienced by other pieces of equipment, and may be at less than Perfect condition as given in the Systems chapter.

A vehicle reduced to zero hit points forces all crew and passengers to make Luck saving throws. Failure means that the passenger takes the vehicle's maximum hit points in damage, while success reduces the damage by half. Each successful repair check on a vehicle fixes 2d6 hit points in addition to improving its condition.

Crew gives the maximum number of vehicle occupants. For the listed vehicles, only one crew member is actually necessary to drive or pilot the vehicle, though additional crew members may be required to fire.

Cargo indicates the vehicle's general cargo capacity in kilograms. Exact tracking of vehicle loads is rarely worth the time, and most GMs should simply use this as a rough figure to decide whether or not an expedition's supply list might reasonably fit on their available vehicles.

Hardpoints are available mountings for vehicle weapons. One weapon can be mounted on each hardpoint, though Gunnery weapons require two. Every weapon requires its own gunner for

effective use, and all vehicle-mounted weapons use the Combat/Gunnery skill regardless of their normal type.

Tech Level indicates the minimum tech level for constructing the vehicle. Vehicles require sixty units of spare parts for construction.

Vehicle Types

Motorcycles and grav-based *hovercycles* are two different tech variants of the same general idea. Raider scouts and enclave patrols particularly appreciate their speed.

Groundcars are usually of modern construction, scrap-built jalopies of metal struts, scavenged plating, and humming electrical motors. *Gravcars* are usually relics from the distant past, and their owners must constantly struggle with the difficulty of keeping them in good repair.

Sailboats and *powerboats* were both small-craft recreational vehicles before the Scream, but modern models and fresh necessity has pressed them into present use. The dangerous mutant water life makes seaward trade lanes just as perilous as drier routes.

Crawlers represent a family of wheeled or tracked vehicles intended for heavy cargo transport across dangerous terrain. They're slow and clumsy, but their heavy armor and roomy interior make them the next best thing to a mobile fortification for their possessors.

Battlewagons bristle with guns and scrap armor built up around a powerful electric motor. Raider bands love them for their firepower, but the ungainly vehicles are hard to handle, inflicting a -2 penalty on all Vehicle/Land checks when driving them.

Utility tractors were relatively common in rural areas before the Scream, with the Mandate emphasis on "natural cultural patterns of agriculture" to complement the vast robotic factory farms that produced the bulk of Old Terra's food supply. These small tractors are sluggish but have numerous uses. They have integral agricultural attachments, a collapsible crane that can raise a metric ton up to thirty meters in the air, gravitic stabilizers that keep them planted firmly even when operating on treacherous terrain, and a pull weight of up to eight metric tons. Most enclaves that have functioning utility tractors prize them more than they do their own children, but the difficulty of acquiring power cells for it and the expertise and spare parts required for maintenance make it a difficult machine to keep in operation.

Mandate GFVs are exceedingly rare, with most gravitic fighting vehicles long since grounded by nanite damage or component failure. Those that do still function require costly pretech spare parts to keep them operational. GFVs have sealed atmospheres that can be recycled indefinitely while the vehicle is powered. They are fully submersible down to a depth of one kilometer and can in theory fly at sub-orbital heights, though doing so runs a 1-in-6 chance of being erased from the sky by Bright Mirror orbital defense lasers. This chance is checked once for every 10 minutes of true flight.

Work Animals

Animal	Cost	HD	AC	+Hit	Dmg	Move	Morale	Cargo
Dog	20	1	6	+2	1d4	30'	9	0
Pack Pony	30	1	7	+0	1d4	30'	5	60 kg
Riding Horse	50	2	7	+2	1d6	50'	6	150 kg
Warhorse	250	4	7	+4	1d8	40'	9	300 kg
Warbeast	500	4	5	+4	1d8+2	40'	9	300 kg

In the years after the Scream, riding beasts and pack animals have come back into wider use. Pure-strain and mutated versions of horses, oxen, donkeys, and camels can all be found carrying men and their burdens between far-flung enclaves. Still, such luxuries as trained livestock are beyond the reach of many small enclaves, and it can be difficult to find a good riding beast outside of those settlements gifted with breeding stock.

Any breed of livestock tough enough to survive the end of the world is not going to need much attention from its owners. Most riding and pack animals can be assumed to get enough daily nourishment from a few hours of grazing, and water and fodder that might be contaminated by human standards will do them no special harm.

Most animals are not trained for combat. A successful Charisma/Vehicle/Land skill check against difficulty 8 will keep an untrained riding animal from panicking during a fight, but it will be unable to perform any attacks of its own. Panicked animals will flee in

a random direction until they feel safe; PCs can leap off runaway beasts, making a successful Dex/Athletics or Vehicle/Land check at difficulty 8 to land without injury. Being thrown from a mount or failing a hasty dismount check causes 1d6 damage to the unfortunate rider.

Combat-trained beasts will never panic in combat, and some breeds might be capable of delivering their own attacks. Such beasts act on their owner's turn. Ordinary pack animals that have been trained to remain calm in combat can sometimes be acquired by adventurers, though always at prices at least double that of an ordinary specimen.

Characters with at least level-0 training in Vehicle/Land are assumed to ride well enough to fight normally from atop a riding beast. Those without this training suffer a -2 penalty on all attack rolls and are liable to fall off if the animal panics.

The table above provides a brief summary of the statistics for some of the more common pack and riding animals on the New Earth. Normal cargo burdens are expressed in kilograms, and are intended simply to give the GM a rough idea of whether or not the rider's anticipated kit is something the beast can plausibly bear. Exact encumbrance tallies aren't usually necessary. Most animals will refuse to move if overloaded.

The prices given reflect common barter costs in a settlement that raises the beasts. Costs outside these favored enclaves can easily be four or five times as high.

Dogs are still man's best friend in the blasted wastelands of the New Earth. Surviving breeds tend to be big, hardy, and gengineered for intelligence. Those raised within an enclave will easily imprint upon a master and fight bravely on their behalf, but packs of wild dogs have often lost all natural obedience and can be yellow-fanged predators in the wild. Such is the usefulness of a faithful dog that they would be much more common among enclaves if they weren't comparatively difficult to feed. Unlike herbivorous livestock, gengineered dogs require special feeding. Their owners must provide at least one ration of food every two days or the dog begins to accumulate Hunger points much as a human does.

Pack ponies are derived from one of the numerous strains of pet equines popular in the decades before the Scream. These ponies are a bit more than a meter and a half high at the shoulder and are bred for durability and a docile temper. Some regions use burros or gengineered onagers for much the same end, depending on what the Mandate bureaucracy found to be most "culturally authentic" for the region. Pack ponies are usually small and nimble enough to anywhere a human can go.

Riding horses in the New Earth are far hardier and more intelligent than their ancient ancestors, having been gengineered to lessen many of the more burdensome elements of their keeping. These animals have difficulty navigating the tight spaces and treacherous footing that a pony might negotiate, but they can also carry substantially greater weight at a swifter pace. Statistics for a riding horse can usually be used for other large pack animals.

Warhorses are uncommon in the New Earth, as trainers must not only find animals that are suitable in size, but also break them of their gengineered inclination to docility. The process can be brutal, and the animals that survive are often scarred and at least slightly deranged. Other, braver trainers work with mutant strains that have lost all natural pacifism. In both cases the result is a steed that can level vicious kicks at an enemy even as its rider attacks.

Warbeasts come in countless shapes and sizes, usually starting with some local herbivore that has experienced heavy mutation from an inheritable strain of Highshine nanites. Steely-horned battle oxen, riding lions, war beetles, or destrier lizards are all examples of the possibilities. Most of them have traits similar enough to use this entry, though thick-skinned beasts might have a slightly better armor class, usually at a cost of a somewhat lesser speed. All warbeasts are combat-trained.

SERVANTS AND HIRELINGS

Minion	Cost/Week
Servant	2
Scrapsmith	20
Healer	10
Porter	4
Expert	10
Warrior	8
Veteran	15
Courtesan	20
Dragoman	15

Employers are also expected to provide daily rations for their servants.

Relationships of service in exchange for protection are commonplace in the wastelands, far more so than simple contract work or day-hires. Most adventurers can usually find a few spare pairs of hands in an enclave willing to work for day wages, but real loyalty is the product of a firm commitment of protection and sustenance. Important men and women in an enclave often have clients that labor for them in exchange for protection, basic necessities, and a cushion of safety in times of famine. In some places this patronage arrangement is formalized into a feudal legal arrangement with specific duties and limits placed upon the relationship. Sometimes, however, it shades into outright slavery and the treatment of men and women as mere property for the stronger members of the community to exploit.

Adventurers are rarely in a position to offer the kind of security that most enclave-dwellers demand for a permanent bond of service. Shorter-term arrangements can be sealed with offers of food or trade goods, but even in those cases there is often an implicit assumption that the employer is responsible for dealing with major problems that their minions might face. An adventurer who shows himself indifferent to the well-being of his servants beyond the strict limits of a bargain can often find it difficult to recruit more help.

Prices below are given on a weekly basis and assume an enclave large enough to have a certain amount of excess labor. In those more brutal communities where men and women are sold as property, their usual price is fifty times this weekly sum for a slave with a given skill set. Prices for skilled trades assume a +1 ability modifier and level-0 in the appropriate skill. Some communities are fortunate enough to have experienced professionals with level-1 skill, in which case the cost will be multiplied by 5. Those professionals with level-2 skill are so rare as to demand ten times the ordinary price, and higher levels belong to those savants who must be persuaded by more than simply day-hire.

Servants are men and women without any skills beyond those common to their community. They may be competent farmers or able hunters, but almost any able-bodied member of their enclave could say the same. Provided their families can spare them from the daily work, they'll undertake any labor that does not expose them to significant danger.

Scrapsmiths can sometimes be hired on a short-term basis to repair gear or build devices out of spare parts provided by their employers. A simple repair job on a low-tech device might only require a ration or two in payment, with more sophisticated devices demanding the cost of spare parts and substantial labor fees. Most scrapsmiths have access to a workshop with a tech level equal to the enclave's overall tech level.

Healers can be trusted to aid gravely-wounded comrades with their stores of medicinal plants, half-functional medical equipment, and judicious experience. Healers can make skill checks to assist patients in overcoming diseases and slow toxins, and can function as a Medkit when attempting to shorten a stabilized character's recovery time. Healers can tend up to six patients at once.

Porters differ from ordinary servants in that they agree to go out into the wilderness and dare dangerous wasteland expeditions alongside their employer. Each porter has an effective Strength of 14 for encumbrance purposes, and they have statistics equivalent to a tribal warrior as given in the Bestiary chapter. Porters will not venture directly into ruins or other places of great and obvious danger, and they won't serve as mercenaries for their employers. Still, they'll fight to defend themselves and patiently endure all the predictable risks of the wasteland.

Experts are gifted in a particular skill, whether it be a trained scout, animal drover, trader, or other profession. This skill is not so rare or important as to demand a special premium, but they can still require better pay than a mere ordinary servant. Experts will not normally expose themselves to danger.

Warriors are men and women willing to ply their spears for pay. Most of them use the statistics of an ordinary tribal warrior, but unlike porters or common servants they are willing to fight alongside their employers. Most village guardsmen qualify as warriors, as do many able-bodied farmers and hunters who have given attention to martial skills. Ordinary warriors are usually quite reluctant to venture into ruins or other places of great peril, but they can be expected to fight bravely in more conventional settings. Warriors trained in unusual weapons or equipped with firearms will invariably charge at least double the ordinary rate.

Veterans are all hardened warriors, often the elite of their community. Any man or woman of the New Earth can be expected to have some competence at self-defense, but these warriors do it well

enough to earn their daily bread at it. Veterans use the statistics of Elite Warriors as given in the Bestiary chapter and will fight as directed by their employer, provided the odds don't look too grim. Some of them will even be willing to venture alongside their employers on adventures, albeit most will demand their own share of the proceeds if it exceeds their normal pay.

Courtesans are relatively rare outside of the most prosperous enclaves. A pretty girl or likely boy might be blandished with gifts in a small farming hamlet, and a wretched soul might do all manner of things for a mouthful of rice, but only a thriving community has enough surplus to support the living luxury of an expert odalisque.

Dragomen are a type of unofficial fixers, interpreters, and guides common to most enclaves with any significant long-distance trade. A dragoman is hired to smooth his employer's path in finding lodgings, negotiating local customs, and arranging meetings with important local figures. Strangers without any grasp of a large enclave's customs and laws are well-advised to enlist their services to avoid costly and occasionally fatal offenses.

Land and Real Property

In most regions of the wasteland the only property rights are those exerted at the tip of a spear. Even in settled enclaves, most real estate is divided by custom and community consent rather than explicit legal agreements. Some enclaves have preserved a more vigorous appreciation for formal property rights, however, and these settlements acknowledge the sale of rights of ownership and use.

In most enclaves, the community will be willing to grant any sum of land to a strong owner provided that they can use it and defend it. Most communities will expect the owner to build some form of home on the land and work it with an appropriate number of servants or family members. Enclaves will not normally grant exclusive hunting rights or vast pastures to a specific owner, but most settlements allow a person to lay claim to as much farmland as they can practically work- assuming they're willing to take the risk of settling unexploited land near the community.

Land prices given below assume that the buyer wants someone else's land, and is paying to persuade them to stake a new claim elsewhere. The fee might also be applicable when the usable land nearby is scarce.

Raising a building takes time. For every 50 rations in building costs, the structure requires one day to build. For a rush job, the price can be doubled to complete the work in half the time as additional laborers are added. For each day a utility tractor or other major technological aid is employed, three additional days worth of building are accomplished. For example, if a house required 60 days to build and two utility tractors were available to assist, each day's work would count for 7 days of construction.

STRUCTURES

Some players like to map out their new construction in detail. For the benefit, the following entries are provided to cover basic structural elements such as walls, flooring, trenches, tunnels, and the like. Such structure is sturdy and plain, without furnishings or other adornment unless otherwise provided. Doors, windows, stairs and other basic structural elements may be included for free.

Wooden Interior: This purchase allows an approximately 3x3x3 meter cube worth of wooden-walled interior. Wooden flooring, interior walls and ceilings are provided. For larger structures, this purchase can be made multiple times- for a two-storey building of 9x9x6 dimensions, this structure could be purchased 18 times. Exterior walls are 0.3 meters thick, and interior walls are 0.15 meters thick. These prices can also be used when building adobe structures.

Scrap Interior: This structure is built of scavenged rubble and Old Terran scrap sheeting. While less aesthetically pleasing than a well-built wooden structure, the Old Terran construction materials are substantially sturdier. The price given assumes that there is a ruin or other significant source of building materials within six kilometers of the building site. Otherwise, PCs will have to make special efforts to bring in building materials in order to erect this structure.

Structure	Cost
Wooden Interior, 3x3x3	50
Scrap Interior, 3x3x3	75
Stone Interior, 3x3x3	100
Wooden Wall, 3x3x1	10
Scrap Wall, 3x3x1	20
Stone Wall, 3x3x1	40
Earthen Tunnel, 3x3x3	10
Stone Tunnel, 3x3x3	50
Trench, 3x3x3	10

Stone Interior: Built of quarried stone, such a structure can be raised anywhere that a sufficient supply of stone is to be had. Most TL2 communities can quarry stone effectively, and even TL1 enclaves can manage it at double cost. TL0 groups must pay quadruple to reflect the difficulty of working stone with their crude tools.

Walls are made of their respective materials. These structures are meant to reflect defensive fortifications, and come equipped with catwalks, machicolations, and a reasonable number of fortified gates.

Tunnels assume stone of ordinary hardness. As with other construction, TL1 communities pay double to tunnel through stone, and TL0 communities pay quadruple cost.

Trenches may be dug through earth, providing moats or defensive fortifications. The same price may be used for mounding up earthworks.

COMPLETE BUILDINGS

For those owners who don't care to specify the details of their new home, or those who wish to buy an existing structure, the following options cover some of the more common edifices to be found in the enclaves of the New Earth. All buildings are fashioned of scrap if such is available, with poorer constructions built of wood otherwise, or stone if some important building.

Huts are one step up from a tent, being one-room dwellings made of corrosion-resistant scrap siding, rough timbers, or heaped stones. The dangers of the New Earth discourage architectural styles that can't stand up to a furious mutant predator attack, and only the most miserably impoverished enclaves make do with more fragile construction.

Village Homes are the sort of construction to be found near the heart of an enclave. They lack their own courtyard walls or other special fortifications, but most of them are composed of a sturdy, three-room lower floor dedicated to work and bulk storage and an upper floor given over to sleeping quarters and the household's most valuable possessions. Most are built of scrap, or wood if the former is unavailable.

Building	Cost
Hut	100
Village Home	750
Manor	7,500
Courtyard Home	6,000
Workshop, TL2	1,000
Workshop, TL3	4,000
Workshop, TL4	8,000
Stronghouse	4,000
Land, Arable	400
Land, Pasture	200
Land, Waste	50

Manors reflect some of the finest dwellings in any given village, usually the ancestral home of a long line of successful local grandees. Manors are always at least two storeys in height and have as many as a dozen rooms. The walls are thick, and many of them have windowless first floors given over to storage, with defensible steps leading up to a second-floor entrance. Construction is of scrap or stone depending on local resources, but always the finest available.

Courtyard homes resemble the *siheyuan* style of homes traditional to China, consisting of several rectangular buildings facing inward on a courtyard, with an outer wall connecting the backs of each building. This style is popular even in those regions devoid of direct Chinese influence as it provides a defensible compound for a large extended family. This price is for a typical courtyard home consisting of four buildings facing a central court. The exterior dimensions are about 30 meters long and 20 wide, while the interior courtyard is 15 meters long and 10 meters wide.

Workshops are required for a scrapsmith's art, or the pursuit of some other sophisticated technical process. TL0 and TL1 crafting requires no special workshops- a cleared space and a full toolkit are all that are needed to work on devices of those tech levels. The prices listed assume that the enclave actually has a sufficient tech level to support such a workshop. Those lacking that sophistication can rarely provide the necessary tools and power to keep a more advanced shop functioning. Physically, many workshops are attached to other structures and are little more than large open rooms with sturdy walls and ample equipment.

Stronghouses often serve as the defensive heart of a settlement, a place of final refuge against raiders and mutants. Most stronghouses are roughly twenty-five meters on a side, with a single door on the windowless ground floor and slit windows on the second floor. Sturdy metal trapdoors in the roof allow for warriors to shoot and hurl stones down on attackers from above. While uncomfortable as a permanent residence, most small enclaves can fit their entire populations into a stronghouse in a time of emergency. The bottom floor often doubles as a granary and the second floor as a storehouse for the community's most valuable relics and salvage.

Land is sold by the hectare, an area of 10,000 square meters. In those communities where land is not simply assigned by common consent, arable land is the most expensive, followed by pasture. Waste land is useless even for grazing, but buildings can be erected there if the soil is not actually toxic or radioactive.

Farm Income

The nanite-tainted land and mutated plant life of the New Earth is not conducive to easy farming or high yields. Most gengingeered crop strains were easy prey for the Highshine nanites and modern farmers have been thrown back to growing primitive food crops that were intended more as ornaments or boutique hobby plants than actual primary food sources. Such is the limited yield from these plants that many enclaves still find hunting and gathering to be competitive tactics even with the availability of farming expertise.

It takes two able adults and their children to work five hectares of land with TL1 tools, which will usually yield about 400 kilos of foodstuffs per hectare. Taking spoilage and bad years into account, most farm families are thus obliged to put everyone to work simply to avoid starvation. TL2 farming equipment will double the amount of land the same family can work. TL3 equipment will allow one family to work twenty hectares and give each hectare a yield of 500 kilos a year. More advanced farming equipment exists, but most of it relies on infrastructure that is no longer functional.

The yields above are intended simply to give the GM a rough idea of a farm's production. Most PCs have no interest in settling down for a life of hard-scrabble dirt farming, but it can be useful to have a general idea of the farmland being worked by a particular enclave. The produce of a player-owned farm can generally be assumed to be used up in keeping the place operating and its workers well-fed.

Breaking Walls and Doors

Adventurers being who they are, it's not unusual that they might wish to blast or smash their way through barriers and walls. The table below gives armor and hit point totals that must be overcome to bash down doors or break man-sized holes in walls. The barrier's armor score is subtracted from any damage done to it by non-Gunnery weaponry.

Construction	Armor	HP/meter
Wood	2	30
Scrap	4	30
Rubble	2	60
Masonry	4	60
Old Terran Wall	6	45
Reinforced Wall	15	60
Milspec Bulkhead	-	#
Doors		*HP*
Wooden Door	2	5
Reinforced Door	4	5
Armored Mandate Door	15	5
# Military-grade Old Terran fortifications cannot be breached by anything short of pretech demo charges.		

A Post-Apocalyptic Bestiary

The wastelands of the New Earth teem with unnatural life. The mutating scourge of the Highshine has given birth to countless strains of twisted, misshapen creatures, many of them mindlessly savage... and the animals aren't very friendly, either.

This chapter contains a selection of pre-made monstrosities along with statistics for more human foes or potential allies. Along with this information, you'll find details on reaction rolls, morale, and building your own mutant abominations for a campaign.

Reaction Rolls

In many cases a creature's response to the PCs will be obvious- a hungry flaysnake or a pack of bandits lying in wait aren't going to suddenly decide to parley based on a character's winning smile. Still, there will be times when the GM needs to decide how a particular person reacts to a group of PCs or responds to a particular offer. Some groups will prefer to handle this without dice, simply choosing a plausible outcome. For those GMs who prefer to inject a degree of randomness into events, there is the _reaction roll.

To make a reaction roll, first decide what the most probable response of the NPC will be, given the situation. A merchant may normally refuse to lower the price on a metasilk backpack, or a startled predator might spring to attack. A bandit with a gun barrel pushed up his left nostril and an earnest encouragement to tell the location of his chieftain's camp might normally try to string things out while he tries to think of a way to save his hide. The GM just decides what the most likely outcome of the current situation might be given the quality of the PCs' arguments and the details of the circumstance. Then the GM decides the _worst plausible outcome for the reaction, be it immediate violence or outraged insult, and the _best possible outcome, whether it's zealous agreement or enamoured friendship.

Then the GM rolls 2d6, adding the PC interlocutor's Charisma modifier and whatever skill he or she might be using to influence the NPC. For haggling, it might be Business, while calming a beast might be Vehicle/Land for a riding animal or Survival for a wild mutant. Convincing fearful troops or frightened townsfolk might be Leadership, and Persuade is useful in one-on-one situations. Almost any skill might be applicable in appropriately narrow circumstances.

A roll of 2 or less means the worst outcome happens, a 7 means the expected reaction is obtained, and a 12 or more means the best plausible outcome occurs. Results between those points shade things accordingly, so a 5 means that things go distinctly worse than they otherwise would, while a 10 means that good results are obtained, if not quite perfect.

The GM uses reaction rolls as a quick and simple way to get the general direction of a group's response. Low is bad, high is good, and average is as-expected. It's not necessary to worry about fine graduations of difference; all that's necessary is to get a hint as to how this particular group of NPCs is going to respond to a social advance.

If a Speaker uses the Speaker's Voice class ability to induce friendliness or intimidation in a subject, you should just immediately skip to the best plausible result for the interaction. Their class ability can't work miracles, but it can always give a Speaker the best results that the dice could give them.

Morale

Every creature is listed with a Morale score. This number ranges from 2 to 12, and reflects the general courage, discipline, and bloodthirstiness of the being. When put in a frightening situation, the subject must roll equal or less than their Morale score on 2d6 or else be overcome with fear. PCs never need to make morale checks.

For most hardened denizens of the wastes, simply engaging in mortal combat isn't enough to provoke a morale check. If their allies start dying, however, most combatants will need to roll a check. As a general rule, a group should roll a morale check the first time an ally dies and when the group has been reduced to half its original numbers. If they succeed in both checks, they're either blood-mad or too desperate to surrender.

A GM can always simply decide the outcome of a morale check, if the situation recommends it. A pack of bandits who've just watched a PC shoot a helpless prisoner in the head are not going to surrender no matter how many morale checks they fail. Conversely, that same pack is not going to stand and fight it out against an obviously superior party of PCs whether or not their morale holds. Intelligent foes will fight accordingly, and very few of them have "fight to the last man" as a cherished personal ambition.

It's up to the GM to decide the exact consequences of failing a morale check. Trained soldiers who fail a check might pull back behind cover and refuse to emerge as they wait for reinforcements. Animals and bandits might simply turn and flee. Others might surrender and beg for mercy. Some enemies may even rally and fight back if it turns out that only death awaits them at the hands of their merciless foes.

Creating Creatures

As a GM, you'll likely find yourself in need of a steady stream of feral antagonists to meet the spears of your PCs. The creature write-ups provided in this section provide a good general selection of foes, but there's a great deal of pleasure in brewing up your own monstrous abominations. Given that satisfaction, here are a few basic guidelines for creating your own post-apocalyptic fauna.

First, decide the creature's basic ancestry. In North America, for example, you might decide that the creature is a mutant strain of black bear, while in India it might be a Highshined tiger or mutated monkey. Some mutants were originally human, but generations of heritable Highshine mutations have left them unrecognizable by their unchanged cousins.

Next, decide what sort of challenge the creature is supposed to present. Is this enemy going to be a sort of dangerous vermin, feeble but numerous? Is it some sort of stalker-beast that springs upon its prey and vanishes before the panicked group can react? Is the creature supposed to be a terrifying threat to be avoided and outwitted whenever possible?

This step is important, because the role the creature is to fill will determine its basic statistics. To fit the role, choose a matching line from the table below. Vermin should always retain a very low hit die, but other types of creatures might be given more or less based on your needs. For each hit die added, increase its hit bonus by one, and for each hit die removed, decrease the bonus by one. Damage usually remains the same, though if you drastically increase the hit dice you might bump the die type up- from d8 to d10 or d12, for example.

Next, you'll want to decide how it looks. You can turn to the Mutation chapter and just roll on the Stigmata table, or on the individual mutation shape tables. Most aggressive mutants suffer from a constant low-level torment due to Highshine rejection and the strain their bodies endure in maintaining their unnatural lives. Pustules, mange, scarring, discoloration, and ulcers are all common in such creatures. Some of the most horribly mutated are so badly mangled by the Highshine that it's a constant strain on the nanites simply to keep them alive.

Lastly, you'll want to decide whether or not it has any remarkable powers. Most animal mutants have at least one unusual ability, commonly derived from their particular Highshine infection and their original animal stock. Mutant rabbits might be able to leap amazing distances, rats might have monoblade-sharp incisors, and tigers might actually be studded with micro-holographic display units to vanish entirely when they remain motionless. One ability per mutant is usually enough, and it should be keyed to their particular nature and deformities. If you want something potentially more exotic, you could roll on the Mutations chapter's beneficial mutations list.

NPC Statistics

For non-player characters and mutant monsters, it's not necessary to give them all the statistics and detailed skills appropriate for a PC. In most cases they won't play a large enough role in the game to make it worth the effort, and few situations will arise where the details of their Strength score or precise Business skill level are all that important. While you can always stat out such men and women fully if you expect they might be significant to play, most NPCs need only a much smaller, more succinct line of statistics. An example creature statline might look like this:

Flaysnake: AC 7, Move 20, HD 3, hp 12, Atk +4/1d6 bite+poison, Skill +2, Save 14+. Poison is Toxicity 8, Virulence 3, Interval 2 rounds and does 1d6 Constitution point damage per failed save.

Armor Class is the first entry in the statistics. A completely unarmored or soft-skinned creature has a base AC of 9. Tough-skinned or agile, elusive creatures have lower ACs, as do humans who wear armor. Most well-equipped tribal warriors will be wearing AC 6 hide armor, though poorer raiders might have nothing but a few dirty rags to cover their nakedness.

Role	HD	AC	AB	Damage	Move	Morale
Nuisance Vermin	1/2	7	+1	1d4	20'	8
Pack Hunter	1	7	+2	1d4	20'	8
Lone Predator	2	6	+3/+3	1d6/1d6	30'	9
Armored Brute	4	3	+4	1d8	20'	9
Stalker	3	6	+6	1d10	30'	7
Apex Predator	6	6	+8/+8	1d8/1d8	30'	10
Lethal Swarm Entity	2	5	+8	1d8	30'	9
Multi-limbed Horror	4	5	+8/+8/+8/+8	1d6/1d6/1d6/1d6	30'	9
Eater of Tribes	10	2	+12/+12/+12	1d8/1d8/1d8	40'	12

Move is the creature's movement rate in meters, with 20 meters per round being the human average. Be careful when deciding on a movement rate for mutant animals; if the creature's too fast, it might be impossible for a party to break off and flee from a losing battle. This might be acceptable for your purposes, but it should be something you do intentionally.

Hit Dice are listed next. All hit dice for NPCs and mutant monsters are 1d8- so at 3 hit dice, the flaysnake rolls 3d8 for hit points. This slightly greater hit die compensates somewhat for the inability of NPCs to roll a steadily-increasing pool of hit dice and take the best result, the way that PCs are allowed to advance. Ordinary, unmartial humans or very weak mutants might have only half a hit die, rolling only 1d4 for their hit points.

Hit points list the specific HP rolled for this creature. If there were several creatures in this particular encounter, their hit points would be separated by slashes- "hp 12/6/20/15", for example.

Attack gives the creature's total attack bonus and the damage done by a successful attack. In most cases, the attack bonus is equal to the creature's hit dice, though particularly skilled, fast, or powerful opponents might have a higher total. Conversely, those creatures that are very large but placid or those humans with very poor fighting skills might have a smaller total bonus. Here, the damage given is a bite attack, doing 1d6 hp of injury and forcing the victim to make a Physical Effect or Luck saving throw to avoid the poison. For a human, the damage might vary based on the weapon they're using.

Some creatures have multiple attacks, either from having amazing agility, numerous murderous appendages, or superhuman skill. These multiple attacks are all rolled at the same time and may be split up among multiple targets if physically practical. Different attacks may have different attack bonuses, depending on what's given in the stat line.

Skill gives a general total bonus to be used on any skill checks related to something the creature should be good at doing. A flaysnake should be good at sneaking around quietly and noticing prey, so it would gain +2 on any relevant skill checks. A village scrapsmith with a +1 bonus might get the bonus when repairing a spear. Most NPCs have at most +1 per three hit dice or levels, and often substantially less. Skill bonuses of +4 or more are indicative of remarkable talent at their field of proficiency or keen natural gifts in mutant animals. Skill checks outside the subject's expertise are rolled with a +0 bonus, or even worse if it's something they ought to be bad at accomplishing.

USING EVERY PART OF THE MUTANT

It's likely that the PCs are going to have some interest in butchering certain mutated beasts they might down in the course of their wanderings. This isn't as simple as it sounds- most mutants and other large game animals are significantly contaminated by their surroundings, and may not be edible.

To butcher an animal requires at least a knife and an Intelligence/Survival skill check if the PC's concept doesn't cover the activity. A small beast will yield 1d2 rations, a man-sized one will provide 1d6, and a cow-sized prey animal will give 1d12. By default, these are all dirty rations that will add Contamination to the consumer. More selective butchering can take only the cleanest and least contaminated parts of the carcass, but will halve the rations obtained. A beast will usually give as many units of TL0 spare parts as it gives rations.

The rations taken from a prey animal will spoil in three days if not adequately preserved by smoking, drying, or salting. Preserving prey can be done with about eight hours of effort.

The Save entry indicates the creature's saving throw. Unlike PCs, NPCs simply have a single saving throw number equal to 15, -1 for each two full hit dice. All saves are rolled against this number.

After the saving throw, a short note is jotted giving the details of the creature's special abilities. When preparing these stat lines for your own game, make sure to write down anything you'll need to reference in the heat of play. Ideally, you want to be able to run combats or interactions with this creature without having to open up any rulebook or cross-reference any other document.

Note that when you're generating ordinary men and women, it's not usually necessary to assign them a class. Most ordinary people don't qualify as Scroungers, Slayers, Speakers, or Survivors- they're just regular people who might be good at a particular line of work. Warriors might have higher attack bonuses than their hit dice suggest, scrapsmiths might be able to use their skill bonus for repairing objects, and so forth. Even a grizzled and experienced war leader might simply have an extra three or four hit dice and a good attack bonus rather than a Slayer's full panoply of abilities.

This roster of mutants, reavers, and robots provides a selection of some of the more common perils of the New Earth's wastelands. When you don't have time to brew up abominations of your own, you can always simply use one of these entities and "reskin" them to appear as a new breed of foe.

Each creature comes with stat block listing the number usually encountered roaming the wastes. When a number is provided in parenthesis, it gives the total creatures usually found in their lair, home village, or nest. Loot types for individuals and groups are explained in the Adventure Creation chapter, in the Rewards section.

Not every creature is unalterably hostile. Many intelligent beings are perfectly willing to negotiate with strangers, particularly if they are in a position of relative weakness. Reaction rolls are helpful in determining the attitude of otherwise dubious encounters.

BEASTFOLK

The Highshine nanites ravaged many of the human survivors of the Scream, scourging their forms and bending them into new and terrible shapes. Some of these unfortunates were overcome by a garbled strain that had originally been intended to preserve the natural wildlife of Old Terra. Rather than being restored to human health, these men and women were hybridized with the genetic templates carried by the warped nanites. The results were beings that were neither wholly bestial nor entirely human.

Most of these "beastmen" retained their human intellects, though they were powerfully influenced by the feral instincts of their less human halves. Most varieties bred true among beastmen of their own kind, with whole breeds of wolfmen, fishmen, and other hybrid types springing up in the years after the catastrophe. Their feral strength and keen senses adapted them to life in places where less gifted humans could not hope to survive. Some of the most dangerous tribes of the deep wastes are made up of these hybrid beings.

The beastmen of a given species and region usually share the same general appearance and mutations, though this varies from place to place; the wolfmen of central North America have small resemblance to the dholepeople of South Asia, and the dogfolk of varying lands have their own appearance as well. The degree of mutation can also vary. Some breeds can have such minor alterations as to leave the mutant almost passable, while others involve complete restructuring of the beastman's body. Some humans who suffer mutation may adopt shapes similar to those of beastmen, but these sports are rarely accepted by their "true born" brethren. Beastmen are rarely cross-fertile with humans. Their offspring are always beastmen of the same breed, but a human mother will often die from nanite-induced systemic toxicity before the child can be brought to term.

Most beastman tribes retain large portions of the culture they possessed before the Scream, usually filtered through the lens of their new existence. Sophisticated technology and complex intellectual pursuits often fall away under the primal instincts of their feral halves, though tribal social structures can be quite elaborate. Some beastmen are able to live alongside fully-human tribes in a symbiotic relationship, while others serve either as the savage masters of human thralls or as sub-human slaves of more technologically-advanced enclaves.

BEASTFOLK PCs

Some GMs may choose to allow players to play beastfolk characters. Each entry below covers the abilities granted to such a PC and their total cost in mutation picks. Some beastman races give attribute modifier bonuses or penalties. These are applied directly to the modifier for an attribute rather than the score- a bullman with a Strength of 11 would have a total Strength modifier of +1 rather than +0. Every beastman PC picks a character class as normal and starts with 1 hit die, even if their species usually has more. Natural armor class benefits and natural attacks are also retained. PCs can roll natural attacks using either Combat/Unarmed or Combat/Primitive skills, adding their Combat/Unarmed skill to the damage roll in the former case.

	ANTFOLK	BOARMEN
No. Enc.	3d4 (1d20 x 20)	1d4+1 (1d6 x 20)
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	7 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	1	1 + 1
Attacks	+1/bite or weapon	+1/gore or weapon
Damage	1d4 or weapon	1d6 or weapon
Save	15	15
Morale	8	9
Loot Type	P1 (G7)	P1 (G7)
Skill Bonus	+1	+1

Antfolk: Insectile hybrids with tough chitinous skin, antfolk are overwhelmingly female in number, quick-breeding, and organized on the basis of genetic castes. Workers perform labor for the nest, warriors defend it, and the male drones exist to service the queen. Antfolk are tough, profoundly united in their purposes, and capable of overcoming most dangers through sheer numbers and relentless ferocity. Instinct often overwhelms their higher reasoning, however, and the compulsion to grow the nest, gather resources, and destroy threats often outweighs longer-term considerations. If a queen dies, unhatched antfolk eggs have a chance of producing one or more princesses, each of whom will form cliques of followers that will eventually battle out to a resolution. A few antfolk find themselves without a nest due to disaster, mischance, or the death of their clique's princess. These wretched survivors are forced to negotiate a world most find to be unbearably lonely.

Antfolk have a remarkably acute sense of smell capable of discerning their surroundings out to 10 meters well enough to fight and act without penalty. Antfolk can also track other creatures with a Wisdom/Survival check against difficulty 6, +1 for each 12 hours since the trail was laid down. Being an antman or antwoman costs 1 mutation pick.

Boarmen: Amalgams of wild boar and human, these beastmen are notorious for their aggression and violent nature. Peaceful coexistence is almost impossible with boarmen, as they often take the smallest slights as mortal insults and are ever quick to resort to hostilities. Some boarmen try to rein in their tempers with religious or philosophical teachings that focus on self-control and patient endurance, but most wild tribes are mere savages. Tribes of boarmen will fight each other almost as readily as they fight normal humans, but boarmen tend to have better experience at managing the delicate subtleties of negotiation with their hot-tempered kind.

Boarmen can fight on for one round after being dropped to zero hit points or lower. Reducing them to -10 HP or lower kills them instantly. Boarman PCs gain a +1 Constitution modifier benefit and a -1 Wisdom modifier penalty. Being a boarman costs 1 mutation pick.

	Bullmen	**Crowmen**
No. Enc.	2d4 (1d8 x 20)	1d10 (2d4 x 10)
Movement	20'	20', Fly 30'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	2	1
Attacks	+2/gore or weapon	+1/weapon
Damage	1d6+2 or weapon	Usually 1d6 spear
Save	14	15
Morale	8	7
Loot Type	P2 (G7)	P2 (G7)
Skill Bonus	+1	+1

Bullmen: Most common in agricultural zones and Hindu-populated regions of Old Terra, bullfolk have a largely peaceful demeanor that belies their great size and fearsome horns. Some are devout believers in variant forms of Hinduism and most are strict vegetarians. Bullfolk communities tend to cluster together in herds led by their oldest and wisest members. Bullfolk provoked beyond the limits of their human patience can fall prey to a blinding rage, however, and massive bulk of their warriors is a fearsome spectacle on the battlefield. Even the cows among them usually stand at two meters in height, and the bulls are usually 30 or 40 centimeters taller still.

Bullmen have a natural Gore attack doing 1d6+2 damage, given their size and strength. Bullmen PCs gain a +1 bonus to their Strength and Constitution modifiers and a -1 penalty to their Dexterity modifier. Being a bullman costs 2 mutation picks.

Crowmen: Cruel scavengers and looters, the crowfolk tend to be pale-skinned and mantled in black feathers. Some have wings tipped in human hands, while others sprout black pinions from their backs. They squabble and fight among themselves on a regular basis, but all unite in regular plundering raids against other communities, both for food and the bright ornaments that these beastmen love so well. Crowmen are treacherous by habit, but some human tribes engage in wary alliances with them for their air support and scouting abilities. Many such enclaves come to grief when their erstwhile allies turn on them at the first sign of vulnerability.

Crowmen can fly, but the focus required prevents them from making effective attacks while in the air. They are unable to hover, and must fly at least half their movement rate each round if they are not to fall. Crowmen cannot fly while encumbered or wearing advanced, pressure-sealed armor. Being a crowman costs 2 mutation picks.

	Fishmen	**Wolfmen**
No. Enc.	1d6 (1d20 x 5)	2d4 (2d4 x 10)
Movement	20', Swim 30'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	1	1
Attacks	+1/weapon	+1/Bite or weapon
Damage	Usually 1d6 spear	1d6+2 or weapon
Save	15	15
Morale	7	8
Loot Type	P1 (G7)	P2 (G7)
Skill Bonus	+1	+1

Fishmen: Cold and distant, the fishfolk are keepers of sunken ruins and lost aquatic arcologies. They are among the most alien of the beastfolk, reluctant to communicate with outsiders and reclusive in their large schools. They are known for raiding landward settlements, harvesting the air-breathers much as men fish the seas. The inability to work metal underwater leaves most of their equipment crude in nature, but some retain forges in air-filled ruins or remote islands. Those without such advantages often plunder human settlements for their worked goods.

Fishmen can function normally both in and out of the water, but require double the normal ration of water if they are to avoid gaining Thirst. They can drink salt water without harm, however, are immune to normal ranges of cold and underwater pressure, and can sense their surroundings up to 10 meters away when underwater even if deprived of light. Being a fishman costs 1 mutation pick.

Wolfmen: Lean and sharp-toothed mutants, wolfmen tend to form small, highly-disciplined tribes. Instincts of submission and dominance are hardwired into their psychology, and they will usually follow their alpha male chieftain in a rigid hierarchy of obedience until he is successfully challenged by a subordinate. Multiple tribes sometimes form into loose confederations, but these alliances invariably splinter as soon as their charismatic leader falls.

Most wolfmen have a natural Bite attack doing 1d6+2 damage and an instinctive talent for teamwork in combat, gaining a +2 bonus to hit in melee when fighting the same target as another wolfman. Being a wolfman costs 1 mutation pick.

Black Dust

This nanite contamination is not so much a creature as it is an environmental hazard. The term "Black Dust" is reserved for ambient nanites that have been subverted to toxic, mutagenic, or corrosive purposes by the Crazed or by the natural decay of their controls. In its worst manifestations, it takes the form of a cloud of churning darkness, while lighter infestations are a shadow in the air. Victims caught within a cloud of Black Dust usually must save versus Tech each round or suffer 1d10 damage. Other clouds might force radiation saves once per round, or Tech saves to resist mutation, or even worse scourges inflicted on the unlucky victims. Sealed suits will hold off Black Dust for 1d6 minutes before they are breached, losing one level of durability in the process.

Blinder Bird

No. Enc.	1d8 (3d10)
Movement	Fly 30'
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	1-1
Attacks	+1/Claw or Bite
Damage	1d4
Save	15
Morale	7
Loot Type	None
Skill Bonus	+2

Given the blinder bird's silent approach, it might be a Highshined owl variant, though the toothed beak suggests some cross-scrambling with the Old Terran archaeopteryx. These vicious aerial predators subsist chiefly on carrion and small animals, but they have a particular craving for human blood. They shadow small groups of humans and dive to slash at exposed heads and faces with nanite-hardened talons. Long blackened tongues lick the blood and aqueous vitae from their claws in between their swooping dives.

Blinder birds are silent in flight and skilled at ambush. The character with the best Wisdom/Perception total in a group must beat the bird's skill check in an opposed test, or else the group will be surprised by the attack.

Cultists of the Crazed

	Cult Warrior	Adept
No. Enc.	2d4 (1d10 x 5)	1d6 (3d6)
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	1	5
Attacks	+1/weapon	+6/weapon
Damage	By weapon	By weapon
Save	15	13
Morale	10	11
Loot Type	P2 (G5)	P5 (G19)
Skill Bonus	+1	+3

These desperate devotees of the mad arch-psions are a regular scourge on the wastelands. The Crazed and their devotees offer aid and protection that can serve to seduce a desperate community to their service. Once the pact is sealed and the community has accepted its new lords, the terms often change for the worse. By then, it's too late to back away; even if the adepts would let the wretched cultists depart, their horrified neighbors would never allow them to live. Veneration of the Crazed is a crime on par with cannibalism or the embrace of psychic powers.

There are five great arch-psions, four of which have visible and active believers. The fifth is also thought to have minions, but his agents are said to infiltrate unknowing enclaves and seek out only their hidden psychic members for corruption. Organization among all the cults is invariably loose and ad-hoc; many cells have only tenuous connections to the Crazed themselves, as some of the arch-psions are scarcely capable of noticing their efforts, let alone aiding them.

The Defiler, She Who Remains is Fujiko Nakagawa, an arch-psion versed in biopsionics and precognition. Her Floating World roams the skies of the New Earth, its construction of living worshipers hideously twisted to their new role. The Bright Mirror system ignores such organic fliers, and her winged messengers bring the words of the Arbiters of Change to the desperate. Full details of her cult are provided in the Codex of the New Earth: The Cult of the Still Lady, currently available as a free PDF.

The Usurper, He Who Commands is Jason Williamson, the foremost precognomist of Old Terra. Master of telepathy and precognition, he helped the Maestros to plot out the core worlds' economic matrix months in advance. The madness of the Scream has convinced him that he and all around him are actually dead and in Hell, and his purpose is to lash these wretched lemures into a semblance of civilized order and disciplined harmony. But his believers invariably disappoint him eventually, and are summarily dispatched to some lower and more miserable damnation.

The Bender, She Who Ruins is Letitia Somoza, once Old Terra's finest nanocoder, blending her telekinetic mastery of microscale nanomanipulations with a precognitive intuition as to the correct path her code should take. Her madness is a conviction that the

Maestros and all AI tech are responsible for the Scream. She burnt down half the world in trying to destroy them, corrupting Highshine, freezing the Bright Mirror defensive system, and relentlessly hunting the surviving Maestros. Her Luddite bands of worshipers use tech only to destroy it in the hands of others, and slaughter all who expose themselves as "agents of the godminds".

The Saltatrix, She Who Dances is Leelavathi Chandrasekhar, whose broken mind conflates the right steps of reason with the correct path of motion. To the Dancer, dance is not simply an act of beauty, but an epistle of objective truth and meaning- one expressed by her mastery of teleportation and precognition. Her followers are led to caches of supplies and vulnerable enclave prey, but they must never stop moving for long. They rove like locust bands across the wasteland, devouring all in their paths.

The Wraith, He Who Sees is Solomon Nkwame, the greatest psychic criminal of the Second Wave. A master of metapsionics and precognition, it was blind luck that led to his capture and containment within a kilometer-thick shell of psi-damping shielding, the better to allow for his study and eventual execution. Some say that the shielding preserved his mind from the Scream- others that it merely left him more coherent in his megalomania. He is said to duel the other Crazed for eventual dominion over the New Earth, and his agents seek out likely psychics to train them in his cause. A few even insist that his goals are benevolent, and that he seeks to protect the world from his mad brethren.

Flaysnake

No. Enc.	1 (1d4)
Movement	20'
Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	3
Attacks	+4/Bite
Damage	1d6 + poison
Save	14
Morale	8
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+2

A man-sized rattler with glistening, scarred flesh exposed to the wasteland's sands, the flaysnake is one of the more unfortunate animal victims of the Highshine nanite. The particular strain that infests the flaysnake has somehow crippled the snake's ability to form scales, leaving its tissues red and exposed. The beast would doubtless die of dehydration and infection were it not for the nanites' grim drive to maintain homeostasis- as it is, it exists in perpetual torment and its savage temper is proverbial.

The giant serpent hunts down small mammals or lone travelers as its usual meals. Its fangs contain a potent poison- Toxicity 8, Interval 2 rounds, Virulence 3. For each failed saving throw, a man-sized victim suffers 1d6 damage to their Constitution. A victim reduced to 0 Constitution dies, and lost points are recovered at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.

Ghoul Bear

No. Enc.	1 (1d4)
Movement	20'
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	4
Attacks	2 Claws at +6
Damage	1d8/1d8
Save	13
Morale	9
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+2

The loathsome ghoul bear is a creature resembling a large North American black bear with a head like that of a human man or woman. They have an almost human degree of intelligence, though they speak only to perfectly mimic the sounds of their former victims. Ghoul bears love carrion and rotted things, but gladly hunt fresher meat when it is available. They are notorious for prowling around the edges of weakened enclaves, crying out for help in the voices of dead men and women.

The mimicry of the ghoul bear is laced with powerful Highshine-augmented subsonics, and provokes a lassitude and dazed torpor in its victims. Every creature within ten meters of the ghoul bear must save versus Mental Effect when it speaks or else they are treated as Dazed for their next round of action. Ghoul bears are immune to these effects, as are the deaf.
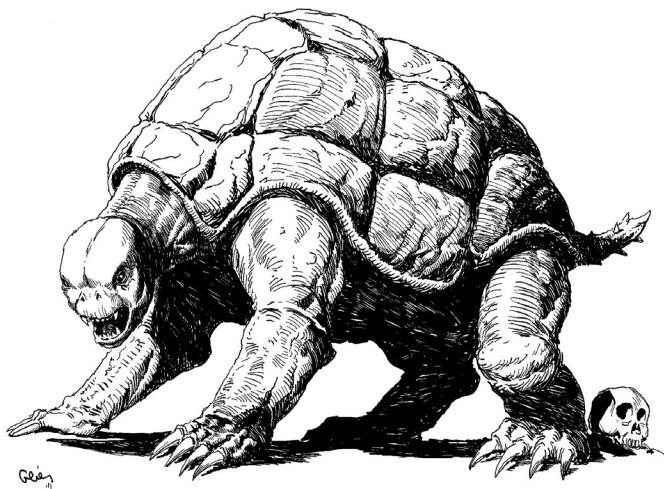
GLOW TURTLE

No. Enc.	1
Movement	25'
Armor Class	2
Hit Dice	5
Attacks	+6/Bite
Damage	1d10
Save	13
Morale	8
Loot Type	None
Skill Bonus	+1

These hulking tortoises are as tall as a man at the crest of their shells. They are notorious for consuming any organic matter they encounter, from carrion to scrub plants to village crops. Severe Highshine alteration has left them capable of enduring enormous levels of radioactivity and nanocontamination; they are effectively immune to poisons and radioactivity. These toxic substances build up in their shells, however, and cause them to emit a fierce blue glow of radiation. Anyone who comes within 30 meters of a glow turtle must make a saving throw versus Physical Effect or suffer one point of Constitution loss as radiation damage, with the check repeated at one-minute intervals.

Glow turtles are exceedingly bad-tempered and will usually attack any creature of human size or smaller. While incapable of chasing prey over long distances, they can move with surprising speed in combat. They remain solitary outside of their yearly breeding season.

GOREHOUND

No. Enc.	2d4 (2d12)
Movement	30'
Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	1 or 3 for a pack alpha
Attacks	+3/Bite, +5/Bite for pack alphas
Damage	1d6
Save	15
Morale	8
Loot Type	None
Skill Bonus	+1

It's unclear whether the gorehounds are the product of Highshine infestation or the simple result of generations of feral dogs being winnowed of their softer instincts. The canine stock of Old Terra was substantially augmented over their common ancestors, being made smarter, hardier, and less prone to congenital sicknesses. A few gorehounds have a human degree of intelligence, and all of them are possessed with more than animal intellect.

They hunt in packs, relentlessly pursuing their prey in long-distance chases until the exhausted victims drop and are devoured. Some seem to take an almost sadistic pleasure in playing with their prey, allowing them flashes of false hope before their inevitable, leisurely consumption. A few consent to become companions to particularly brutal raiders, profiting by the scraps their savage masters discard.

GRINDER WORM

No. Enc.	1 (2d6)
Movement	20', Burrows 1'/round
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	5
Attacks	+7/Bite
Damage	1d12
Save	13
Morale	10
Loot Type	None
Skill Bonus	+2

The grinder worm is a massively overgrown earthworm equipped with a caustic, ring-toothed maw, the creature stretching three meters long and thick as a human thigh. It burrows through earth and rubble with remarkable alacrity, and can sense creatures within 20 meters by the vibration of their movement. The grinder worm prefers to burrow up beneath its unsuspecting prey and burst from beneath the flooring or ground to attack from surprise.

If the battle goes against a grinder worm, it's likely to retreat back into its hole, as it can crawl backward just as quickly as it can advance. Rumors persist of truly massive grinder worms capable of coring man-high tunnels through solid rock.

GUT WEASEL

No. Enc.	1 (2)
Movement	40'
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	3
Attacks	Two claw attacks at +6 each
Damage	1d6/1d6
Save	14
Morale	9
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+1

Anatomical examination suggests that gut weasels are a Highshined variant of the wolverine, albeit one capable of living in almost any terrestrial climate. Individual gut weasels rarely weigh more than five or six kilograms, but their ferocity, speed, and diamond-hard claws make them a substantial threat to far larger creatures. The Highshine strain's alterations leave gut weasels deficient in a number of important nutrients that are most often found in the organ tissues of large mammals. As a consequence, gut weasels are known for disemboweling victims with their claws, often burrowing completely into the bellies of cattle and other large creatures before the wretched victim can react.

Gut weasels are blindingly fast. When determining initiative for a combat round, they automatically receive an initiative value of 10. Most gut weasels are found alone, but occasionally a nesting pair can wreak havoc on an unwary expedition.

HERITOR BUG

No. Enc.	3d6 (1d20 x 20)
Movement	15'
Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	1 HP
Attacks	+1/Bite
Damage	1d4
Save	15
Morale	10
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+1

Vicious, mutated cockroaches as long as a man's forearm, heritor bugs are a common and dangerous vermin in the ruins of Old Terran cities and Mandate bases. They thrive in radioactive areas and can survive on vanishingly small amounts of organic sustenance. Any serious blow with a weapon will kill a heritor bug, but they attack in savage swarms that can strip the flesh from a man in minutes. Their

razor-sharp mandibles are small, but they exude an acidic spittle that often leaves gruesome scars on those creatures that survive their frenzied hunger.

HUMANS

As dangerous as the beasts of the wastelands can be, few can match humanity's aptitude for murderous violence. Even the most peaceful enclave can erupt in bloodied spears and gunsmoke with a sufficiently vicious quarrel, and raider clans pick out their meager livings from the bones of fellow humanity. Everything that a person has, another person is ready to take.

The people of the New Earth are tough, canny, and ready to do what they must to survive. Only the richest and most sheltered enclaves can afford to entertain softer sentiments, and those tribes that were unwilling to compromise with necessity are no more than legends now. An ordinary tribesman can be expected to know the use of spear and knife, and few are strangers to killing. Some communities strive to keep the chaos and bloodshed of the wastes safely beyond their borders, but even in the most orderly societies the specter of a bloody future lingers as a constant threat.

	CULTIST	ELITE WARRIOR
No. Enc.	2d4 (2d20)	1d4+1
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	1	2
Attacks	+1/weapon	+3/weapon
Damage	By weapon	By weapon
Save	15	14
Morale	10	9
Loot Type	P1 (G6)	P3
Skill Bonus	+1	+1

Cultists: Some men and women are fired by a wild zeal for their cause, either as servitors of the dread cults of the Crazed or as devotees of more conventional faiths. These fanatics rarely live long enough to improve their equippage beyond that of an ordinary tribal, but their ferocious enthusiasm for their cause makes them very hard to break on the battlefield. Most wastelanders hate dealing with such bloodthirsty zealots, as even when outnumbered most will fight to the last man.

Elite Warriors: Every enclave has some who excel at the red arts of violence, men and women who have a positive knack for murder. These elite warriors often form the bodyguard of the enclave's leader, or are charged with those missions too dangerous for ordinary combatants. Most will be armed as well as their enclave is able, with projectile and energy weapons not uncommon to the wealthier groups. As a rule of thumb, for every twenty ordinary warriors in an enclave one of them will qualify for the elite.

	ENCLAVE DWELLER	RAIDER
No. Enc.	3d4 (2d20 x 50)	2d4 (1d20 x 10)
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	1	1
Attacks	+1/weapon	+1/weapon
Damage	By weapon	By weapon
Save	15	15
Morale	7	8
Loot Type	P2 (G8)	P2 (G8)
Skill Bonus	+1	+1

Enclave Dweller: These people cling to something more than simple tribal affiliations, and often look down on their more "primitive" brethren- even if they rarely have a technological base much more advanced. Most enclaves are built around particular religions, cultures, or historical bonds rather than the simple blood ties of a tribe, and their members jealously guard their customs against the encroachments of the wild. Enclaves are often comparatively wealthy communities, and have more in the way of "civilization"; this softness leaves their men and women less talented at violence than their tribal kindred. On the other hand, their warriors and guards have the luxury of specialization, and are often equipped with scrap-built gunpowder weaponry.

Raider: Loners don't last long in the wastes, and raiders are almost invariably found in groups. Small bands are usually the remnants of unsuccessful clans, disgruntled deserters, or scouting parties sent out by larger groups, while a full clan might include a hundred or more warriors. Raider bands can't survive without a constant migration in search of fresh prey, and groups are constantly entering or leaving a region in search of suitable targets. The rank and file are rarely any better-equipped than an ordinary tribesman, but the leader and his lieutenants often have access to the best weaponry the band has available.

	TRADER	TRIBAL
No. Enc.	1d6	1d8 (2d20 x 50)
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	3	1
Attacks	+3/weapon	+1/weapon
Damage	By weapon	By weapon
Save	14	15
Morale	9	8
Loot Type	P5	P2 (G7)
Skill Bonus	+2	+1

Traders: Not many people make a living through trade in the New Earth. Few enclaves produce much in the way of surplus goods, and the dangers of travel often make a mercantile career both short and terminally exciting. Still, some men and women are tough and

	WANDERER	**WARLORD**
No. Enc.	1d6+2	1
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	Special	7
Attacks	Special	+7/weapon
Damage	Special	By weapon
Save	Special	12
Morale	9	11
Loot Type	P5	P10
Skill Bonus	+1	+3

Wanderers: The PCs aren't the only heroes in the wastelands- or hero-equivalents, at least. A wandering group of skilled wastelanders might be found in the course of an expedition, usually bound for a nearby enclave or ruin. The group will consist of 1d6+2 members, with even odds for them belonging to any given class. Levels are usually 1-3. More experienced characters will be found only 20% of the time in which case they will be level 1d4+2. 2% of the time, genuine heroes of the wasteland are encountered, some wide-famed band of warriors of level 1d4+5. Higher-level NPCs might exist in the region, but they're likely too rare to be found just wandering the wilderness unless intentionally placed there by the GM.

Heroic prowess is not always accompanied by heroic purpose. If the GM doesn't have any obvious rationale for the wanderers' presence, they should roll 1d6. On a 1-2 the group is essentially trustworthy and at least modestly altruistic, on a 3-4 they're a mercenary lot who can usually be relied upon to behave well provided no temptations are presented, and on a 5-6 they're a pack of badlands bastards who'd scalp their own mothers for the price of a wig. A standard reaction roll can help shape their interactions with a party.

Warlords: Chieftains, bandit kings, tribal warlords, barbarian heroes, and other specimens of unbridled brutality are not uncommon in the wastes. These statistics reflect the typical leader of a raider clan, prosperous enclave, or other significant local power. For those enclaves civilized enough to choose their chieftains based on something other than charisma and martial prowess, there is usually a war chief or military commander with this degree of skill and equippage.

clever enough to recognize the possibilities, and make their living moving goods and people from one enclave to another. Traders almost always travel with 2d6 guards, and often have access to advanced weaponry. Some make deals with raider clans, buying safety with regular payments, while others rely on steel, powder, and well-aimed lasers to keep the rabble back. Most traders will have at least 1d4 spare rations of food and water available for trade for each member of the group. Most traders are too fearful of bandit treachery to willingly travel with strangers met on the way, but sometimes a convincing word or good local reputation can persuade them to take on additional hands.

Tribal: A common man or woman of the wastes, tribals are accustomed to hunting, farming, or performing whatever other services get them their daily rations. Some possess salvaged weaponry or scrap-forged handguns, but the scarcity of ammunition for training leaves most of them very poor shots, suffering a -2 penalty with projectile or energy weapons. The majority rely on spears, knives, and other easily-acquired tools of hunting and war. In any given enclave, about one third of the population will qualify as a tribal for combat purposes, with the remaining portion consisting of those too young, too old, or too crippled to fight effectively.

Manscorpion

No. Enc.	1 (2d6)
Movement	20', Climb 20'
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	3
Attacks	2 pincers and a sting at +5 each
Damage	1d6/1d6/1d6 + poison
Save	13
Morale	9
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+3

Solitary hunters, the manscorpions stand almost three meters tall, a four-legged abdomen tapering into a vicious sting and a humanoid torso armed with two bone-cleaving pincers. The creature's head is more insectile than human, and it makes only chittering noises to its own kind.

Manscorpion toxin is paralytic in nature, with a Toxicity of 10, Interval of 1 round, and Virulence of 1. For each failed save the victim loses 1d10 points of Dexterity. At Dexterity 0, they are immobile and helpless. If they survive, lost points return at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.

Manscorpions prefer to nest in ruins, taking advantage of their hardened climbing claws to ascend above the notice of ground-walking prey. They lack human intelligence but are notoriously stealthy hunters. Small groups are attacked by solitary manscorpions, but larger bands might draw out an entire nest to ambush them.

Psychics

	Minor Psychic	Adept Psychic
No. Enc.	1	1
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	9 or by armor	9 or by armor
Hit Dice	3	8
Attacks	+2/weapon	+6/weapon
Damage	By weapon	By weapon
Save	14	11
Morale	9	9
Loot Type	P5	P8
Skill Bonus	+2	+3

Ever since the Scream wiped out the psychic mentors of Old Terra, those luckless men and women born with Metadimensional Extroversion Syndrome have been unable to acquire the training they need to preserve their sanity. With each exertion of their native powers, the fires of metadimensional force burn a fresh road through their neural tissue. Death or violent madness is the inescapable outcome for such feral psychics, and their only hope is in a strict refusal to use their abilities. Many secret psychics manage to go their entire

lives without using their cursed graces. Others are more reckless- or more desperate.

These feral psychics are usually killed or driven away by their community when they're not hidden by family. Those that live often become madmen and ravers in the wilderness, dangerous lunatics with an unquenchable hatred for their fellow humans. Others have lunacies more compatible with leadership, and accrue bands of desperate reavers willing to follow one of their dreaded kind in exchange for the benefits of their powers. The satisfaction of their delusions and horrific urges is simply a price for their followers to pay.

A few psychics are found and enlisted by the cults of the Crazed, the handful of arch-psychics that survived the Scream with their minds in tatters. These inhuman intellects are capable of training their servants to use psychic powers without inevitable mental destruction, and their hierarchs and senior clergy also know such secrets. Psychics trained by the cults lack the endless wells of psychic energy possessed by the ferals, but they can act without the cumber of madness to their plans. Some have second thoughts about falling in with the Crazed and arrange to escape their reach. Those who would live never stop running.

Rumors persist of a lineage of psychic mentors unaffiliated with the cults, a tradition of teachers who can train a psychic mind without the awful prices that the Crazed demand. Some among the learned suspect that even if these trainers exist, they can hardly be working out of a spirit of benevolent charity.

Psychic Powers

Psychic abilities manifest in numerous ways, particularly under the warping influence of the Crazed. The six traditional disciplines are Biopsionics, Metapsionics, Precognition, Telekinesis, Telepathy, and Teleportation. Psychics tend to focus on two or three of those spheres, and have little or no ability outside their specialties. Full details of each discipline can be found in the *Stars Without Number* core book, presently available as a free PDF.

If you don't have access to that book, you can simply take appropriate mutations from the second chapter of this book and reskin them as psychic abilities, or give a psychic a selection of powers that seem appropriate to their specializations. Feral psychics can use their powers freely and constantly, while those that have received training in controlling the dangerous energies are limited in the amount of power they can draw without risking permanent brain damage, and can usually use their powers a total of twice a day for every hit die they possess.

For your convenience, the following are a selection of abilities that might go well with a psychic. They may possess more, but two or three of the following are usually all that are worth recording for any particular subject. The powers are arranged weakest to strongest, with novices usually picking from the first two and adepts picking from all of them.

Biopsionics: Revive a mortally-wounded subject with 1 hit point. Heal 1d6+1 damage to themselves or a touched target. Boost their strength and agility to gain +1 to hit and damage and a -1 AC bonus

for five minutes. Alter their physical appearance for a day to appear as another person of their general size and dimensions. Target a living creature to liquefy them for 6d6 points of damage, with a Mental Effect save at a -2 penalty to take only half damage. This liquefaction can affect a given creature only once per day.

Metapsionics: Sense whether or not a target has psychic powers. Gain +2 to all saving throws versus psychic powers. Force a psychic to save versus Mental Effect or take 1d6+1 damage every time they use their powers for five minutes. Gain a free reroll on a save versus a psychic power. Force a target to save versus Mental Effect each round to use any psychic powers at all, with the effect lasting five minutes.

Precognition: Gain immunity to surprise. Get an intuition about whether an action will result in immediate harm or distress. For five minutes, force a target to roll twice on any skill checks or attack rolls and take the worse result, with a save versus Mental Effect to resist it on any given round. Gain a vision of the next major personal event likely to happen to them. Once per day, miraculously survive an attack or injury that should have killed them.

Telekinesis: Manipulate an object within sight as if with one hand. Manipulate an object within sight as if using both hands and 18 Strength. Blast an immobile object for 4d8 damage. Fly by telekinetic force for five minutes. Force any enemy within 20 meters to save versus Mental Effect or else be physically paralyzed for the round.

Telepathy: Sense a target's emotions. Read a target's surface thoughts, with a Mental Effect save to resist. Probe a target's recent memories, with a Mental Effect save to resist. Strike a victim's mind to inflict 6d4 damage and stun them for 1d4 rounds- a Mental Effect save resists this ability, and the power can be used on a given target only once per day. Read a victim's deep memories and get full

answers to complex questions, with a save versus Mental Effect to resist.

Teleportation: At the weakest level, the psychic can teleport himself and his clothing up to 10 meters. More powerful psychics can move a half-dozen people and their gear up to a kilometer, while the most powerful can lift several metric tons into orbit with them. Teleporters must either be able to see their destination or have physically visited it before.

Redhorn

No. Enc.	1d4 (2d6)
Movement	30'
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	3
Attacks	Two claws, one bite, one gore, all at +3
Damage	1d6/1d6/1d6/1d8
Save	14
Morale	8
Loot Type	None
Skill Bonus	+1

The first wave of Highshine mutation retained a portion of its original purpose as a tool of ecological stabilization. Under the right circumstances,the nanites could even alter the instincts and digestive systems of natural wildlife to subsist on those foodstuffs most available in the wake of a planetary disaster. The Crazed warped this technology, and the Redhorns are simply one example of its effect upon the hapless fauna of the New Earth.

Redhorns are thin, lank, vicious bovines with fanged maws and clawed hooves. They have a voracious appetite for flesh, and will attack most creatures of human size or smaller without hesitation. Lone redhorns are sometimes encountered, as are small packs, but the most dangerous breeds hide in the midst of ordinary cattle herds. These redhorns seem to possess a dim, almost-human intelligence, and herd their unchanged brethren much as humans do. They conceal their fangs, and their clawed hooves are difficult to spot until it's too late to flee their horns. The larger the herd, the more such redhorns are to be found in it. Some frantic wastelanders tell tales of entire stampedes of these predators running rampant through remote human enclaves.

Robot

In the days before the Scream much of the most tedious, repetitious labor was conducted by purpose-built robots, laboring out of sight of the bulk of humanity. While men and women busied themselves with creative or artisanal work, the tireless legions of iron labored at the unseen efforts that kept Old Terra prosperous. The vast majority of these bots were either drone bodies operated by an installation's AI, or else they were hulls equipped with onboard expert systems that roughly simulated intelligence in the robot's appointed sphere. Few robots were actually independently intelligent. Such intellect required the insertion of an AI core, and even the simplest AI could cost hundreds of millions of credits to develop. It was much more

efficient to hook such cores up to a full-fledged installation, where support hardware and additional computing modules could allow the AI to operate dozens or even hundreds of robot bodies at once.

As the Terran Mandate's authoritarianism turned to into soft and implacable tyranny, more and more robots were designed for "internal security". These "monitors" were usually used as remote drones for Mandate officials, or expert-system guardians of restricted areas and Mandate personnel. Some of these bots have since fallen into disrepair, but most Mandate bunkers and bases have at least a skeleton crew of operational robotic guardians working off of ancient expert-system templates. By the time security bots became common, most of the Mandate's bureaucracy had too much mistrust of the Maestros to risk putting combat-capable bots under AI control.

The Mandate was always somewhat paranoid about subversion, and taking control of these bots is difficult. Simply possessing a keycard or other insignia of rank is insufficient- the bots expect their commanding officer to have a Link implant and the correct cryptographic files to confirm his or her authority. Without such irrefutable proof, most guardbots and other security hardware will ignore any attempt to subvert their mission. A skilled scavenger can sometimes reprogram a bot's expert system to recognize him as its authorized controller, but such mastery tends to be tenuous and temporary at best unless the scrounger can dig up the necessary master codes from the installation.

Expert-system bots are quite capable within their specific sphere of duty, but have only rudimentary skills for negotiating other challenges. A medbot can perform almost any necessary medical procedures, and can even adapt to the oddities of mutated physiology- but in a combat situation, the bot will do little but crouch and avoid damage as best it can. A security bot can negotiate physical obstacles, identify battlefield dangers, and use solid small-group tactics, but it has very little ability to discern between noncombatants who happen to have a weapon and guerilla soldiers. If an expert-system bot is faced with a problem outside its sphere of competence, roll 2d6 and add its skill bonus. On an 8+, the bot makes a sensible decision. On a 7-, it does something inappropriate but in line with its basic role.

Bots require a power source. AI cores emit enough energy to fuel any bot hull, but expert systems or drones require power cells or an installation's broadcast power. Human-sized or smaller bots that use cells consume a type A cell for each day of operation, while larger bots and those installed into vehicle bodies require a type B cell for each day's use.

Damaged bots require repair. All bots are programmed with maintenance and self-repair routines that allow them to fix themselves, provided sufficient spare parts and tools are available. For every 8 hit points worth of repair, one unit of spare parts of the appropriate tech level is required. Most bots require TL4 spare parts unless noted otherwise. A human can perform the repairs instead, if they have the correct expertise and at least level-1 competence in either Tech/Postech or Tech/Pretech. A full maintenance cycle takes 24 hours divided by the tech's skill rating and can fix all damage with the requisite supply of spare parts. Field maintenance takes only 10 minutes but can only heal up to half the bot's maximum hit

points. Field maintenance can only be performed once in between full cycles. A bot reduced to 0 hit points is destroyed and fit only for scrap. A man-sized bot can be salvaged for 1d6 units of TL4 spare parts, or 2d6 units of TL5 in the case of warbots.

As designed and pattern-built entities, bots do not roll their hit points. They receive a certain number of hit points based on their hull type, and this total does not vary. Heavy-duty or unusually advanced bot models might have more hit points than the standard versions. Bots mounted into vehicle hulls have the HP, armor class, and damage resistance of the vehicle.

	COMPANION BOT	SECURITY BOT
No. Enc.	1 (1d6)	1 (2d4)
Movement	20'	20'
Armor Class	7 or by armor	4 or by armor
Hit Dice	8 HP	12 HP
Attacks	+1/Weapon	Stunner or weapon +4
Damage	By weapon	1d8 stunner or weapon
Save	14	13
Morale	12	12
Loot Type	None	None
Skill Bonus	+2	+1

Companion Bot: Officially, these bots were intended as mobile administrative assistants for important Mandate bureaucrats and their favored civilian subordinates. In practice, they served in all the ways one might expect of a robot indistinguishable from a well-formed human being. Only physical injury or invasive medical examination will reveal the synthetic nature of these bots, and they are even capable of limited self-repair to their epidermis and structural members. The bot will heal 1 hit point worth of damage every five minutes, but won't heal damage above half its maximum hit points- at that level, its exterior is flawless, but significant strain and structural damage may remain beneath. Thus, a companion bot with 8 hit points reduced to 2 by a spear thrust will heal until it reaches 4 hit points. A bot reduced to 0 hit points is destroyed, and cannot regenerate.

Companion bot expert systems are usually programmed to be polite, genteel, and attentive to others, and can easily track social appointments, perform errands, and make convincing light conversation. They are almost invariably strikingly beautiful or handsome, but most are colored or designed in ways that make clear their synthetic nature. In the latter days of the New Earth, however, most of these markings can be easily mistaken for mutation stigmata. Companion bots were particularly prone to drastic reprogramming during the waning days of Old Terra, and it's not unknown to come across models that have been quietly repurposed as assassination tools, engines of spectacular decadence, or as robotic ghosts of long-dead loved ones.

Security Bot: These bots are generally humanoid in shape, though obviously artificial in nature. Early-model guardbots were usually fashioned in smooth, bland outlines emblazoned with blue Man-

date insignia. Bots built during the more decadent later years of the Directorate are more menacing in appearance, with dark navy-blue hulls and sharp, bladed cooling flanges common on the designs. All security bots are equipped to use any standard weapon, and come equipped with integral stunners that can shock and subdue targets they touch. Damage inflicted by these stunners can reduce a target to zero hit points, but they'll awaken ten minutes later with one hit point. Bots from a more decadent period or highly restricted installation might use laser rifles instead.

Most security bots are programmed to repel intruders, initially demanding their departure before using physical force. Most security bots will take steps to avoid inflicting lethal injury unless they've been programmed otherwise. Security bots that succeed in subduing a group will either deposit them outside the restricted area or lock them up in temporary holding cells- which are apt to turn very permanent in the absence of any legal authority coming to collect them.

	WARBOT	WORKBOT
No. Enc.	1	1d4 (3d6)
Movement	30', Flight 30'	20'
Armor Class	0	4
Hit Dice	60 HP	16 HP
Attacks	+12/+12 weapons	+2/Weapon
Damage	1d8+4 monoblade 1d10+2 laser rifle	By weapon
Save	10	13
Morale	12	12
Loot Type	None	None
Skill Bonus	+4	+2

Warbot: Where security bots were intended to maintain order and guard restricted areas, warbots were outright engines of destruction. Their presence on Old Terra was rare during the early years of the Mandate, with most being shipped offworld for use on the frontier. As the Mandate slowly decayed and internal resistance grew, more and more warbots were deployed directly to Earth. Their employment was hidden from the public, the Net censored of any mention of their use and the rebel bases and insurgent zones they cleared simply did not exist outside of whispered words traded among the citizenry.

Warbots are brutal machines, usually man-sized and vaguely humanoid so as to make use of standard military equipment. All are equipped with integral close-combat weaponry and hull blades, along with built-in laser weaponry equivalent to a laser rifle with inexhaustible ammunition. Some of the most advanced varieties have integral shear rifles instead, and assault bots that support gunnery-class weaponry for cracking rebel fortifications aren't unknown. Warbots may make two attacks per round in whatever combination of weapons they wish.

Warbots are found most often in classified Mandate bases that were once engaged in dubious research or the containment of dangerous malcontents. Others stand vigil in ruined rebel bases, waiting patiently to be relieved by superiors who died centuries ago. Warbots are quite intelligent about navigating physical obstacles and killing intruders, but have little competence or capability with other activities. Many don't even attempt to communicate with those lacking Link-transmitted Mandate credentials. Warbots require TL5 spare parts for repair.

Workbot: The carefully-calibrated effort at "social harmony" that animated the Mandate kept robotic workers largely out of sight and usually employed only at the most dangerous, tedious, or dirty jobs. The Maestros and their precognomists deployed human labor in other ways, leaving these humanoid hulls to toil silently in great manufactories or factory farms. In some societies, a few workbots were designed for specific functional tasks, such as medical care, teaching, or valet services.

Workbots rarely interfere with human interlopers, though they will summon security bots to deal with any unauthorized intruders. Particularly mutated PC specimens might be treated as dangerous animals or even livestock. As they are relatively harmless bots, the Mandate took less care than usual to prevent their electronic subversion, and some scroungers in this later age have been able to crack their encryption protocols and reprogram them for more violent work. Most workbots are humanoid in shape, but others have been installed into production equipment or work vehicles.

BUILDING ROBOTS

Some ambitious scroungers might take it into their heads to build robots. Doing so requires at least a TL4 workshop, or TL5 for warbots, and 60 units of spare parts. Creation is according to the usual rules for building relics, but the extreme complexity of bot creation adds +1 difficulty, or +2 if a warbot is being built, and the construction requires two weeks.

The scrounger must also program an effective expert system using their Int/Computer skill total. The GM keeps the difficulty secret- it's 7, plus 1d4 for every +1 skill bonus the scrounger wants for the expert system. A scrounger attempting to build a superb expert system might well accidentally push the difficulty so high that even their class ability isn't enough to succeed on the skill check, which takes one month per +1 bonus.

If the skill check is failed, the expert system is faulty. Every time the bot is placed in a confusing situation, the GM rolls 1d6; on a 3-, it makes the worst possible decision under the circumstances and goes berserk for ten minutes before returning to control. On a 4+, it may make a normal check to determine its response.

Expert systems may be erased or changed with one hour's work on an obedient robot. An expert system can be copied freely between hulls of the same type, but most Mandate-era systems are too specific and crusted with irrelevant cruft to be useful to modern bot-crafters.

Skewman

No. Enc.	2d6 (2d20 x 20)
Movement	15'
Armor Class	8 or by armor
Hit Dice	1
Attacks	+1/weapon
Damage	By weapon
Save	15
Morale	8
Loot Type	P1 (G7)
Skill Bonus	+1

A particularly persistent and heritable strain of Highshine infection leaves its host with strangely-jointed limbs and a great difficulty in standing upright as other humans do. Furry pelts, scales, and other cosmetic epidermal changes are often experienced as well, and some skewmen are difficult to recognize as human at all. Most skewmen are forced to creep and scrabble through the wastes, reliant on crude clubbing weapons that can handle the abuse of their locomotion.

Skewmen keep to their own kind, and while they can interbreed with unchanged humans, the offspring is always a skewman. Most skewman tribes hate the "upright", and blame them for their twisted condition, crediting their evil ways with bringing the curse down upon the innocent ancestors of the skewmen. Their peculiar body geometry makes it difficult for them to use weapons more sophisticated than clubs, though many carry specially-shaped throwing sticks for hunting purposes. These count as clubs with a spear's throwing range.

Some skewman tribes make a point of enslaving the "upright", sometimes committing gruesome surgical atrocities on these wretched prisoners in order to leave them more like their captors. These slaves are used to labor in the fields or dig in the ruins, though such scrap miners are always kept under close oversight in case they should stumble across an Old Terran weaponry. Now and then one such slave manages to escape from their warped masters to bring word of their atrocities to nearby enclaves. Sometimes the locals act to stamp out the evil, and other times they have their own troubles to consider.

Skewmen jealously preserve Old Terran relics, even those they cannot use or understand. Their possession is a sign of status, and the chieftain will invariably have the most and best such gear.

Whiskered Devil

No. Enc.	1d4 (3d6)
Movement	15', Swim 30'
Armor Class	3
Hit Dice	2, or 5 for alphas
Attacks	+3/Claw or bite, +7/Claw or bite for alphas
Damage	1d8
Save	14
Morale	8
Loot Type	None (G1)
Skill Bonus	+2

These bloated, savage mutations of the Old Terran walrus have adapted to the lethal waters of the new world. Their six-centimeter thick hide is capable of turning projectile weapons and they can remain submerged for up to an hour before surfacing for air. They haunt the coasts of almost every major landmass on the New Earth, and they are a common scourge to sea traffic. Whiskered devils are perpetually hungry, and every fish and landbound creature is just one more morsel to them.

Some of these mutants have contracted uplift strains of Highshine nanites, and have an intelligence far beyond that of ordinary beasts. These alphas lead their more feral brethren in attacks on coastal communities, usually in night ambushes where their slow rate of land movement isn't so great a liability.

Rumors persist of entire communities of whiskered devils lurking in coastal waters near human settlements. These "civilized" devils are said to be every bit as malicious and hungry as their bestial comrades, but they are intelligent enough to conduct crude aquaculture and send hunting parties to snatch human slaves to perform work that their own clumsy flippers cannot accomplish. Fishmen are said to be sometimes slaves of these devils, though they have an easier time escaping their captors. These rumormongers insist that ordinary humans are kept confined to ancient ship hulks or tiny islands, imprisoned by the cruel seas that lap on every side.
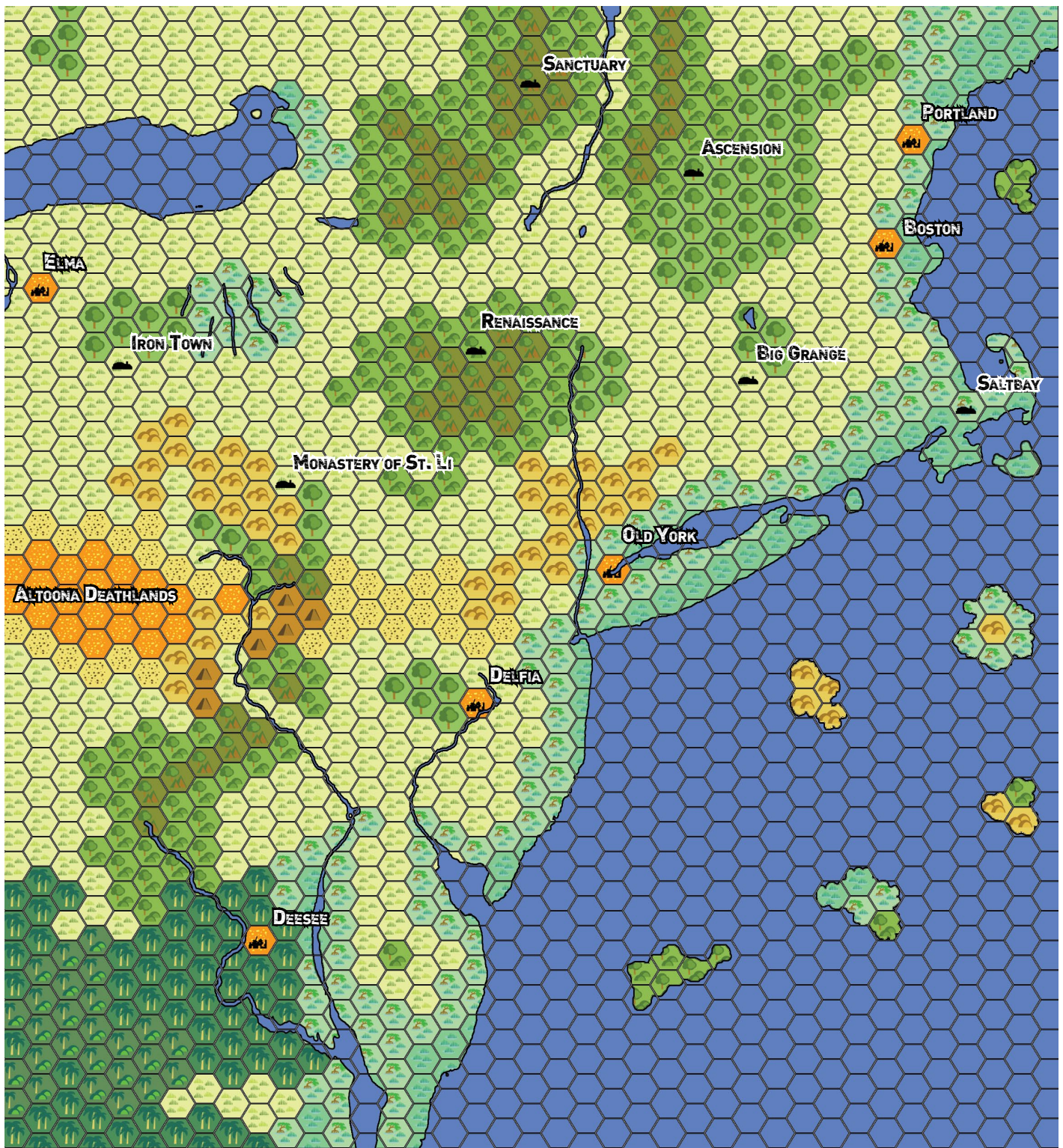
Map Key   1 Hex = 20 km

Deathlands	Hills	Badlands	Major Necropolis
Mountain	Jungle	Swamp	Enclave
Forested Mountain	Jungle Hills		
Forested Mountains	Light Forest		

Map labels:
- SANCTUARY
- PORTLAND
- ASCENSION
- BOSTON
- ELMA
- RENAISSANCE
- BIG GRANGE
- SALTBAY
- IRON TOWN
- MONASTERY OF ST. LI
- OLD YORK
- ALTOONA DEATHLANDS
- DELFIA
- DEESEE

The Bonelands

The northeastern region of the former United States of America is a wasteland of parched grasses, mutant foliage, and forbidding mountains. Climatic change over the past eight hundred years has left its southern reaches thickly infested with multihued jungles, while the northern Adirondacks are blanketed in a stubborn tree cover that hides a multitude of sharp-fanged mutants. Between, the wreckage of heavy orbital bombardment and the massive radiation spill around the Altoona Deathlands form a zone that invites only the toughest, most fearless salvagers.

Extensive Mandate-era coastal rebuilding kept the seas from eating much of what was once Long Island and the New England coastline, but the engineering has long since broken down into a maze of stranded towns and mazy swamp passages. This "Big Sink" is a haven for swamp-dwelling mutants, dangerous Atlantic sea life, and countless small enclaves that eke out a living on fish and hard-won swamp foods. Some of them turn to darker ends to get what they need, and many who dare the Big Sink's vine-shrouded ways never come out again.

The Deesee Jungle in the south is named for the ancient necropolis that served as the former zone capital during the years of the Mandate. Innumerable small mutant tribes are locked in a perpetual struggle with the fervent jungle life, new mutant strains appearing every month in a steaming cauldron of Highshine infestation and radioactive rain. Some areas of the jungle are uninhabitable to any but the most inhumanly resilient creatures- particularly those regions that surround the blighted remains of the capital. The Crazed saved a slow death for that doomed city, overrunning it with storms of Black Dust and mutagenic nanites rather than the quick, clean obliteration of an orbital strike or nuclear explosion.

The northern mountains and lakes are less obvious in their hostility to humanity, but the twisted trees hide the prowlings of great packs of feral gorehounds and swollen, misshapen mountain cats. The great and brutal enclaves of Ascension and Renaissance make life dangerous for any tribe that dares to settle in the lowlands, so most seek refuge in the forbidding crags of the mountains or the depths of the mutated forests.

It is the central span of the Bonelands that forms some of the most consistently lethal terrain in the entire region, the wide band between the drowned ruins of Old York in the east and the Altoona Deathlands in the west. The long eastward plume of radioactive contaminants trailing from the Deathlands mingled with the streaks

Your Own Private Ruination

The Bonelands region presented here is simply one possibility for your own game, one generated with the tools and techniques given in this book. You might decide to redo it in a way more to your liking, or remix it into a different flavor of abject devastation. A map of the region is provided at the end of the chapter in case you care to make a desolation more to your liking. If using a PDF, you can switch its layers off and on for the view you wish.

of environmental nanopollutants released by the crumbling cities to create a toxic stew all but certain to deface any life unfortunate enough to be caught in its shadow. The land is capricious, green and inviting in places, but holding huge and terrible beasts in its deeper hollows. Much of the terrain is gouged and scored by a rain of orbital debris unleashed on its wretched cities during the first few weeks of Old Terra's death. The few that dare to travel between the jungles and the north would usually sooner risk the Big Sink and the sea monsters than try to make a straight run overland.

North or south, however, one universal in the Bonelands is its ruins. This region of Old Terra was once one of the world's most thickly populated areas and it's difficult to go two kilometers without finding the skeletal ruins of some bucolic hamlet or small town. Factories, farms, resorts, geoengineering sites, monuments to long-forgotten glories and more all thickly crust the land. The massive necropoli that were once Old York, Boston, Portland, and Delfia stretch in a vastness long since buried under mutant plant life and the weight of catastrophe. The cities marked out on the regional map are merely the centers of these ancient graveyards, and their tendrils of urban accretion stretch for a hundred kilometers around the desolate cores. The city centers are almost unreachable in some cases, buried under debris and crashed orbital habitats. Plumbing their deepest reaches is a pastime only for the veteran wastelander and the young fool.

The bones of smaller cities crowd the earth outside the great necropoli. For many of them, nothing remains but a few gutted foundations buried under two centuries of growth. Others still have one or two precarious buildings left standing, their supports eroded by Highshine corrosion and the slow breakdown of "eternal" construction materials. Most tribes and settled enclaves are wary of inhabiting such ruined places, for fear of the things long since buried beneath.

The roads between these towns are largely memory, save for where their earthworks cut through rough terrain and make inviting traps for bandit prey. In the days of the Mandate, great underground gravtunnels for internal and intercity travel once connected the necropoli, all carefully monitored by Harmony officers to prevent unapproved travel. Most of these tunnels are collapsed or drowned in the present day, and those that are not are usually home to gruesome ecosystems of desperate life, forcibly adapted to their environment by Highshine infections.

The Crazed have only a modest influence in the region compared to some less fortunate zones. Their cultists and bleak evangelists can be found creeping through the back country and spreading their poisonous doctrines among the desperate, but there is little evidence that they have more than a few hidden strongholds in the Bonelands. It may be that they were reluctant to interfere in the area due to the presence of the minor Crazed Theophilus Lien, but the arch-biopsion has been dead for a hundred years. In the disordered minds of these mad psychics, it may be that they have yet to notice his expiration- and when they and their servants do regard the vacuum in the region, who is to imagine what they might do?

ASCENSION

TIER 2 POLITY

POPULATION	4,000 adults, 8,000 children, 2,000 aged				
GOVERNMENT	Caste-based, with psychics ruling over others				
ORIGIN	Pleasure resort taken over by a maddened psychic				
TAGS	Inbred, Psychic Cult			**TL**	**1**

	TIER	**PROG.**	**RUIN SOURCES**	
FOOD	120	60	+1	Enclave raids	2
INFLUENCE	55	30	+1	Slave unrest	2
MORALE	20	40		Lienist zealots	3
SECURITY	41	40	+1	Sanctuary saboteurs	1
TECH	12	30			
TOTAL PROGRESS		**3**	**TOTAL RUIN**	**8**
PERKS	Cunning (The Pure can sabotage rival groups in ways impossible for non-psychics)			

In the blazing aftermath of the Scream many of the resorts and pleasure-cities of the Mandate were cut off by cascading disasters. In the north, the Serenity Towers resort complex found itself under siege by one of its former guests- the maddened Theophilus Lien, an arch-biopsion who had somehow survived the Scream. This minor Crazed methodically dissolved half of the cowering guests and enslaved the rest.

Lien's particular madness had convinced him that his soul was the soul of all psychics, and that only through converging all the scattered shards into a single bloodline could he be made immortal and immanent in all ages. He was one of the vanishingly few psychics still capable of training novices, and he promptly set about seeking newborn infants with the gift. Those he found, he took and raised for his chosen minions. Lesser, "impure" souls were simply slave fodder for the Towers of the Mind. Even now, the handful of psychics capable of training the gift of others into a controlled state are all constantly monitored by their suspicious brethren.

Since his death one hundred years ago, the Minders are agreed that the man was a lunatic, barring a fringe element that nurses a demented zeal for the cause. They continue to support his eugenic program, however, breeding and crossbreeding those with known psychic bloodlines to purify the line and increase the chance of psychic offspring. This actually works, to an extent- though the cost in deformations and genetic illnesses is brutal. Those not needed for the Great Plan are slaves who may be disposed of as the Lords and Ladies of the Pure appoint. All told, there are perhaps sixty psychics within Ascension, an enormous concentration over the usual one-in-a-thousand odds.

The Minders tolerate strangers, provided they do not prove troublesome and granted that they bring something of value. The Pure tend to neglect the coarse terrestrial concerns of tech and science, and often trade the abundant produce of their slave-worked farms for salvage brought by the few renegades willing to work with the hated psychics. While they are powerful in their pale Old Terran towers, they are universally hated and feared by the other denizens of the Bonelands.

ENEMIES

Great Mother Lien, mistress of Ascension and she who determines the eugenic schedules. She is a fearsomely powerful precognitive and has foiled several premature successions by her insights. She desires to gather in all the psychics of the Bonelands to Ascension- whether they wish to come or not. Her legs are withered and twisted, and she cannot stand.

Inquisitor Matthias, the half-mad telekinetic who loves to squeeze the truth from the recalcitrant. He hunts constantly for those who would interfere with the Great Plan or defy their genetic superiors, and has sometimes been known to manufacture such enemies of the state when the pickings are slim. Matthias' skin is piebald with patches of white and brown.

FRIENDS

Lady Amani Yueh, a young telepath of uncommon talent who can no longer tolerate the constant press of loathsome thoughts around her. She delves into the minds of strangers who enter Ascension, seeking those who might help her escape. She has need of such aid, for the lady was born without eyes.

Healer Atwater, a commoner who has seen too much of the suffering that comes of the inbreeding demanded by the eugenic program. Even if psychics are superior beings, this method of gaining them costs too much in maimed lives.

THINGS OF IMPORTANCE

A scouting report, perhaps never received, that indicates the locations of several undiscovered psychics within the surrounding enclaves.

Old Terran drugs that give a brief, potent boost to a psychic's powers. They may be dangerously addictive.

COMPLICATIONS

With the profound inbreeding going on in Ascension, the locals have become highly vulnerable to certain strains of disease. A sickness has broken out in the towers. Will they be quarantined? Does the enclave have enough stims to protect the Pure? If they don't, what will they do to get them?

The other enclaves fear and hate the psychics of Ascension, and raiding bands are hitting the outer farms. Many such raiders claim that they strike against the evil of the Towers of the Mind, but their victims are the wretched commoners of Ascension Their interest in facing the Pure seems less than their wish to plunder the slaves.

PLACES CHARACTERISTIC OF ASCENSION

The Leaving Mire, a muddy hole where dead and hopelessly misshapen infants are thrown to be devoured by the pigs.

The Hall of the Pure, an opulently-decorated Old Terran ballroom. Dozens of crippled psychics are carried there by their slaves to pay court around the throne of the Great Mother.

BIG GRANGE — TIER 1 POLITY

POPULATION	800 adults, 1,600 children, 400 aged		
GOVERNMENT	Democratic, adults voting on important matters		
ORIGIN	Old Terran factory farm taken over by survivors		
TAGS	Mandate Heirs, Mutant Hatred	TL	0

	TIER	PROG.	RUIN SOURCES	
FOOD	10	6	+1	Mutant raiders	1
INFLUENCE	1	3		Farm breakdowns	1
MORALE	6	4	+1	Internal quarreling	1
SECURITY	2	4			
TECH	0	3			
TOTAL PROGRESS		2	TOTAL RUIN	3
PERKS	Independent (The Grangers' fractious ways make them hard for anyone to control- even their own elected leaders)			

Not many people survived the destruction of Old York. The ancient city had long since faded from its former place of global glory, but the old engineering of lost ages provided the Crazed with plenty of things to devastate. Burst seawalls inundated much of the city, and multiple atomic explosions cleared most of the rest.

Among the few survivors that succeeded in fleeing the doomed city were a handful of desperate men and women who fled northeast, away from the coast. They eventually halted at one of the countless robot-operated factory farms, where a Harmony station had been established to keep down the local malcontents and prevent vandalism of the robots. The chief in charge understood the gravity of the situation and threw open the agency and its resources to the desperate survivors. This history has left the Grangers with a deep sense of loyalty to the memory of the Mandate, and the maintenance of the agency's records and datafiles is an honored role among them.

In the present, the Grangers make their living by harvesting the factory farm's fields in between planting cycles. The limited maintenance keycodes possessed by the Harmony officers allow them to shut down the factory's external security long enough to harvest, but they still can't enter the deeper reaches of the plant without attracting the attention of dangerous security bots.

For the past hundred years, the Grangers have been fighting a slow war with the mutants of Saltbay. The mutants see no reason to leave the factory farm in Granger hands, and the raids have left the locals bitterly prejudiced against all mutants. Those who change among them are exiled, and outsiders with visible mutations are made to stay outside the village. Great deeds might soften the Grangers' attitude toward mutants, but the Saltbay raiders keep the wounds fresh and festering. If Big Grange was closer, Saltbay surely would have conquered it by now, but the distance is prohibitive for Saltbay's limited ground forces.

Big Grange lacks a scrapsmith ever since the last one died during a Saltie raid. The locals struggle along as best they can, but they have great difficulty in making anything but the most basic goods.

ENEMIES

Big Sal, the Granger warboss. Sal's hated muties something special ever since a Saltbay raiding party killed his wife and children. Now he's getting so that he's seeing everybody as a Shiner or one of their friends.

Mother Ruth, the Marianite Catholic priest of Big Grange. Six months ago she secretly mutated after a run-in with a hot zone. The stigmata came as scaly patches on her torso, but her cassock covers it. Her new condition has left her convinced that God has sent her a message- Big Grange must be destroyed for its sins against mutantkind... preferably before they find out she's changed. If God isn't clear on that, Mother Ruth certainly is.

FRIENDS

Mayor Feng, the harried chief executive of the town. Feng dislikes mutants as much as the next Granger, but he can see that the town can't survive this conflict forever. He'd like to quietly seek a truce, if he could find anyone he could trust with the message. It would ruin him if proof got out that he was trying to negotiate.

Keeper Joshua, custodian of the Mandate records. An elderly man, Joshua has memorized practically the entire hardcopy file system of the Harmony station that once sheltered the Grangers' ancestors. While many of the data systems are long since dead, Joshua might be willing to impart useful ruin locations or security keycodes if the PCs can help the Grangers.

THINGS OF IMPORTANCE

The ancestral storm plate of the warboss, originally taken from the Harmony agency that once stood here. It's been out of power since the last big Saltie raid, but Big Sal won't admit that to anyone but Feng.

A new metawheat hybrid located somewhere in the guts of the robot-infested factory. If it could be loaded into the farm's gene splicers the yield would increase enormously.

COMPLICATIONS

The farm is slowly breaking down, and the Grangers don't have the spare parts they need to repair it- or the technical expertise to do it even if they did. If the farm stops working, the settlement will starve, as their adults aren't skilled hunters.

Every ten years, the Keeper must make a pilgrimage to a remote ruin to re-authorize the continuing operation of the farm with a particular keycode. Unfortunately, the ruin is now infested with something dark and terrible, and if a way is not cleared before the end of the month, the factory will halt- and it may never start again.

PLACES CHARACTERISTIC OF BIG GRANGE

A broad field of patchy metawheat being tended by workbots with age-dulled hulls.

The Harmony agency station that now serves as Big Grange's town hall and stronghouse against raiders.

Iron Town
Tier 1 Polity

Population	300 adults, 600 children, 150 aged		
Government	Monarchic, ruled by the family of the Foreman		
Origin	An industrial facility taken over by its workers		
Tags	Educated, Nobility	TL	2

	Tier	Prog.	Ruin Sources	
Food	3	6	Raw materials lack	1
Influence	4	3	+1	Raider pillaging	1
Morale	6	4	+1	Factory dangers	1
Security	7	4	+1		
Tech	11	3	+1		
Total Progress			**4**	**Total Ruin**	**3**

Perks	Tech Base/TL2 (The Forgers live remarkably well thanks to the factory power plant and industrial tools. Hot running water and electricity for all.)

The enigmatic economic patterns imposed by the Maestros weren't always terribly comprehensible to human observers. The small artisanal factory established here in the western lands never made much economic sense but it preserved the centuries-old cultural folkway of repetitive manufacturing labor that some bureaucrat evidently found charmingly quaint. When the Scream came, the factory workers were able to use their primitive tools to maintain the simple facility.

The factory is dominated by the Union, an elite of a half-dozen small families descended from the original supervisors. The Foreman who rules Iron Town is always chosen from among their number by other members of the Union. The Foreman's sons and daughters are accorded the princely positions of Firstmen and Firstwomen.

Iron Town is the most technologically advanced major settlement in the Bonelands. Even its common folk are literate and almost all of them are capable of basic scrapsmithing at the least. Even the youngest adult of the Union families knows as much as any village scrapsmith, and their elders are among the best in the region, a handful of them possessing the equivalent of Tech/Postech-3 skills.

The factory itself was never intended to produce much more than cultural capital, but the dummy blanks and bars it makes out of recycled scrap can be filed and hammered into the necessary parts for more advanced equipment. The factory's self-contained nanite power plant is capricious but provides the Forgers with electricity, hot water, and a quality of life far superior to that of any of their neighbors.

The Forgers are constitutionally suspicious of outsiders, but they're forced to trade in order to get the food that their small numbers can't effectively grow or hunt. They never trade firearms with outsiders who haven't proven themselves trusted allies, but their swords, spears, and metal goods are prized in the region. They also shun would-be immigrants in most cases, fearing that they might be conquered from within or reduced to "ignorant savages". This dislike is largely shared by their neighbors, despite the trade.

Enemies

Trader Suthu, an ochre-scaled mutant who makes a round between enclaves trading Iron Town wares. He figures things would go a lot smoother with him in charge, and he's got friends in Renaissance who agree with his estimation of things.

Firstwoman Sigrid, the Foreman's eldest daughter. She's vigorously opposed to Iron Town's neutrality and is convinced their future hinges on conquering the nearby villages and using them as the nucleus of a new empire. Since she'll be the empress, everything will doubtless progress wonderfully.

Friends

Firstman Andrew, the Foreman's youngest son. Leg-crippled from birth, Andrew has an acerbic manner and an ever-watchful eye. He sees most of the plots against his father before they're halfway made, but he knows Sigrid is the man's favorite and the Foreman won't believe in her scheming without proof.

Martin Santino, master gunsmith. A true genius of scrap and shard, Martin is able to do wonders with things that go bang. He's gathered info on numerous important sites that might contain certain precious raw materials, but doesn't dare get them himself.

Things of Importance

Calibration materials for the factory's power plant. Without regular maintenance and repair, the aging power plant might die at any time.

Plans for an experimental railgun. Santino needs these to manufacture the high-tech gunnery weapon, and he needs the weapon to help fortify the factory against hordes of raiders and aspiring tyrants. Unfortunately, they either remain lost in a Mandate-era ruin, stolen by spies, or flawed with subtle errors.

Complications

Iron Town needs new blood. The small numbers who live there are barely enough to keep the factory going and defend the works. Yet the people are prejudiced against the ignorance and savagery of outsiders, and may not accept them until too late.

Renaissance wants Iron Town as either an obedient vassal or as a smoking crater. They'd prefer the first but will accept the second. If Trader Suthu's plots don't work, they're willing to sneak in a device that will turn the factory's power plant into a small atomic bomb.

Places Characteristic of Iron Town

The factory floor, where scrap is fed into massive hoppers and melted down into sheets, bar stock, and small parts. Half the enclave is working here at any one time, filing down stock parts into the necessary shapes for their new creations.

The fortified gate, where the Forgers keep a suspicious eye on any stranger seeking to come for trade, and where they turn away any who don't give evidence of being on useful business for Iron Town.

The Monastery of St. Li — Tier 1 Polity

Population	800 adults, 1,600 children, 400 aged
Government	Tribal, formerly led by a council of clan elders
Origin	Remote monastery that sheltered survivors
Tags	Expert Artisans, Cruel Tribute **TL** 1

	Tier	Prog.	Ruin Sources	
Food	2	6	Renaissance tribute	2
Influence	1	3	Raider attacks	1
Morale	3	4	Bishop's demands	1
Security	0	4		
Tech	5	3 (+1)		
Total Progress	1		**Total Ruin**	4

Perks	Religious Zeal (As God preserved their ancestors, so the Lians believe they will be preserved. Their "Our Faith is Tested" pool is empty now.)

The inhabitants of the Monastery of St. Li are a patchwork of tribes descended from the initial swarm of refugees who sought shelter from the Traditional Catholic inhabitants. The monastery's architectural style coincidentally doubled as an excellent fortress against the initial bands of desperate looters, and their vineyards and artisanal farmland supported the survivors. The refugees were all deeply impressed by their survival, and while not all converted to Traditional Catholicism, all of the clans are quite devout toward their traditional faiths.

The Highshine disaster had a positive effect for the monastery, in that the interactions seemed to have a positive effect on one of the nearby nanoemitters. Originally intended to keep a particular spring clean and purified for the monastery's winemaking, the nanites now imbued the water with unusual powers of healing and cleansing, curing radiation poisoning in those who drank it. The nanites degraded if removed from the spring, but the wine the monks made was able to preserve this effect, making it an extremely valuable trade commodity.

In time, this wealth attracted the interest of the restorationists from Renaissance. The Rennies sent a large squad of heavily-armed ambassadors to "invite" the Lians to take their proper place in the grand restoration of the glories of humanity- their proper place being endless grinding labor for their Rennie overlords. The Lians had the monastery but not enough men or guns to fight off the Rennies, so they were forced to submit and a quisling local cleric put in charge over their traditional clan council.

Outsiders are tolerated around the monastery, but they are not welcome if they bring no useful trade goods or convenient services. The Rennies avoid molesting traders overmuch lest they stop coming to the monastery, but any interference with the Lian slaves is punished harshly. The current Unifier is both amused and contemptuous toward the Lians, viewing them as godbothered fools who are being done a favor by having a place within the glorious future that the restoration will bring. Those who fail to appreciate the kindness shown to them will be treated accordingly.

Enemies

Unifier Zuma, the representative of their Renaissance "protectors". Zuma is a man cruelly indifferent to the sufferings of the Lians, as he appreciates the value of sacrifice... in others, at least. He commands the heavily-armed Rennie "protectors" that keep the monastery docile.

Bishop Eileen Nakamoto, the Rennies' puppet bishop. Elevated from a Marianist Catholic tribe, the new bishop is perfectly willing to cooperate with the Rennies, as they give her carte blanche to enforce her sect's matriarchal beliefs on the other tribes. Physical sacrifices are as nothing compared to the glory of spiritual purity.

Friends

Mother Aziza bint-Maryam, a young priestess from the bishop's tribe who abhors her forced pieties. While as zealous a believer as the bishop, she feels that forced faith is a disgrace to her creed. She despises the Rennies, but she really wants the bishop unseated.

Josiah Vintner, chief winemaker for the monastery. Practically all the vintage now goes to Renaissance, and they've been pushing him to plant even more vines out beyond the secure zone around the monastery. Zuma's demands must be mitigated or the hillside vines must be secured, or else a lot of Lians are going to die trying to grow grapes out there.

Things of Importance

The saint's lamp; an ancient glowbeacon once affixed to the monastery's bell tower. Mandate safety requirements insisted on it to prevent flight collisions despite the integral radar in gravcars. It's now a symbol of the monastery's salvific power, and the community's holiest relic; Zuma keeps it under lock and key.

A secret cache of explosives Lian scroungers salvaged from nearby ruins. Will they be found by Zuma? Stolen by raiders? Used to blow the Rennie "protectors" sky-high?

Complications

The religious tolerance once present at the monastery has been shattered by Bishop Nakamoto, who insists on deposing male clergy and replacing them with Marianite Catholic priestesses from her own clan. The Rennie protectors enforce this.

The spring laced with the nanites that give St. Li wines their special virtue is being overtaxed; there's not enough water to make all the wine the Rennies demand. Zuma blames local "saboteurs" for the lack of output and is threatening hangings. A new supply of the nanites might exist in a nearby research ruin.

Places Characteristic of the Monastery

Rows of ripe wine grapes tended by gaunt, weary Lians. A Rennie overseer keeps an eye on the locals as they work.

The monastery building itself, built by Old Terrans to resemble an ancient stone structure. Beneath the stone facing is armor-tough Mandate construction plating that has stood off even the heavy guns of raiders.

RENAISSANCE — TIER 2 POLITY

POPULATION	2,300 adults, 4,600 children, 1,150 aged				
GOVERNMENT	Theocratic; the cadres of Restoration rule				
ORIGIN	A hidden rebel base with an ideal position				
TAGS	Pariahs, Food Supply			TL	1

	TIER	PROG.	RUIN SOURCES	
FOOD	100	60	+1	Slave unrest	2
INFLUENCE	40	30	+1	Guerilla raids	2
MORALE	55	40	+1	Internal purges	3
SECURITY	46	40	+1		
TECH	21	30			
TOTAL PROGRESS		4	TOTAL RUIN	7	
PERKS	Vast Army (The Restorationists have the largest known standing military force in the Bonelands, and they like to use it against "reactionaries")				

Rebels and malcontents had an unusually high survival percentage after the Scream, as many of them were already accustomed to surviving beyond the comforts of Mandate civilization. Renaissance was founded from the rebel base operated by one such faction, the "Universal Restoration Way". It looked back to a mythical golden age of humanity before the Mandate, when the world was perfectly ordered under the wise guidance of autocrats who provided all their people required. The Restorationists struggled valiantly against the brute forces of democracy and the blind, savage mob.

Since then, the "Rennies" have been vigorously attempting to rectify the chaos of the world through the salvific power of their spears. Any group that fails to bow to the Commander and his chosen Unifier nobility is clearly composed of dangerous reactionaries and must be brought into line forcibly. Rennie society is composed of a poisonous noble clique of Unifiers, a larger block of "ideologically sound" subjects, and a still larger lump of slaves considered incapable of grasping the wisdom of the Restorationist way. They and their minions are universally despised across the north. This doesn't stop certain traders from quietly bartering in their markets, though.

The Unifiers spend most of their time extorting neighboring enclaves and scheming to trap each other in public errors in ideology, the penalty for which ranges from demotion to summary execution. The subjects keep their heads down and gladly prosper on the sufferings of the slaves and neighbors, while the slaves merely endure.

The Rennies keep a large standing army composed strictly of Unifiers and subjects. These troops are equipped with the best they can plunder and are usually kept busy monitoring the slaves for signs of rebellion. The work tends to attract the most zealous and sadistic of the locals.

Outsides are welcome in Renaissance so long as they show due deference to the Commander and submit to the authority of the Unifiers. Those who do so are allowed to trade in the largest and most abundant market north of Saltbay, with wares and slaves from all across the north provided to willing buyers.

ENEMIES

Commander Ernesto Guzman, the Leader of the Restoration and the Glorious Father to the World. Guzman is a cynical restorationist apparatchik who achieved his position by arranging the downfall and death of everyone in his way. He believes in nothing but power for its own sake and relishes using idealistic young fools as catspaws and patsies.

Unifier Janice Hastings, a true believer in the restorationist creed. She is convinced that only Renaissance can lead the Bonelands out of its current savagery, and absolutely any means are acceptable in that cause. Human lives are meaningless compared to the glory of the Cause- at least, human lives other than hers.

FRIENDS

Samuel Lin, a teenage slave "favorite" of one of the Unifiers. Samuel hates his position and his patron, but plays along for the sake of his family. Even so, his growing anger is moving him to aid saboteurs and rebels against the Restoration.

Red Clara, a mutant with gleaming, metallic skin the color of fresh-spilt blood. A runaway slave, she's formed a band of ruthless guerillas that haunt the lands around Renaissance, taking any opportunity to strike their former oppressors and aid fellow rebels.

THINGS OF IMPORTANCE

Proof that an important Unifier falsified a rival's crimes. The Restorationist elites are always trying to purge each other, and the right proof of false accusations are enough to get any of them killed.

The security schedule for the military supply depot. The precious firearms and other advanced tech of the Restorationist army would be irreplaceable were they to be lost to sabotage.

COMPLICATIONS

The small enclaves and petty holdings of the surrounding lands are beginning to make serious efforts to coordinate against the Rennie advance. The Commander doesn't care for that, and means to make an example out of some of these reactionaries.

Ascension is possibly the only enclave in the Bonelands as deeply despised as the Rennies. Both of them have totalitarian ideologies that admit no competitors, and only a reluctance to commit themselves to a large-scale enclave war keeps them from each others' throats. This doesn't stop them from laboring diligently to sabotage each other, however.

PLACES CHARACTERISTIC OF RENAISSANCE

Fields worked by coffles of human and mutant "reactionary" slaves. Treatment is brutal and the Rennie guards are accomplished sadists.

A bustling town center, prosperous on the tribute exacted from the surrounding tribes. Merchants sell stolen goods and Rennie tribute caravans come in regularly with extorted plunder.

SALTBAY — TIER 2 POLITY

POPULATION	1,300 adults, 2,600 children, 650 aged		
GOVERNMENT	Oligarchic; mutant families rule in council		
ORIGIN	A former Old Terran shipping port		
TAGS	Ancient Settlement, Mutant Rule	TL	0

	TIER	PROG.	RUIN SOURCES	
FOOD	47	60	Human raids	2
INFLUENCE	44	30	+1 Sea monsters	1
MORALE	42	40	+1 Pillaged traders	1
SECURITY	20	40		
TECH	10	30		
TOTAL PROGRESS		2	TOTAL RUIN	4

PERKS	Expert Traders (The Saltbay trade ships go all up and down the coast to serve the little enclaves and villages that dot the land.)

Saltbay rose from Old Natuxent, an Old Terran port town once served by massive oceangoing cargo ships that disgorged their wares into vast gravway tunnels that burrowed throughout the Bonelands. These transport pipelines brought innumerable vital goods to the cities of the region, and when the Scream washed over the city, the natives impounded the goods in the warehouse, detonated the tunnels to block intruders, and hunkered down to survive.

Damage from the Crazed was relatively limited, save for a particularly vicious atomic strike on the edge of the town. A potent Highshine strain mingled with the radioactive winds to mutate the great majority of Saltbay's citizenry, and ever since the town has been a stronghold of mutant dominance on the Bonelands coast.

The great cargo-ships soon collapsed into uselessness, but some of the pleasure boats owned by Mandate officials could still be made functional, and crude coastal barges of local wood and scrap could float close to shore to bring goods to other enclaves. Saltbay became a trading town, with strangers bringing in goods from along the Big Sink and Saltbay's armed powerboats fending off pirates and sea monsters.

Ambition runs as strong in Saltbay as anywhere else, and a faction on the town council keeps insisting that the settlement needs to take over the nearby farming enclaves in order to strengthen their position. More peaceful heads usually dissuade them, but the human settlement of Big Grange has been a lasting target for the warmongers for years, and even the more peaceable members sometimes approve raids as payoff for support from the expansionists.

Trade is the root of Saltbay's prosperity, and they welcome outsiders who bring something useful to exchange. They have a particular need of technical resources, as many of the mutants find it difficult to manipulate standard tools and much of their inherited technical base has collapsed. They make very little for themselves these days, instead acquiring their necessary goods through trade with more technically proficient enclaves. This attitude may come back to haunt them if Renaissance and Ascension ever turn attention south.

ENEMIES

Yellowfoot, the talon-footed patriarch of the powerful Benson family of avian-inflected mutants. He despises humans as inferior, maladaptive creatures fit only to serve the new masters of the New Earth. He spares no opportunity to do them a bad turn- them and any mutant soft-headed enough to help them.

Little Sue, a tiny meter-tall mutant with a wide array of lethal abilities and a cheerful contempt for human life. She's the de-facto boss of Saltbay's criminal circles, and the mutant elite aren't terribly concerned about her so long as she keeps her extortions limited to human traders and citizens.

FRIENDS

Mei-Lin Silverheels, a trader with an fractal crust of silvery nanites spiralling over her form. She's unusually charitable toward humans, and is often willing to give strangers a job if they seem tough enough to deal with the dangers that press on her caravan route. Raiders have been particularly bad on land of late.

"Eyeball" Tom Chang, a man with eight evenly-spaced eyes circling his shaven skull. A member of the important Chang family of mutants, he's nominally in charge of policing criminal activity in Saltbay, but frustrated by the lack of cooperation he gets from any attempt to deal with those criminals who prey on the human inhabitants of the town.

THINGS

Good blueprints for low-tech shipbuilding would be precious in Saltbay. They lack the tools to build sophisticated ships, but they can't afford to rely on their relic powerboats forever.

A mutagenic slurry that turns normal humans into mutants. Some crazed Saltie might seek it as a way of "improving" the local humans.

COMPLICATIONS

A powerboat has been seized by pirates, and is now being used to run down coastal barges and plunder them. The pirates are hiding out somewhere in the coastal swamps, and there's suspicion that they're paying off a noble family to help keep the council distracted from taking strong action against them.

Someone's broken into a tunnel complex beneath a Saltbay building, and the first explorers down have failed to return. What relics of Old Natuxent might be down there- and what stopped the initial investigators from coming back?

PLACES CHARACTERISTIC OF SALTBAY

The Saltbay wharves, with the half-dozen armed powerboats under heavy guard and the coaster barges pulling in and out with the tides.

The streets lined with Old Terran buildings in relatively good repair, the remains of Old Natuxent visible in their ancient ceraplast walls and tinted armorglass windows.

SANCTUARY   TIER 1 POLITY

POPULATION	600 adults, 1,200 children, 300 aged		
GOVERNMENT	Oligarchic; raiding band leaders make policy		
ORIGIN	Small mountain town turned into a slave refuge		
TAGS	Exiles, Sanctuary	TL	1

	TIER	PROG.	RUIN SOURCES	
FOOD	2	6	Ascension patrols	1
INFLUENCE	4	3	+1	Mountain savages	1
MORALE	12	4	+1		
SECURITY	6	4	+1		
TECH	0	3			
TOTAL PROGRESS		3	TOTAL RUIN	2
PERKS	Fierce Loyalty (The locals are bound by ties of shared suffering. Their "Our Loyalties are Tested" pool is presently empty.)			

Sanctuary was founded a little less than a hundred years ago by some of the first slaves to successfully flee Ascension after the death of Theophilus Lien. The small mountain resort village they found had been cracked and damaged by quakes from a nearby orbital strike, but enough of the buildings were standing to make it habitable. The pelting of orbital debris left the surrounding lands rough and riven with narrow passes, ones easily blocked or guarded from intruders.

Ever since, the men and women of Sanctuary have been fighting a one-sided war against the Minders of Ascension, plundering their goods and freeing their slaves. Newly-freed slaves find a harsh custom- they are permitted to follow the raiders back to Sanctuary if they are able, but no food is shared and no help is given. Those that live are strong enough to contribute to the community. Exceptions are sometimes made for infants and children, but Sanctuary is too poor to take in many foundlings.

The citizens of Sanctuary are almost all either former slaves or the children of such. Outsiders are accepted as traders and visitors, but those that can't do some good for the community are "encouraged" on their way with little ceremony. Sanctuary always has room for another strong arm- provided they have no Minder ties- but they can't afford to humor the useless.

Sanctuary's rulers are the leaders of the raiding bands, and they earn their authority by the amount of supplies and number of strong freed slaves they bring back to the settlement. A guerilla chieftain who fails to bring back resources soon loses his following, while those who do the most for the community tend to earn the greatest deference. Serious differences of opinion are resolved by votes among the raid leaders.

As poor as Sanctuary is, there is little distinguishing between personal and enclave goods. The belongings a person can carry on their own back are their own; all else is for those that need it. The Quartermaster is the exception, holding in trust those community goods meant for trade with outsiders.

ENEMIES

Marta Twenty-Kills, Sanctuary's most fearsome warrior. While her murderousness toward the Minders is normal in the community, Marta really just loves killing people- any people- and there are a lot of people in Sanctuary she'd really like to kill. If someone presents her with the opportunity to get away with it, she will.

Quartermaster Jack, the enclave storekeeper. He fled Ascension after his husband Stephen was dragged off to what he assumed would be a quick execution. Minder agents have given him proof that Stephen is alive, however- and will continue to remain alive so long as Jack keeps performing little favors for them....

FRIENDS

Urchin, a spiky young mutant girl. Something of an enclave mascot, Urchin is cheerful, winsome, and can take a mag rifle round to the chest without flinching. She's always on some errand of goodwill to the nearby villages, but sometimes things are too dangerous to handle alone, and she's obliged to find help where she can.

Barnabas Masud, mountaineer. Having lived in the Adirondacks for decades as a hermit, Barnabas knows more about its hidden ruins and sinister inhabitants than any man living. His mountain-folk kindred often visit Sanctuary to get his advice and share news of events in the back country.

THINGS

An Old Terran mind-shielding device that can mask an infiltrator's thoughts from the Minders. Such devices were known on Old Terra, but few have survived the violence of the Crazed.

Parts to restore an Old Terran factory farm and make Sanctuary a viable food provider for a vastly greater number of slaves. The lack of food holds back the enclave from present growth.

COMPLICATIONS

Despite their best efforts to filter out moles, some of the slaves in Sanctuary are actually Minder plants. Other slaves usually are quick to identify these quislings, but sometimes these other slaves have tragic accidents before the truth can come out.

Sanctuary's location was chosen for its defensibility rather than its rich resources. The town is perpetually short of food and other supplies, and many of the raids are simply to steal the vital necessities of life rather than to free slaves. Serious improvements to the place are needed if it's going to grow much.

PLACES CHARACTERISTIC OF SANCTUARY

Narrow mountain pass leading up to Sanctuary, well-armed with rockslides that can be triggered on any intruding Minder forces.

The crumbling town square surrounded by partly-patched Old Terran buildings, where former slaves gather after the day's work to rest in the light of a few scavenged glowlamps and share some conversation with each other.

Some Notable Ruins of the Bonelands

The ruins that follow are sketched lightly and given no specific location in the Bonelands. If you intend to use the region as written, it can be helpful to pick one or two of these ruins and flesh them out in full, keeping them in reserve in case you need a bit of quick content during a gaming session. Most ruins are fairly self-contained, and can be placed almost anywhere without requiring some special explanation for their provenance.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
Freedom Outpost	Rebel Base	Famine	Mutants	Unstable Construction / Cryogenic Pods

Multiple nearby orbital strikes have drastically destabilized this ancient mountain lair. The cracks in the seals eventually opened wide enough to let in a number of vicious mutant raiders who favored the outpost for its defensible nature and large stock of salvage-though food supplies appear to have been completely consumed by the time the base went into hibernation. The mutants have yet to crack the automated defenses on the lower level, where scores of cryogenic pods hold the sleeping survivors of the ancient rebel group.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
The Place of the Deep Glow	Sinister Caves	Nukes	Degenerates	Disguised Purpose / Cult Stronghold

Nuke strikes drove the inhabitants of several nearby towns into this maze of underground passageways cut as part of an abortive waste-storage construction effort. The Highshine infestation reacted with some of the waste cannisters, and certain of the survivors were infected with a strange parasitic hybrid of the two. These "Keepers of the Glow" now rule the degenerates in their deep tunnels.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
The Abdulafia Clinic	Pleasure Resort	Mutation	Mutants	Highshine Concentration / Mad Scientist

Mad Doctor Abdulafia is a survivor of the Scream, hopped up on cutting-edge longevity nanites and high-grade Mandate technology from his former exalted rank. The mutation and degeneration of those around him- and his own misshapen state- have driven him into a frenzied search for a cure for Highshine mutation. The grounds of the clinic are haunted with his failures, discarded and vicious.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
Plant #993	Power Plant	Panic	Robots	Psychic Stronghold / Sentient Plants

The first dreadful weeks after the Scream saw mad violence claim most of the survivors who gathered at this still-functional power plant. Those who remained tried to use a mutated kudzu variant for foodstuffs, but the radiation and Highshine combined to merge the humans with the plants in a breed of grotesque hybrid. Something about the hybridization process appears to have unlocked psychic powers in the plant-beings, and they now use the plant's robotic workforce to ensure their safety and abundant fertilization.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
Grahamstown	Ruined Village	Raiders	Mutants	Taboo Land / Black Dust

Local enclaves warn strangers away from Grahamstown, calling it a place of ghosts and demons. Those who stir up the creatures within are often attacked, such is the dread of the shambling things within Grahamstown's crumbling houses. In truth, a raider attack on a squatter community some decades ago accidentally broke open a nanoemitter programmed to spew Black Dust. The hostile nanites permeated the brains of the luckless humans, destroying their minds and turning them into bestial, undying savages.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
Fen Guo Educational Center	Pleasure Resort	Conquest	Squatters	Unstable Power Core / Failed Community

Once a recreational "educational center" for interminable Mandate retreats, the Fen Guo Center was once home to a peaceful enclave that prospered on the center's still-functional nanotech power generator. An attack by the Wheeler raider clan slaughtered the locals, but the fighting damaged and destabilized the power core. The surviving raiders now guard the center jealously, but if no one is able to repair the damaged power core, it's going to wipe out several nearby enclaves when it finally goes critical. The Wheelers refuse to believe that anything is wrong with the core, and view any attempt to get near it as mere trickery aimed against them.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
Cornucopia Farms	Agro-Complex	Panic	Robots	Flooded Ruins / Cyclical Threat

One of the innumerable robot-operated factory farms that fed Old Terra, Cornucopia Farms was remote enough that few survivors ever made it to it in the wake of the Scream, and those that did ended up killing each other over control of the farm. The robots have cheerfully continued their labors, growing several boutique plant varieties and numerous colorful ornamentals. Unfortunately, these ornamentals have mutated into a perfect food source for a type of ground-dwelling mutant locust not unlike a heritor bug. Every few decades, the locust population explodes into a carpet of crawling doom that slaughters those nearby enclaves that have innocently sprung up in the quiet years between outbreaks.

Name	Origin	Ruination	Main Occupants	Tags
BetterLife Industries	Industrial Complex	Decay	Squatters	Ancient Lore / Forbidden Fruit

Advanced pharmacological tech was one of the few varieties of Mandate pretech that was commonly available to ordinary Old Terran citizens. BetterLife Industries operated this plant to create a wide range of lifestyle stims. Less obviously, they also operated it to conduct maltech research into combat stims, mind-controlling drugs and chems meant to destroy the wills of troublesome malcontents. The few scientists and workers left at the site after the Scream gradually succumbed to the perils of the New Earth, and only recently have a band of squatters made a new home in the place. They're using stims indiscriminately, relying on the boosted speed, strength, and ferocity that the combat mixes grant-and heedless of the damage that they're doing to their minds. Some of the worst of them are barely-sentient monsters, and even the most rational can't hope to understand the stim research and advanced chemical blueprints left behind by the maltech researchers.

These tables can be used for a quick hint as to the kind of perils and encounters to be found in the Bonelands. In most regions, there's a 1-in-6 chance of an encounter for each day of travel. In the vicinity of the Altoona Deathlands or the dangerous mid-region the peril might rise to 2-in-6, and anywhere near a major necropolis is 3-in-6 at the least.

1D12	Northern Bonelands Encounters
1	3d6 *Heritor Bugs* are lairing in a ruin: AC 7, Move 15', 1 HP, Atk: +1/1d4 bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
2	2d4 *Renaissance slavers* looking for "recruits" and plunder: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
3	1 *Ghoul Bear* is out hunting: AC 5, Move 20', HD 4, Atk: Two +6/1d8 claws, Skill +2, Save 13+, Morale 9
4	2d4 *Gorehounds* in a pack: AC 7, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +3/1d6 Bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8. The alpha has 3 HD.
5	2d4 *Ascension Raiders* from the trusted commoner class, dispatched to collect some potential psychic, scout distant territory, or catch a runaway slave: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
6	1d8 *Sanctuary Tribals* on a long recon for new food and salvage sources: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
7	2d6 *Ascension Raiders* as above led by 1 *Minor Psychic*, dispatched on a mission by the Great Mother: AC 5, Move 20', HD 3, Atk: +2/1d8 Revolver, Skill +2, Save 14+, Morale 9, immune to surprise, can teleport 10m as a movement action
8	3d4 savage *Skewmen* are haunting a path between enclaves, hoping for an unwary band of travellers: AC 8, Move 15', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d4 club, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
9	A ridgeline gives a view down onto the slopes below, and by luck the PCs spot potential enemies first. An encounter as above, but the PCs start 1d6 x 50 meters away and have seen the foes without having been spotted themselves.
10	The land is jagged with orbital debris and pockets of half-collapsed tunnels. Another day must be spent to safely thread the gauntlet or else each PC must save versus Luck or take 1d6 damage from falls and cuts.
11	1d8 *Tribals* are feeling friendly and might trade: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
12	An abandoned structure might have something interesting in it- one roll on the Random Loot rewards table.

Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

1D12	Southern Jungles Encounters
1	1 *Flaysnake* python is ready to ambush prey: AC 7, Move 20, HD 3, Atk +4/1d6 bite+poison, Skill +2, Save 14+. Poison is Toxicity 8, Virulence 3, Interval 2 rounds and does 1d6 Constitution point damage per failed save.
2	2d8 *Cult Warriors* seek sacrifices for their mutant god-beast: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 Spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
3	2d8 *Blinder Birds* seeking prey: AC 6, Move 30' Fly, HD 1-1, Atk: +1/1d4 claw, Skill +2, Save 15+, Morale 7
4	2d8 *Gorehounds* scavenging: AC 7, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +3/1d6 Bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8. The alpha has 3 HD.
5	1d4 *Manscorpions* lair here: AC 5, Move 20' Climb 20', HD 3, Atk: All at +5- 1d6/1d6/1d6+poison, Skill +3, Save 13+, Morale 9, poison is Toxicity of 10, Interval of 1 round, and Virulence of 1. For each failed save the victim loses 1d10 points of Dexterity. At Dexterity 0, they are immobile and helpless. Lost points return at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.
6	2d8 *Tribals* from a jungle village: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
7	2d10 jungle *Raiders* out on a hunting expedition: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
8	1d4 *Ghoul Bears* working together: AC 5, Move 20', HD 4, Atk: Two +6/1d8 claws, Skill +2, Save 13+, Morale 9
9	Patch of radioactivity. If the PCs don't possess a geiger counter, each must make a Radiation save.
10	A country house overgrown with vines; 1 day's hacking has an even 50% chance of nothing or a Random Loot +10 roll.
11	Vicious mutant plant life strikes 1d4 PCs; +8 to hit, 2d6 damage. The plants can't move and die easily under blades.
12	Jewel-bright plant life hypnotizes the unwary; each PC saves vs. Mental Effect. Those who fail suffer the Distracted negative condition for 1d3 days.

Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

1d12	Big Sink Encounters
1	2d6 *Fishmen* wait for prey: AC 9, Move 20' Swim 30', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
2	2d4 *Tribal Swampers* are fishing- or robbing: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
3	2d4 *Raiders* have a flat-bottomed raft: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
4	3d6 aquatic *Heritor Bugs* swarm from the reeds: AC 7, Move 15', 1 HP, Atk: +1/1d4 bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
5	1d8 *Blinder Birds* nest in the mangroves: AC 6, Move 30' Fly, HD 1-1, Atk: +1/1d4 claw, Skill +2, Save 15+, Morale 7
6	1d6 *Whiskered Devils* are out hunting: AC 3, Move 15' Swim 30', HD 2, Atk: +3/1d8 claw, Skill +2, Save 14+, Morale 8
7	A toxic mudhole suddenly drags down a random PC. Make an Evasion save or be soaked with noxious filth, gaining 1d6 Toxin points and suffering the Sickened negative condition until they can clean themselves with a lifestyle stim or copious clean water.
8	The swamp channels twist and turn back on themselves. The best navigator in the group must make a Wis/Navigation check at difficulty 10 or be unable to find a way through, delaying the party by a day.
9	A stretch of radioactive muck forces a Radiation save for all groups that don't have a geiger counter out to warn them.
10	The swamp noises are unceasing that night. No one gets a good rest or recovers lost hit points.
11	A cloud of unseen toxic swamp gas wafts over the PCs. Each must make a Physical Effect save or suffer 1d6 damage.
12	Mutant leeches encrust the PCs. Those not wearing fully-sealed armor or with natural ACs better than 9 suffer 1d4 damage.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

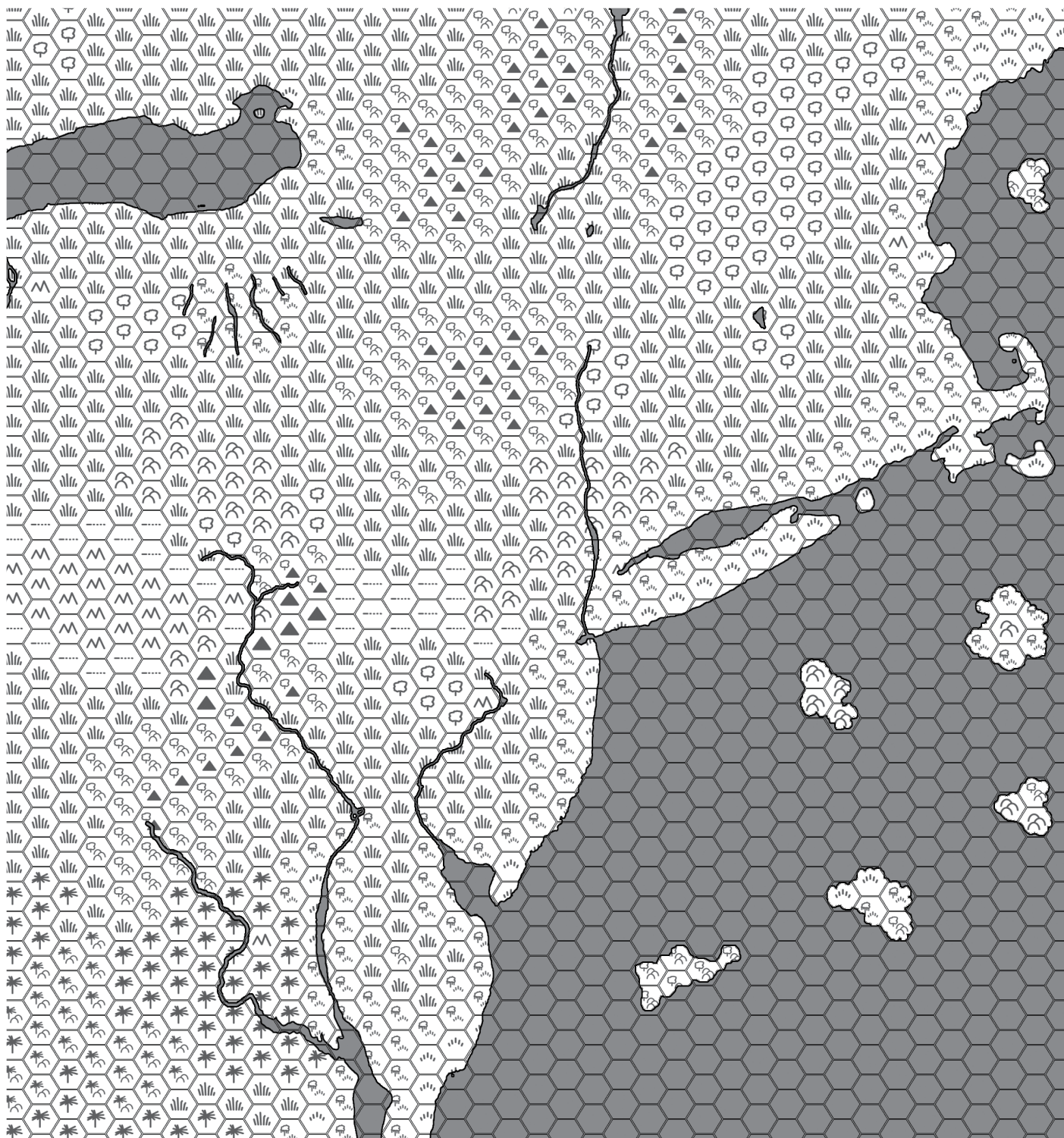| 1d12	Deathlands and Necropolis Encounters
1	1 berserk *Warbot* has been released from a Mandate military cache nearby: AC 0, Move 30' Flight 30', 60 HP, Atk: +12 each for 1d8+4 monoblade and 1d10+2 laser rifle, Skill +4, Save 10+, Morale 10. It must operate on broadcast power from somewhere nearby.
2	1d4 *Grinder Worms* burrow through the wreckage in search of more tender food: AC 6, Move 20' Burrow 1'/round, HD 5, Atk: +7/1d12 Bite, Skill +2, Save 13+, Morale 10
3	1 *Glow Turtle* is disguised as a man-tall boulder: AC 2, Move 25', HD 5, Atk: +6/1d10 bite, Skill +1, Save 13+, Morale 8
4	1d4 *Flaysnakes* cooperate with almost human intellect: AC 7, Move 20, HD 3, Atk +4/1d6 bite+poison, Skill +2, Save 14+. Poison is Toxicity 8, Virulence 3, Interval 2 rounds and does 1d6 Constitution point damage per failed save.
5	1d4 berserk *Security Bots* crawl through the wreckage: AC 4, Move 20', 12 HP, Atk: +4/1d10+2 Laser Rifle, Skill +1, Save 14+, Morale 12. A live power source probably exists nearby
6	1d4 *Manscorpions* nest here: AC 5, Move 20' Climb 20', HD 3, Atk: All at +5- 1d6/1d6/1d6+poison, Skill +3, Save 13+, Morale 9, poison is Toxicity of 10, Interval of 1 round, and Virulence of 1. For each failed save the victim loses 1d10 points of Dexterity. At Dexterity 0, they are immobile and helpless. Lost points return at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.
7	Building collapses or deathlands sinkholes have made progress treacherous. 1d6 days are spent in the same area trying to get clear of the wreckage, -1 day for each level of Navigation skill possessed by the group.
8	Invasive nanites have rendered all water supplies Dirty and made all carried rations inedible. Old Terran rations are immune, as is water kept in Old Terran sealed containers.
9	Patch of intense radioactivity. If the PCs don't possess a geiger counter, each must make two Radiation saves.
10	A nearby wall collapses or an immobile sandtrapper plant snaps at a PC; Evasion save or take 2d6 damage.
11	Stumble into acrid pocket of stinking chemicals. Foraging checks suffer -3 penalty for 1d6 days until the stench wears off as prey are alerted. A cleansing lifestyle stim removes the chemical immediately.
12	An abandoned structure might have something interesting in it- one roll on the Random Loot rewards table at +10.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

Map Key 1 Hex = 20 km

⋀ **Deathlands**	✳ **Jungle**	**Swamp**
Forested Mountain	**Jungle Hills**	**Major Necropolis**
Forested Mountains	**Light Forest**	**Enclave**
Scrub Plains	**Marsh**	

Gamemaster Resources

One of the special challenges of brewing up a sandbox campaign is the difficulty of finding fit inspiration for all the necessary details. It's easy enough to draw sweeping outlines and grand plans, but when it comes down to making the fussy bits and specific elements of a game it can quickly turn exhausting. The tables and maps in this chapter are intended to provide a number of shortcuts for the busy GM, with a wide array of random tables for spitting out quick results for your preparation. At the end of the chapter, you'll also find several blank record sheets for easier tracking of your heroic wanderers.

As with all the tables in this book, they should be taken as a starting point and a tool for sparking your own inspiration. It can often be helpful to simply review the lists for ideas, or pick fitting items and assemble them into the creation you need.

Quick Enclave Architecture Details

With a half-dozen or more enclaves to make for every region, you might have some difficulty in distinguishing their visual appearance to the players, or coming up with an idea of what the buildings look like. The following tables give some fast possibilities for the local architecture.

1d20	Basic Building Style	Common Decorative Elements
1	Thatched huts made of posts bent together and tied above.	Intricate decorations in ochre and other earth dyes
2	Dried mud bricks in a dry climate, or fired, glazed bricks in wet places.	Bright plastic fragments embedded in structures
3	Repurposed intact ancient buildings	Mirror-bright metal surfaces adorning important places
4	Wicker walls woven around posts	Intricate woodcarving on structures
5	Homes dug into the hillsides	Countless prayer flags of cut and brocaded Old Terran cloth
6	Soddies made of stacked peat "bricks"	Religious symbols worked in elaborate fashion on buildings
7	Cinderblock and scrap huts	Mosaics made of credit chips and plastic fragments
8	Sheets of hard ceraplast crudely fastened together	Chimes or shaped pipes that keen in the wind
9	Transparent armorglass salvaged from buildings	Bright paints on every available surface
10	Tents and yurts of mutant animal leather	Careful carving worked into building walls
11	Stone blocks quarred from nearby	Stone statues of the honored dead or religious figures
12	Unfinished stacked-log construction	Gongs of thin-pounded metal sheets
13	Buildings of finished wooden planks and timbers	Tough armorglass fragments worked into the decor
14	Tents of tough, bright-colored Old Terran cloth	Small, brightly-worked shrines to local religious figures
15	Hollowed boles of giant mutant plants	Memorials to the dead carved into walls and structures
16	Fired clay bricks and mortar	Beautifully-carved columns of wood or stone
17	Poured concrete shapes	The skulls and body parts of slain enemies and beasts
18	Stacked fieldstone construction	Fountains from some functional water system
19	Bundled reed walls and thatching	Gruesome protector-gods painted to ward off evil
20	Wattle-and-daub structures of mud and sticks	Geometric patterns picked out in fragments of bright debris

Quick NPC Generation

Numerous occasions call for a quickly-built NPC. It can be helpful to roll up a dozen or so men and women with the following tables beforehand, filling in their names, appearances, and personality particulars on 3x5 cards. When you need an NPC in a hurry, just take the top card off the deck. At the end of the session, update the card with their new role and any important interactions you need to track. You shouldn't feel any obligation to use all the tables- just pick the ones that seem useful to the person you need to build.

1D10	Ancestral Ethnicity	Build	Life Stage
1	Caucasian	Tiny	Barely adult
2	Southern African	Short	Unwed Youth
3	Northern African	Short but broad or obese	Married Youth
4	South Asian	Average	Widowed Youth
5	East Asian	Average but broad or obese	Unwed Adult
6	Arab	Average height but thin	Married Adult
7	Lunar	Average height but thin	Married Adult
8	Tailored Phenotypic Mix	Tall and broad or obese	Widowed Adult
9	Roll 1d8 twice	Extremely tall and thin	Married Elderly
10	Roll 1d8 three times	Huge	Unwed/Widowed Elderly

1D20	Memorable Traits
1	Loudly bigoted against another enclave
2	Near-sighted or hard of hearing
3	Scars over a missing hand, eye, or foot
4	Trace of Shape mutation table stigmata
5	Mute or possessing a speech debility
6	Elaborate tattoos or piercings
7	Limb crippled from old wound or accident
8	Extensive scarring over some visible skin
9	Fastidiously clean and neat
10	Uses a particular phrase over and over
11	Always accompanied by another NPC
12	Always predicting the worst possible outcome
13	Icy scorn for a particular gender or ethnicity
14	Talks loudly and slowly to outsiders
15	Answers questions with another question
16	Bald or with a fanciful hair style
17	Always toying with their weapons
18	Quotes religious scripture constantly
19	Indiscriminate flatterer
20	No sense of humor whatsoever

1D12	Big Problems for the NPC
1	Has a chronic and eventually fatal disease
2	Wife or child is gravely ill or has been crippled
3	Powerful local has a grudge against them
4	Has committed a crime and fears discovery
5	Owes a powerful person a favor they can't afford
6	Can't presently feed themselves or their family
7	Suspected of being a psychic- and possibly is
8	Follows a faith unpopular with the locals
9	Their true love wants nothing to do with them
10	Recently disgraced for a serious failure of duty
11	They've recently broken a valuable enclave relic
12	They've been betrayed by a once-friend

1D10	Current Greatest Desire
1	The romantic attentions of a particular neighbor
2	Enough food to ensure family's safety for a while
3	Revenge against a hated enemy
4	Justice for a crime committed against them
5	Truth about a spouse or lover's faithfulness
6	Better equipment for their role in the enclave
7	Leadership in the enclave's government
8	The strengthening of the enclave as a whole
9	Safety for themselves or an imperiled friend
10	Cure for a sick or crippled friend

1d20	Favored Clothing Style	Best Trait	Worst Trait	Relationship with Spouse/Family
1	Crude rags and tatters	Compassionate	Arrogant	Warm, loving, and uncomplicated
2	Patched Old Terran clothing	Cooperative	Bigoted	Spouse recently committed adultery
3	Loincloth and little more	Courageous	Deceitful	Parents disapprove of their role in group
4	Robes of homespun or Old Terran cloth	Determined	Entitled	A new faith brings tension between them
5	Fragments of Old Terran plastics	Fair-minded	Foolish	NPC recently committed adultery
6	Leathers studded with credit chips	Forbearing	Greedy	Spouse pushing NPC to greater glory
7	Brightly-colored dresses or kilts	Forgiving	Indolent	Spouse or parent nags incessantly
8	Tunic and trousers of available cloth	Generous	Insulting	Spouse or parent overshadows NPC
9	Brightly-brocaded clothing	Honest	Irresponsible	Spouse committed crime; must hide it
10	Suit studded with beads and charms	Honorable	Malicious	Unforgivably terrible mistake was made
11	Armor even at inappropriate times	Hospitable	Mistrustful	Unjust suspicion between them
12	Feathers and leather and dyes	Humble	Reckless	Justified suspicion between them
13	Bright-woven homespun clothes	Loyal	Selfish	Pondering a divorce/disowned by parents
14	Saris or sarongs of bright cloth	Merciful	Spiteful	Impatient for inheritance
15	A few well-placed armor plates	Peaceful	Treacherous	The only support for parents or spouse
16	Shaggy camo clothing that blends well	Perceptive	Ungenerous	Pressured to divorce for infertility
17	Leathers decorated with their kills	Prudent	Untrustworthy	Family deplores spouse or lover
18	Fashionable Old Terran business suits	Responsible	Vengeful	Family burdens them with many orders
19	Leather straps and light cloth	Self-sacrificing	Violent	NPC is family's pride and joy
20	Paint alone when climate permits	Unbigoted	Wrathful	They mutually hate each other

1d20	Interesting NPC Roles in the Enclave	Most Significant Source of Influence
1	The finest and most respected farmer in the enclave	Has blackmail evidence on the enclave's leader
2	The enclave's best hunter	Amazing knack for finding food
3	Cruelly oppressed house servant for the elite	Has done favors for everyone in the enclave
4	Enclave's caretaker for the sick and crippled	Remarkable powers of seduction
5	Favorite concubine to an important leader	Believed specially blessed by God
6	A scout roving the nearby lands for signs of trouble	Hereditary authority rests in their bloodline
7	Tech maintaining arcane and balky relics	Owns a powerful relic used for the good of the enclave
8	Clergy of the enclave's dominant faith	Performed a mighty deed of arms that saved the enclave
9	Beggar, if the enclave's big enough for such	Married into a powerful local family
10	Sage versed in Old Terran lore	Respected for presciently wise advice and good judgment
11	Harried official of the enclave's government	Years of friendship with important enclave figures
12	Scrapsmith forging necessities from spare parts	Best trader in the enclave, has many foreign friends
13	Stranger who wandered in recently from afar	Accidentally crippled by enclave leader; guilt brings influence
14	Missionary of another faith- openly or otherwise	Found a cache of precious tech and shares it with enclave
15	Wandering historian or sage	In their youth, was a great adventurer- by local standards
16	Judge or magistrate of the enclave	Respected for rigorously upright spiritual life
17	Owner of the biggest farm or house in the enclave	Children or siblings married into half the enclave's families
18	Head or eldest heir of a large and powerful family	Secret psychic powers
19	Former wanderer made mentally ill by experiences	Hidden ties with an outside raider or cult group
20	Heir of the enclave's ruler	Irresistibly charming and well-loved by enclave

Quick NPC Class Stats

The vast majority of the denizens of the New Earth don't have a character class- they're simply normal men and women. They might be exceptionally good at what they do, but they don't need or have the complexity of a full character class. The following thumbnail statistics are provided for those occasions when you need a classed NPC and don't care to take the time to generate them the long way. They can also be used to provide fast pre-generated characters for players in need of a quick replacement for their late, lamented hero. If so, you should allow the player to reroll each level's hit dice to give a proper result for the PC's hit points.

SCROUNGERS

Lvl	HP	AC	AB	Weapon/Armor	Physical Effect	Mental Effect	Evasion	Tech	Luck
1	4	6	+1/+1	Sword (1d8), Hide Armor	16	15	13	12	14
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-1, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Literacy-0, Science-0, Survival-0*, Tactics-0*, Tech/Postech-1								
3	12	6	+1/+3	Laser Pistol (1d6), Hide Armor	16	15	13	12	14
	Skills: Combat/Energy-1*, Combat/Primitive-1, Computer-0, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Literacy-0, Science-0, Survival-0*, Tactics-0*, Tech/Postech-2								
5	20	4	+2/+5	Laser Rifle (1d10), Harmony Armor	14	13	11	10	12
	Skills: Combat/Energy-2*, Combat/Primitive-1, Computer-0, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Literacy-0, Science-0, Survival-0*, Tactics-0*, Tech/Medical-0, Tech/Pretech-1, Tech/Postech-2								
7	28	3	+4/+7	Shear Rifle (2d8), Insurgent Combat Shell	12	11	9	8	10
	Skills: Combat/Energy-2*, Combat/Primitive-1, Computer-1, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Literacy-0, Perception-0, Science-0, Survival-0*, Tactics-0*, Tech/Medical-0, Tech/Pretech-1, Tech/Postech-3, Vehicle/Land-0								
9	36	2	+4/+7	Shear Rifle (2d8), Executive Protection Field	12	11	9	8	10
	Skills: Combat/Energy-2*, Combat/Primitive-1, Computer-1, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Literacy-0, Perception-0, Science-0, Survival-0*, Tactics-0*, Tech/Medical-0, Tech/Pretech-2, Tech/Postech-4, Vehicle/Land-0								

An NPC Scrounger's default attributes are Strength 7 (-1), Intelligence 14 (+1), Wisdom 7 (-1), Dexterity 11 (+0), Constitution 11 (+0), and Charisma 14 (+1). All skills are class skills except for those marked with an asterisk; players can swap skills in and out accordingly. The listed attack bonus gives the base and the character's bonus with their listed weapon.

Scrounger Class Skills: Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive, Computer, Culture/Literacy, History, Instructor, Language, Navigation, Perception, Profession, Science, Security, Tech/Any, and Vehicle/Any.

SLAYERS

Lvl	HP	AC	AB	Weapon/Armor	Physical Effect	Mental Effect	Evasion	Tech	Luck
1	4	4	+2/+3	Spear (1d6+1), Scrap Mail	12	15	13	16	14
	Skills: Athletics-0, Cbt/Prim.-1, Cbt/Proj.-0, Cbt/Unarmed-0, Culture/Enclave-0*, Navigation-0*, Perception-0, Survival-1								
3	12	3	+2/+4	Revolver (1d8+1), Harmony Armor	12	15	13	16	14
	Skills: Athletics-0, Combat/Primitive-1, Combat/Projectile-2, Combat/Unarmed-0, Culture/Enclave-0*, Navigation-0*, Perception-0, Survival-1								
5	20	2	+4/+6	Combat Rifle (1d12+1), Scrap Plate	10	13	11	14	12
	Skills: Athletics-1, Combat/Primitive-2, Combat/Projectile-2, Combat/Unarmed-0, Culture/Enclave-0*, Navigation-0*, Perception-0, Survival-1, Tactics-0								
7	28	2	+6/+9	Mag Rifle (2d8+1), Insurgent Combat Shell	8	11	9	12	10
	Skills: Athletics-1, Combat/Primitive-2, Combat/Projectile-3, Combat/Unarmed-0, Culture/Enclave-0*, Navigation-0*, Perception-0, Stealth-0, Survival-1, Tactics-0								
9	36	0	+6/+10	Mag Rifle (2d8+1), Powered Armor	8	11	9	12	10
	Skills: Athletics-1, Combat/Primitive-2, Combat/Projectile-4, Combat/Unarmed-0, Culture/Enclave-0*, Navigation-0*, Perception-0, Stealth-0, Survival-1, Tactics-0								

An NPC Slayer's default attributes are Strength 14 (+1), Intelligence 7 (-1), Wisdom 11 (+0), Dexterity 14 (+1), Constitution 11 (+0), and Charisma 7 (-1). All skills are class skills except for those marked with an asterisk; players can swap skills in and out accordingly.

Slayer Class Skills: Athletics, Combat/Any, Exosuit, Leadership, Perception, Profession/Any, Stealth, and Tactics.

SPEAKERS

Lvl	HP	AC	AB	Weapon/Armor	Physical Effect	Mental Effect	Evasion	Tech	Luck
1	4	6	+1/+1	Spear (1d6), Hide Armor	16	12	14	15	13
	Skills: Cbt/Primitive-0, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, History-0, Language-0, Navigation-0*, Persuade-1, Survival-1								
3	12	4	+1/+2	Revolver (1d8+1), Harmony Armor	16	12	14	15	13
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-0, Combat/Projectile-1*, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, History-0, Language-0, Navigation-0*, Persuade-2, Survival-1								
5	20	4	+3/+5	Combat Rifle (1d12), Terran Explorer Suit	14	10	12	13	11
	Skills: Business-0, Combat/Primitive-0, Combat/Projectile-2*, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, History-1, Language-0, Leadership-0, Navigation-0*, Persuade-2, Survival-1								
7	28	3	+5/+7	Mag Rifle (2d8), Insurgent Combat Shell	12	8	10	11	9
	Skills: Business-1, Combat/Primitive-0, Combat/Projectile-2*, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, History-1, Language-0, Leadership-1, Navigation-0*, Persuade-3, Survival-1								
9	36	3	+5/+8	Mag Rifle (2d8), Insurgent Combat Shell	12	8	10	11	9
	Skills: Business-1, Combat/Primitive-0, Combat/Projectile-3*, Culture/Criminal-0, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, History-1, Language-0, Leadership-2, Navigation-0*, Persuade-3, Survival-1								

An NPC Speaker's default attributes are Strength 11 (+0), Intelligence 11 (+0), Wisdom 7 (-1), Dexterity 11 (+0), Constitution 11 (+0), and Charisma 14 (+1). All skills are class skills except for those marked with an asterisk; players can swap skills in and out accordingly.

Speaker Class Skills: Artist, Bureaucracy, Business, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive, Culture/Any, Gambling, History, Instructor, Language, Leadership, Persuade, Profession, Religion, Steward, and Tactics.

SURVIVORS

Lvl	HP	AC	AB	Weapon/Armor	Physical Effect	Mental Effect	Evasion	Tech	Luck
1	7	6	+1/+2	Spear (1d6+1), Scrap Mail	12	12	14	14	13
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-0, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, Navigation-1, Stealth-0, Persuade-0*, Survival-1, Vehicle/Land-0								
3	21	5	+1/+4	Monoblade (1d8+2), Harmony Armor	12	12	14	14	13
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-2, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, Navigation-1, Stealth-0, Persuade-0*, Survival-1, Tech/Medical-0, Vehicle/Land-0								
5	35	4	+3/+6	Huge Monoblade (2d8+3), Scrap Plate	10	10	12	12	11
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-2, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, Navigation-2, Stealth-0, Persuade-0*, Survival-2, Tech/Medical-0, Vehicle/Land-0								
7	49	4	+4/+7	Huge Monoblade (2d8+3), Insurgent Combat Shell	8	8	10	10	9
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-2, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, Navigation-2, Stealth-1, Persuade-0*, Survival-2, Tech/Medical-1, Vehicle/Grav-0, Vehicle/Land-0, Vehicle/Sea-0								
9	63	3	+4/+8	Proton Axe (3d10+1), Powered Armor	8	8	10	10	9
	Skills: Combat/Primitive-3, Culture/Enclave-0, Culture/Traveller-0, Navigation-2, Stealth-1, Persuade-0*, Survival-2, Tech/Medical-1, Vehicle/Grav-0, Vehicle/Land-1, Vehicle/Sea-0								

An NPC Survivor's default attributes are Strength 14 (+1), Intelligence 11 (+0), Wisdom 11 (+0), Dexterity 7 (-1), Constitution 14 (+1), and Charisma 7 (-1). All skills are class skills except for those marked with an asterisk; players can swap skills in and out accordingly.

Survivor Class Skills: Athletics, Combat/Unarmed, Combat/Primitive, Navigation, Perception, Profession/Any, Stealth, Survival, Tech/Medical, and Vehicle/Any.

All characters are assumed to have 1d6 Type A energy cells available for each weapon or suit of armor that requires their use. Gunslingers have 1d6 x 10 rounds of ammo to hand. If a character is being brought in as a replacement PC, they begin with the listed armor, weapon, and normally-rolled starting gear as given in character generation. For every two levels above first, they can pick one of the following: Any two items from the starting gear table, A Type A+ power cell, 5 units of spare parts of a tech level no greater than their own level, or a roll on the Random Loot table in the rewards chapter at a +5 bonus.

Quick Name Lists

The Mandate preferred to maintain homogenous cultural and ethnic groups on Old Terra in order to simplify their task of maintaining social stasis among the planet's inhabitants. Still, centuries of exchange after the Years of Smoke left numerous pockets of newcomers dotting the globe. Despite the Mandate's best efforts at cultural control, almost every district had a distinct leavening of "foreigners", most of whom had lived there for generations.

Almost any mix of ethnicities and cultural extractions can now be found in the enclaves of the New Earth. Small cultural reservations formed rallying points for the survivors, and a lack of easy travel and communication between enclaves has kept exchanges since to a minimum. Most enclaves in a given region will be largely peopled by the most common pre-Scream culture in the area- as interpreted by the Mandate- but there are always some that speak of different origins. After Mandate standardization, most groups ended up following the given name-surname pattern preferred by bureaucrats.

The following name lists are provided to simplify NPC generation for a GM. Each table can be used individually, or they might be mixed and matched for those enclaves that have blended several groups. For pronunciation, a quick check online can give a guide- the Chinese names in particular involve letter-sound matches that aren't intuitively obvious. Of course, in the ensuing eight hundred years between now and the New Earth's present day a great deal of linguistic drift has happened. There's no guarantee that modern pronunciations match the tongues of the far future wastes.

1D20	ARABIC NAMES MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Ali	Amani	Akwal
2	Aziz	Atiya	Amari
3	Baraka	Bashira	Antar
4	Farid	Daniyah	Atef
5	Gabir	Durra	Basara
6	Hamid	Faizah	Daher
7	Harun	Habiba	Dalharni
8	Ishaq	Jalilah	Dosari
9	Ismail	Jamila	Faraj
10	Jafar	Jilan	Ganim
11	Kafil	Khadija	Habash
12	Khalid	Leila	Issa
13	Muhammad	Maliha	Jahani
14	Rafik	Munira	Khoury
15	Rashid	Nathifa	Madari
16	Saleh	Rasha	Naifeh
17	Tariq	Shimah	Said
18	Yazid	Suha	Sarraf
19	Yusuf	Yusriya	Shamun
20	Zahur	Zuleika	Tahan

1D20	CHINESE NAMES MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	An	Ai	Cai
2	Bohai	Biyu	Chang
3	Chao	Daiyu	Chen
4	Dai	Fei	Feng
5	Fa	Fen	Guo
6	Gui	Jia	Han
7	Hong	Jun	Huang
8	Hui	Lan	Li
9	Jin	Lian	Lin
10	Liang	Liling	Qian
11	Ming	Luli	Ren
12	Peng	Mai	Su
13	Quan	Mei	Sun
14	Ru	Meilin	Wang
15	Shen	Shan	Wu
16	Tao	Tai	Xiao
17	Tung	Xiao	Yang
18	Wei	Xue	Zhao
19	Xin	Yao	Zheng
20	Yu	Zi	Zhou

1D20	INDIAN NAMES MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Amrit	Anala	Achari
2	Bodhan	Basanti	Banerjee
3	Chakor	Candra	Bhat
4	Devak	Devani	Chaturvedi
5	Ekaksh	Eshana	Desai
6	Gopal	Himadri	Devar
7	Ganak	Hiranya	Dhawan
8	Harit	Indira	Gupta
9	Indra	Jaya	Iyengar
10	Jagatha	Kanti	Johar
11	Kumar	Lalita	Khan
12	Lal	Manisha	Khatri
13	Manoj	Nalini	Marar
14	Nimit	Padma	Mehra
15	Prasad	Priya	Patel
16	Rajan	Rukhmani	Rana
17	Rudra	Shakti	Sethi
18	Suresh	Sita	Singh
19	Tarun	Tanushri	Trivedi
20	Vijay	Vimala	Varma

LUNAR NAMES			
1D20	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Alan	Barbara	Aldrin
2	Aleksandr	Catherine	Armstrong
3	Anatoly	Christina	Chaffee
4	Charles	Eileen	Collins
5	Edwin	Kalpana	Dobrovolski
6	Fred	Kathryn	Duke
7	Georgi	Laurel	Furukawa
8	Ivan	Linda	Gagarin
9	Jack	Liu	Garriott
10	James	Mae	Glenn
11	John	Mary	Grissom
12	Michael	Nancy	Haise
13	Neil	Nicole	Junlong
14	Owen	Pamela	Lovell
15	Satoshi	Samantha	McAuliffe
16	Sergei	Sandra	Ochoa
17	Vasili	Susan	Shepard
18	Vladimir	Tamara	So-yeon
19	Yevgeny	Valentina	Swigert
20	Yuri	Yvonne	Yang

NEO-EGYPTIAN NAMES			
1D20	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Amenken	Ahset	Amun
2	Bek	Aneksi	Anubis
3	Djedefhor	Betresh	Aten
4	Harkhaf	Dedyet	Bastet
5	Imhotep	Herit	Bes
6	Kawab	Imi	Geb
7	Kha	Isis	Hathor
8	Khusebek	Kemsiyet	Horus
9	Mahu	Kiya	Isis
10	Mereruka	Mereneith	Khepri
11	Nakht	Merti	Ma'at
12	Nebwenef	Nebettawy	Nepthys
13	Neferu	Nefertari	Osiris
14	Nekure	Nithotep	Ptah
15	Padiaset	Raia	Ra
16	Rahotep	Sitamun	Sekhmet
17	Setau	Tarset	Set
18	Theshen	Tem	Shu
19	Wajmose	Tia	Sobek
20	Weshptah	Tuya	Thoth

SWAHILI NAMES			
1D20	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Akida	Afya	Chenge
2	Badru	Bahati	Chiku
3	Darweshi	Chaniya	Genzabuke
4	Dogo	Dhakiya	Jaku
5	Elimu	Eshe	Jumane
6	Enzi	Fahari	Kafumu
7	Faraji	Ghanima	Kagasheki
8	Fumo	Halili	Kheri
9	Ghubari	Ishara	Kilango
10	Haki	Johari	Kisyeri
11	Hamisi	Karama	Lekule
12	Imara	Makini	Madabida
13	Juma	Mwasa	Makinda
14	Kifimbo	Neema	Mgimwa
15	Lumbwi	Raziya	Rukia
16	Musa	Sikudhani	Salum
17	Salehe	Tatu	Selemani
18	Sefu	Waseme	Sindato
19	Simba	Zawadi	Sinkamba
20	Zuberi	Zuwena	Waride

| ZULU NAMES			
1D20	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1	Bafana	Cebile	Dlamini
2	Cothoza	Deliwe	Hlanganani
3	Dumisane	Fikile	Kaleni
4	Guduza	Gabisile	Mabena
5	Jama	Hlengiwe	Mabomvini
6	Khulekani	Hleziphi	Mabuza
7	Lungelo	Jezile	Machunwini
8	Malusi	Khanyisile	Maqadini
9	Ndonsa	Khethiwe	Mathebula
10	Nkanyiso	Lindiwe	Mazibuko
11	Phakama	Nokulunga	Mhaule
12	Qhude	Nomvula	Ndebele
13	Sandile	Sizakele	Ndwandwe
14	Senzo	Sizamile	Nkosi
15	Sibusiso	Thandeka	Ntuli
16	Sipho	Velile	Shabangu
17	Thulani	Wendile	Sibanyoni
18	Xhegu	Xolile	Sibiya
19	Yengwayo	Zibuyile	Silongo
20	Zama	Zondlile	Thwala

Maps and Stocking Tables

On the following pages you'll find a selection of unkeyed maps and stocking tables designed to give you a quick starting point for your ruins and enclaves. Most of the maps are multi-branched, and you can get several uses out of the same map by simply excising certain portions or swapping the orientation. The PDF version of this book also has the upper and lower maps on separate layers, so you can turn off one or the other if you simply wish to print a single map.

Scale and orientation are for you to determine on each map. One square = 3 meters is a convenient indoor scale, while an outdoor map might be best at one square = 6 meters.

The feature and object tables need not be used randomly if you have your own ideas about what should go in a particular ruin. The nature of its inhabitants and its original purpose will give a number of possibilities, and you can also choose appropriate locations for the salvage you've rolled for a particular site.

Don't hesitate to scrawl on your maps and dirty them up with notes and drawn details. Making a beautiful and evocative map can be excellent fun, but these are meant for table use. Clarity, ease of reference, and simplicity in play are your goals, and more inspirational endeavors are best saved for other kinds of cartography.
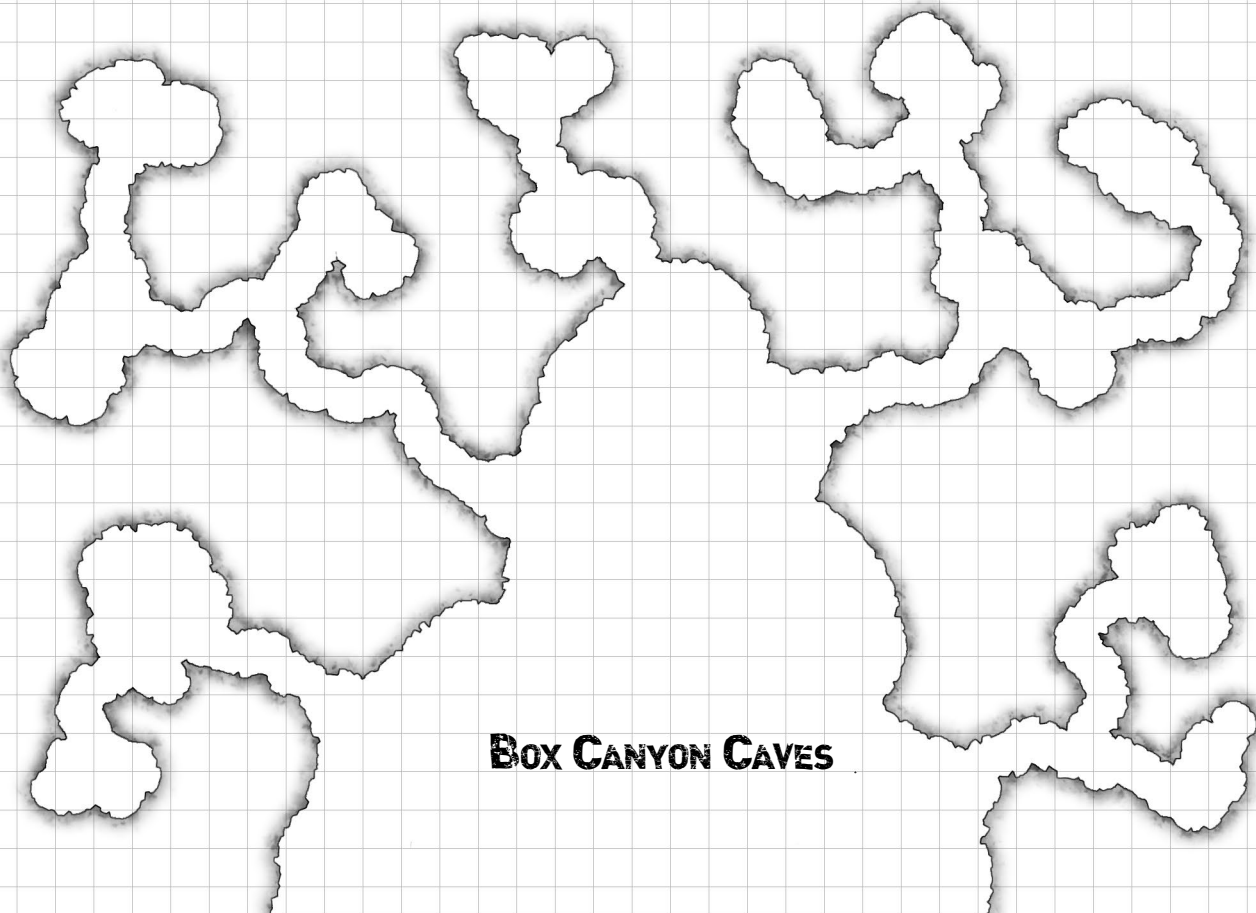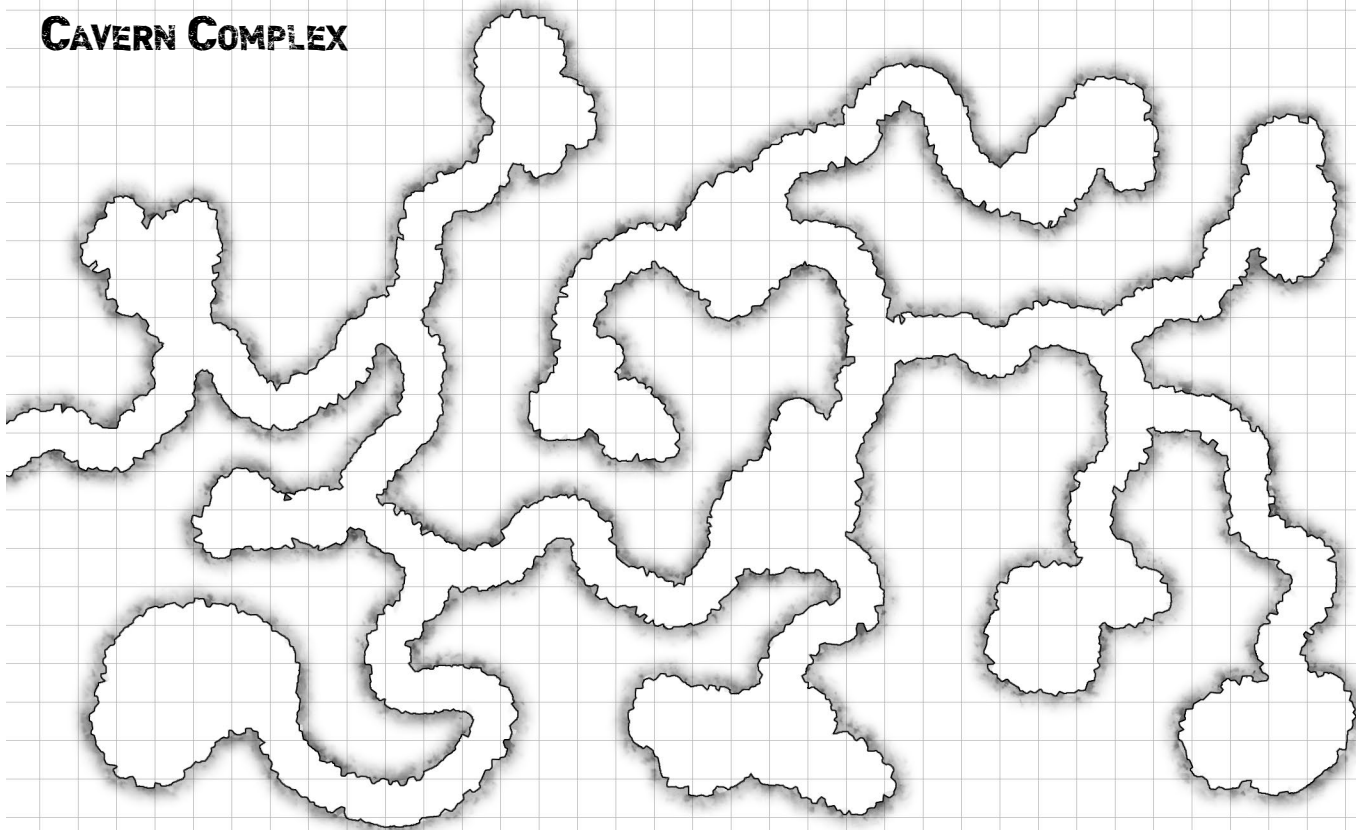

RUINED TOWN ENCLAVE
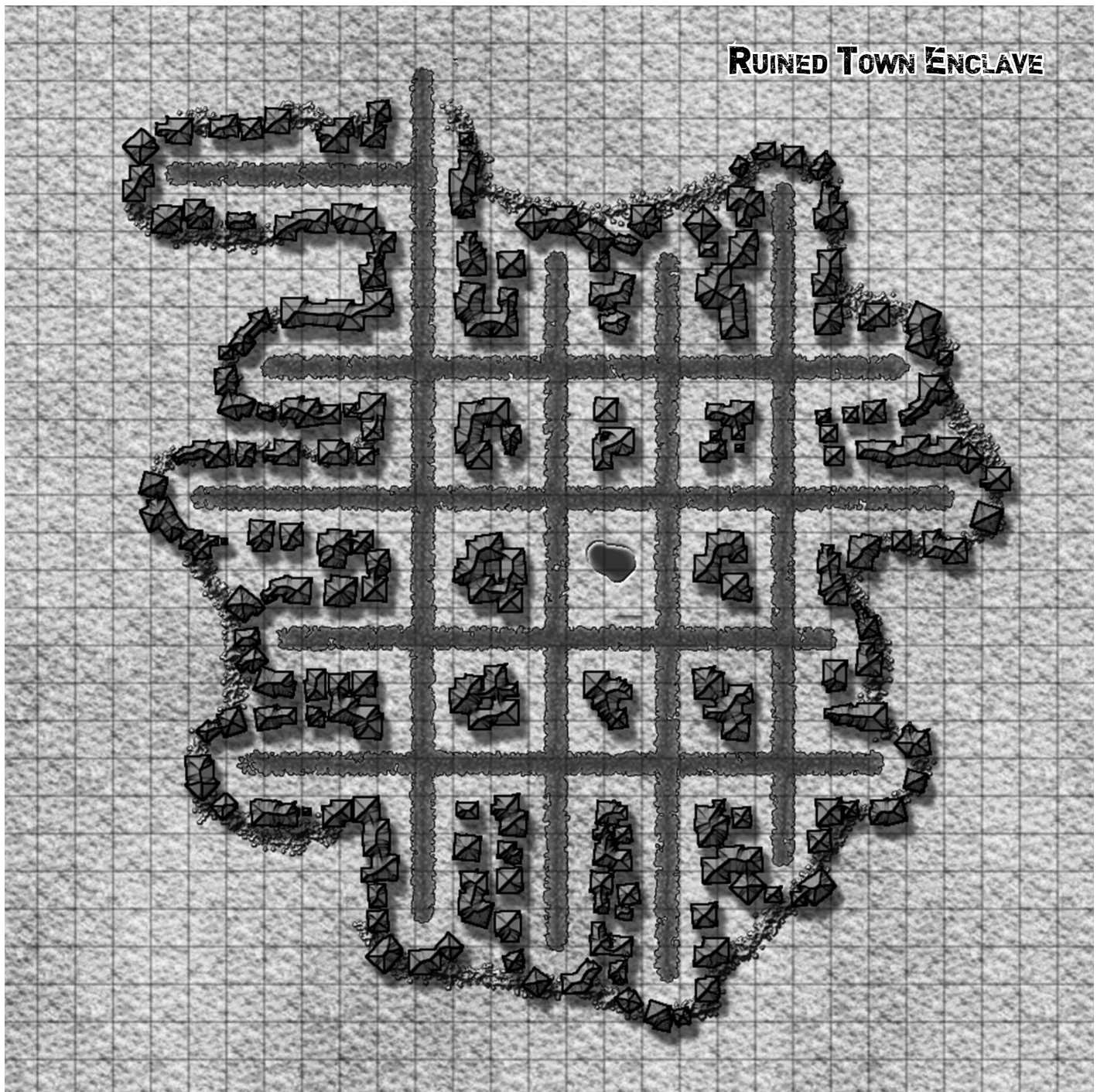
Village and Enclave Features and Contents

1D100	Features and Places in Such Sites	1D100	Objects Found in Such Sites
1-3	Scraggly wheatfield	1-3	Scrap-forged plowshare and harness
4-6	Pile of worthless scrap from a ruined building	4-6	Stack of wooden barrels
7-9	Tarped-over hut in a ruined building	7-9	Makeshift still
10-12	Makeshift house of ill-repute	10-12	Locked footlocker with personal possessions
13-15	Pit latrine	13-15	Salvaged plastic barrels
16-18	Open-air scrapsmith forge	16-18	Frayed plastic utility tarp stretched over a hole
18-21	Once-beautiful Old Terran temple or church	18-21	Makeshift bucket fashioned of watertight fabric
22-24	Retrofitted Old Terran housing	22-24	Crude pottery vessels
25-27	Crumbling amphitheater	25-27	Several transparent plastic bottles
28-30	Busy, muddy central plaza	28-30	Pile of carefully-gathered manure
31-33	Drinking house	31-33	Broken stone arrowheads and scrap feathers
34-36	Inn for traders and wanderers	34-36	Jar for fermenting vegetables
37-39	Jail for those awaiting execution, beating, or exile	37-39	Drawing of a loved one
40-42	"City Hall", such as it is	40-42	Skull of some particularly ferocious mutant beast
43-45	Pen full of sullen livestock	43-45	Plastic bottle of dubious local hooch
46-48	Barren field tainted by nanites	46-48	Bundled animal furs
49-51	Well of dubiously clean water	49-51	Farm tools made of plastic and hammered metal
52-54	Public bathhouse	52-54	10m of leather cordage
55-57	Tanner's workshop with reeking vats	55-57	Broken metal spearpoint
58-60	Carpenter's shop, working with toxic mutated wood	58-60	Local mosaic done with colorful credit chips
61-63	Mill powered by water, oxen, workers, or slaves	61-63	Crude musical instrument
64-66	Stronghouse for enclave's grain and valuables	64-66	Satchels of dried dyestuffs
67-69	Butcher working on game and livestock	67-69	Sewing needles and coarse thread
70-72	Brewer turning local plants into "drinkable" booze	70-72	Woven wall hanging
73-75	Watchtower at the edge of the settlement	73-75	Whipping post for troublemakers
76-78	Freshly-plowed field awaiting planting	76-78	Dress decorated with colored wire
79-81	Stable with oxen, horses, or other work animals	79-81	Fiber-optic cable to direct sunlight into a room
82-84	Wretched hut of slaves or social untouchables	82-84	Secret cache of food hidden from others
85-87	Plaguehouse for the sick, perhaps with healer	85-87	Backpack that has been torn by terrible claws
88-90	Leatherworker expert in using mutant hides	88-90	Metal pot with fire tripod
91-93	Gate in the palisade around the enclave	91-93	Plastic sack, possibly containing grain
94-96	Deep cistern for the dry season	94-96	Clay lamp filled with tallow
97-99	Heavily-fortified home of a local elite family	97-99	Reaping sickle
00	Functional steam power plant for electricity	00	Precious artifacts the locals can't even recognize

Cavern Complex

Box Canyon Caves

Cavern Features and Contents

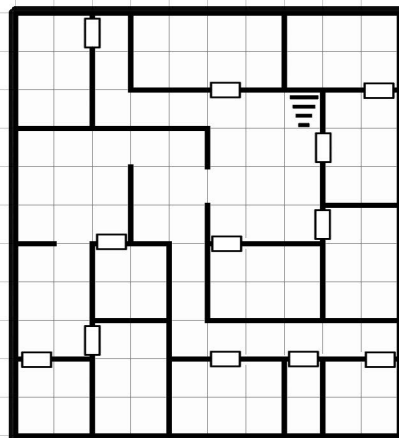| 1d100	Features and Places in Such Sites
1-3	Spring flowing out of a crack in the wall.
4-6	Crack fuming with poisonous vapors
7-9	Deep, icy pool of potable water
10-12	Vein of ancient compressed garbage
13-15	Deep crevasse with no visible bottom
16-18	Brittle stalactites ready to fall
18-21	Stream flowing through the main cavern
22-24	Narrow shaft of light from an inaccessible crack
25-27	Cairn of stones over people long-dead
28-30	Quarrymarks where soft stone was cut and dragged
31-33	Chamber ready to collapse at any provocation
34-36	Narrow stone bridge over a deep crevasse
37-39	Ledge along a deep pit
40-42	Invisible cloud of odorless unbreathable gas. Lamps will go out, but glowbugs and other tech-light won't.
43-45	Chamber with a carpet of slippery slime mold. Probably harmless, unless it's mutated.
46-48	Vent of invisible superheated geothermal steam
49-51	Dead man's last days scratched out on a wall
52-54	Numerous animal burrows too small to enter
55-57	Cave carpeted with what is probably bat guano
58-60	Cavern with soil, light from above, and plants
61-63	Slippery pebbles on a steep decline
64-66	Fetid pool of murky water at the bottom of the cave
67-69	Tunnel carved by something huge and iron-clawed
70-72	Forest of stalagmites that block vision
73-75	Pallid fungus growing wildly in a particular cave
76-78	Rocks weighting a scrap plate over a sinister hole
79-81	Cave with dazzling, mirror-reflective walls
82-84	Cavern waterfall plunging into the dark
85-87	Cave with walls that crawl with loathsome vermin
88-90	Veins of now-worthless "precious" metal
91-93	Decayed tourist information kiosk
94-96	Crude shrine to cthonic gods
97-99	Basement of surface structure slumped downward
00	An out-of-place room carved before the Scream.

| 1d100	Objects Found in Such Sites
1-3	Burnt-out remains of a campfire
4-6	Gnawed fragments of fungus
7-9	Scattered natural crystals
10-12	Empty oil flasks
13-15	Burnt sticks near wall drawings
16-18	Crumbling bones of those who sought refuge here
18-21	Fetid animal nest
22-24	Carrion dragged in by beasts
25-27	Objects swept in by a stream that enters the cave
28-30	Cache buried under heaped stones
31-33	Scrawled symbols suggesting dire peril
34-36	Rotted campsite with ancient survivalist's bones
37-39	Pre-Mandate corroded barrels of toxic waste
40-42	Melted tallow candle stubs
43-45	Pit trap of pebbles and dust over Old Terran cloth
46-48	A burnt-out torch
49-51	Gnawed bones of a small animal
52-54	Corpse festooned with newly-grown mushrooms
55-57	Bones near a clear, sweet, poisonous pool of water
58-60	Antique 21st-century plastic flashlight
61-63	Broken fragments of digging tools
64-66	Bones half-buried in a rockslide
67-69	Frag grenade tripwire trap
70-72	Decaying Mandate-era lightning system
73-75	Ruined remains of a ventilation blower
76-78	Broken rope tied to a rock pillar
79-81	Stained, partly-bisected filter mask
82-84	Scatterings of empty food wrappers
85-87	Tripwire attached to a harmless noisemaker
88-90	Burnt-out wireless camera
91-93	Plundered remains of a survival cache
94-96	Snare trap that brings down a shower of rocks
97-99	Rusted traces of an ancient minecart track
00	An injured stranger, left for dead by someone

Underground Bunker
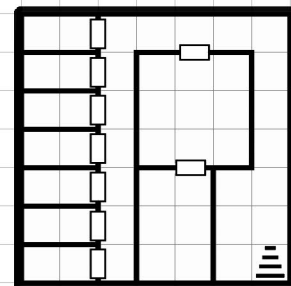
Harmony Security Station

Ground Floor

Second Floor

Basement

# Bunker and Harmony Station Features and Contents

1d100	Features and Places in Such Sites
1-3	Interrogation room with grim implements of pain
4-6	Cell stained with filth and old blood
7-9	Toilet or hygiene facilities
10-12	Meeting room with a large table
13-15	Armory with numerous sturdy lockers
16-18	Evidence room with countless small drawers
18-21	Shrine to a rebel cause or religion
22-24	Weight room with exercise equipment
25-27	Kitchen with semi-functional cooking gear
28-30	Cold storage which may or may not still be cold
31-33	Vault containing precious objects or evidence
34-36	Barracks room with rows of cots and footlockers
37-39	Private quarters for a commander or elite member
40-42	Library containing reference material or records
43-45	Security post with a desk and camera
46-48	Infirmary lined with beds and decaying medical gear
49-51	Assembly area with much open space
52-54	Greenhouse room with dead or overgrown plants
55-57	Morgue full of ancient bones
58-60	Small theater area to entertain and inspire rebels
61-63	Cryopod area with frozen rebels or dangerous perps
64-66	Office space scattered with desks and cabinets
67-69	Ventilation control room to keep the bunker aired
70-72	Furnace and cooling installation for the building
73-75	Nanite scrub chamber to remove unwanted dust
76-78	Memorial area for those fallen in the line of duty
79-81	Workshop for maintenance and repair
82-84	Group showers and bathing facilities
85-87	Lounge area for off-duty rebels or Harmony agents
88-90	Security control room with camera feeds
91-93	Black vault containing something horrible
94-96	Escape tunnel running to a distant blind
97-99	Computing control center full of servers
00	Hidden passage to another seemingly-irrelevant structure or ruin

1d100	Objects Found in Such Sites
1-3	Discarded Harmony badge or rebel insignia
4-6	Several lost teeth
7-9	Selection of polycomposite billyclubs
10-12	Sheaf of rebel or Harmony propaganda flyers
13-15	Frag grenade booby-trap in a closed container
16-18	Footlocker full of personal possessions
18-21	Locker with ancient uniform
22-24	Holos of loved ones
25-27	Thick book extolling the organization's virtues
28-30	Long-irrelevant interrogation records
31-33	Small musical instrument
34-36	Good pair of boots
37-39	Thick handwritten confession
40-42	Scouting report of local rebel sympathizers
43-45	Map to a suspected rebel cache
46-48	Decaying trophy necklace of ears
49-51	Loudspeaker
52-54	Box of handcuffs
55-57	Box of graffiti-worthy paint sticks
58-60	Trophy of some great institutional victory
61-63	Desk long since rifled of useful contents
64-66	Dead camera hanging from the ceiling
67-69	Laser-tripwire security alarm
70-72	Cell keycards
73-75	Sheaf of records too sensitive to be entrusted to potentially Maestro-monitored computer systems
76-78	Holomap of long-nuked community
79-81	Depleted weapon maintenance kit
82-84	Extremely sturdy safe with electronic lock
85-87	Bullet-perforated suit of ruined armor
88-90	Box of dangerously unstable stun grenades
91-93	Bones of someone left to die in a cell
94-96	Radioactive water fountain
97-99	Selection of masks or mirrored helmets
00	Rebel or Harmony agent still in cryostasis

Small Factory

Ground Floor

Second Floor

Office Building

Ground Floor

Second Floor

Third Floor
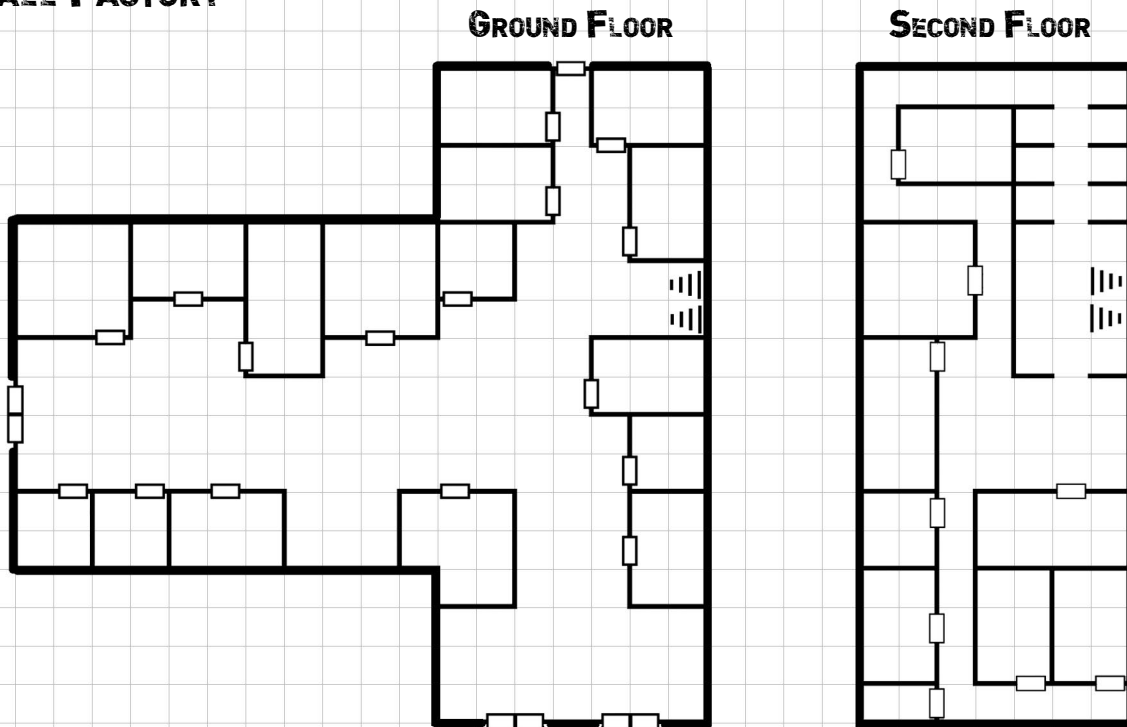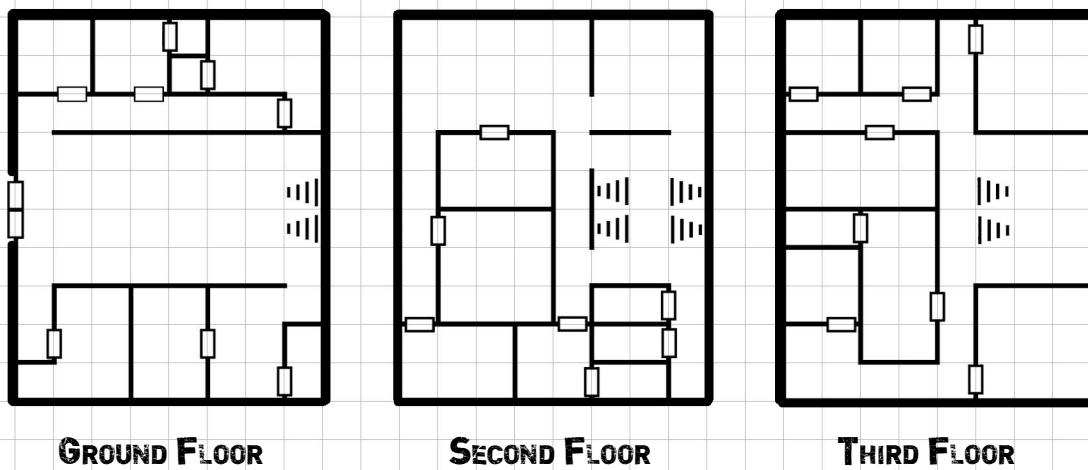
FACTORY AND OFFICE FEATURES AND CONTENTS

1D100	FEATURES AND PLACES IN SUCH SITES
1-3	Lavatory or hygiene facilities
4-6	Conveyor belt running down large room
7-9	Array of dangerous-looking robotic arms
10-12	Catwalks over churning chemical vats
13-15	HVAC control room for heating and ventilation
16-18	R&D laboratory full of partially-built prototypes
18-21	Open work area dotted with desks
22-24	Break room with motivational Mandate posters
25-27	Cauldron of congealed once-molten metal
28-30	Giant robotic hammer-arm for forging
31-33	Extrusion nozzles for shaping ceraplast
34-36	Banks of specialized computing terminals
37-39	Kitchen with makeshift cooking facilities
40-42	Employee cafeteria with long rows of tables
43-45	Meeting room with broken holoprojectior
46-48	Executive office with floor-to-ceiling windows
49-51	Grubby janitorial closet
52-54	Cubicle lined with personal trifles
55-57	Computing room with long-dead servers
58-60	A churning wall of still-operative machinery
61-63	Power plant that might even be non-explosive
64-66	Maintenance shop littered with broken gear
67-69	Auditorium with banked seating
70-72	Bunk room for overnight workers
73-75	Warehouse storage space for finished goods
76-78	Quality control line with wares in various states
79-81	Employee game room
82-84	Robot bay to contain currently-unused workbots
85-87	Loading bay for shipping cargo by gravtruck
88-90	Reception room for visitors
91-93	Executive washroom
94-96	Tastefully-decorated meeting room for VIPs
97-99	Filing room with "sensitive" documents
00	Vault containing illicit object or tech

1D100	OBJECTS FOUND IN SUCH SITES
1-3	Strange device that duplicates printed matter
4-6	Cat holo motivational poster
7-9	Secret cache of stimulant drugs
10-12	Memory chip with blackmail material on it
13-15	Hardcopies of the business's *real* account ledger
16-18	Prototype product
18-21	Award plaque granted by an industry group
22-24	Posters warning of "socially damaging behavior"
25-27	Battered snack vending machine
28-30	Strange tools of no clear purpose
31-33	Memory chip with meeting holopresentation on it
34-36	Cabinet full of secret personnel files
37-39	Key to the executive washroom
40-42	Large, baffling objet d'art for the reception
43-45	Group hologram of the company's workers
46-48	Wastebasket full of Old Terran trash
49-51	Bones of an employee dead at their desk
52-54	Portrait of the founder
55-57	Framed company sports team roster
58-60	Pile of raw materials for manufacturing
61-63	Mummified remains of someone's lunch
64-66	Keycard for a secured area
67-69	Lockers full of work uniforms
70-72	Empty suggestion box
73-75	Broken sonic scrubber mop
76-78	Keycard to a private gravcar
79-81	Petty cash box full of worthless credit chips
82-84	Holos of the latest advertising campaign
85-87	Camera trained on work area
88-90	Secret cache of pilfered goods
91-93	Ancient bottle of now-dangerous cleaning solution
94-96	Bones of someone hiding under a desk or in a closet
97-99	Handwritten warning about "Harmony spies"
00	Details of a secret affiliate site with valuable loot

Quick Religion Generation

The social engineers of the Mandate were at pains to tame the myriad faiths of Old Terra. By the end, the vast majority of the populace followed mild, innocuous faiths that placed obedience to duly-constituted government authority as the noblest virtue of humankind. Numerous rebel bands were composed of believers who sought a more authentic relationship with God, even if their theology bore no resemblance to anything from history.

In the wastelands of the New Earth, few go without some form of faith. It may be honored chiefly in one's choice of curses, but within the bounds of an enclave a shared religion is yet another tie of unity in the face of the hungry wastes. Those who abstain must often deal with mistrust and suspicion.

The following tables provide some random permutations which can make up a new religion for an enclave or organization. The cultural patchwork of the Mandate combined with the homogenizing effect of enclave society can leave two neighboring tribes following very different beliefs- sometimes to the point of bloody conflict.

1D12	Base Religion
1	Catholic Christianity
2	Theravada Buddhism
3	Mahayana Buddhism
4	Judaism
5	Islam
6	Two Lands Faith (Neo-Egyptian)
7	Taoism
8	Animism
9	Ancestor Worship
10	Protestant or Orthodox Christianity
11	Hinduism
12	A political ideology

1D10	Attitude toward Unbelievers
1	Benevolent acceptance and cooperation
2	Benign tolerance with no attempt to convert
3	Tolerance but with regular conversion attempts
4	Tolerant if they're outsiders, but not fellow tribals
5	Not openly hostile, but deeply mistrustful
6	Unbelievers cannot convert, but are tolerated
7	Unbelievers cannot convert and are scorned
8	Unbelievers live only at the faith's convenience
9	Demanding of conversion or death by the sword
10	Rabid hatred with no possibility of conversion

1D20	Emphatic Principles of the Faith
1	Only one gender or ethnicity can join the clergy
2	They specify a different or additional holy text
3	Human sacrifice is necessary
4	All things are permitted to the truly holy believer
5	The clergy are the true owners of all property
6	The governmental leader is the church's leader
7	The local government is the only legitimate one
8	Misfortune is a sign of hidden sin
9	Strangers must be aided if possible and prudent
10	Death for the faith or enclave means paradise
11	The leader of the faith never errs in faith matters
12	The clergy are the proper judges of crime and sin
13	All members are clergy and have equal authority
14	Some other enclave is rightfully their holy place
15	Slavery is an abomination before God
16	Slavery is a just expression of the faith's rule
17	Others of the same root faith are foul heretics
18	An earthly paradise awaits somewhere in the world
19	AIs are emissaries of God
20	Ruins are taboo places and must be guarded

1D12	Faith's Biggest Current Problem
1	The clergy are shamefully corrupt
2	Schismatic fighting is splitting the faith
3	The people are losing faith from harsh misfortunes
4	Someone is killing the clergy
5	The secular leaders are trying to take control
6	Lacking necessities for a vital religious ritual
7	The center of the faith was overrun by evil
8	The faith is hated by neighboring enclaves
9	The faith's leader is young or incompetent
10	Leadership is deadlocked between clergy factions
11	A powerful cleric has gone renegade as a warlord
12	The faith is self-destructing with mad principles

Quick Encounter Tables

Crossing the wastelands is dangerous in the best of times, and it's common for wanderers to run into something unpleasant. A GM can always make his or her own judgment over what might be likely to crop up in a particular region of the map, but the following tables provide some quick possibilities. The upper eight results on each are groups of NPCs or mutants, while the bottom four are possible events appropriate to the region; if you specifically want one or the other, you can just roll 1d8 or 1d4 accordingly.

1d12	GENERAL WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS
1	1d8 *Blinder Birds* seeking prey: AC 6, Move 30' Fly, HD 1-1, Atk: +1/1d4 claw, Skill +2, Save 15+, Morale 7
2	2d4 *Wolfman hunters* on the prowl: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
3	1 *Ghoul Bear* looking for carrion: AC 5, Move 20', HD 4, Atk: Two +6/1d8 claws, Skill +2, Save 13+, Morale 9
4	2d4 *Gorehounds* in a pack: AC 7, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +3/1d6 Bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8. The alpha has 3 HD.
5	1 hungry *Gut Weasel*, AC 5, Move 40', HD 3, Atk: Two +6/1d6 claws, Skill +1, Save 14+, Morale 9
6	1d8 *Tribals* from the nearest enclave: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
7	2d4 *Raiders* seeking victims: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
8	1d4 *Redhorns* among 1d8 cattle: AC 6, Move 30', HD 3, Atk: All at +3- 1d6/1d6/1d6/1d8, Skill +1, Save 14+, Morale 8
9	Patch of radioactivity. If the PCs don't possess a geiger counter, each must make a Radiation save.
10	Ancient Mandate stun mine on the trail to discourage illicit travel between zones. Explodes under one PC as stun grenade.
11	Vicious mutant plant life strikes 1d4 PCs; +5 to hit, 1d6 damage. The plants can't move and die easily under blades.
12	An abandoned structure might have something interesting in it- one roll on the Random Loot rewards table.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

1d12	RADIOACTIVE BADLANDS AND DEEP WASTES
1	2d4 demented *Cult Warriors*: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 Spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
2	1 vicious *Flaysnake* lying in wait: AC 7, Move 20, HD 3, Atk +4/1d6 bite+poison, Skill +2, Save 14+. Poison is Toxicity 8, Virulence 3, Interval 2 rounds and does 1d6 Constitution point damage per failed save.
3	1 *Glow Turtle* gnaws on the dry foliage: AC 2, Move 25', HD 5, Atk: +6/1d10 bite, Skill +1, Save 13+, Morale 8
4	1 *Grinder Worm* erupts: AC 6, Move 20' Burrow 1'/round, HD 5, Atk: +7/1d12 Bite, Skill +2, Save 13+, Morale 10
5	1 *Manscorpion* is hunting: AC 5, Move 20' Climb 20', HD 3, Atk: All at +5- 1d6/1d6/1d6+poison, Skill +3, Save 13+, Morale 9, poison is Toxicity of 10, Interval of 1 round, and Virulence of 1. For each failed save the victim loses 1d10 points of Dexterity. At Dexterity 0, they are immobile and helpless. Lost points return at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.
6	1 berserk *Warbot* roams endlessly: AC 0, Move 30' Flight 30', 60 HP, Atk: +12 each for 1d8+4 monoblade and 1d10+2 laser rifle, Skill +4, Save 10+, Morale 10. It must operate on broadcast power from somewhere nearby.
7	2d4 savage *Skewmen* seek prey: AC 8, Move 15', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d4 club, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
8	1d6+2 *Wanderers* with PC classes of level 1d4+1. They've probably come to scavenge a nearby ruin.
9	Severe hot zone. If the PCs don't possess a geiger counter, each must make two Radiation saves.
10	Highshine nanites have infected all normal and dirty rations carried, leaving them inedible and/or transformed into an unholy sort of life influenced by their original organism. Old Terran rations are immune.
11	Infectious nanite zone: all PCs must save versus Physical Effect or Luck or else be sickened with Slow Blood: Toxicity 10, Interval of one week, Virulence 4. While infected, suffer the Torpid negative effect. Each failed save adds another condition: Sluggish, Incapacitated, and then Dead.
12	A relic undisturbed by looters; roll on the Random Loot reward table at +10.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

1d12	LAKE, OCEAN, OR COASTAL ENCOUNTERS
1	3d6 *Fishmen* guard their domain: AC 9, Move 20' Swim 30', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 7
2	3d6 aquatic *Heritor Bugs* swarm up the side: AC 7, Move 15', 1 HP, Atk: +1/1d4 bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
3	1d6 *Traders* man a small ship: AC 5, Move 20', HD 3, Atk: +3/1d8 Revolver, Skill +2, Save 14+, Morale 9
4	1d4 aquatic *Security Bots* hunt intruders: AC 4, Move 30' Swim, 12 HP, Atk: +4/1d10+2 Laser Rifle, Skill +1, Save 14+, Morale 12. They must be recharging themselves from some nearby power source.
5	2d4 *Whiskered Devils* seek prey: AC 3, Move 15' Swim 30', HD 2, Atk: +3/1d8 claw, Skill +2, Save 14+, Morale 8
6	2d8 *Tribals* from the nearest enclave are sailing: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
7	4d8 *Raiders* have turned pirate: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
8	1d6+2 *Wanderers* with PC classes of level 1d4+1, exploring the sea or seeking a lost ruin.
9	A vicious squall blows up. If the PCs are aboard a ship, move 1d3 hexes in a random direction. If onto land, the ship suffers 2d20 HP of damage per hex it can't travel. Otherwise, the captain makes a Luck save or the ship takes 2d20 HP damage.
10	Mutant salt mites have gotten into the canteens or water casks. If not protected by Old Terran packaging or flasks, all fresh water is rendered undrinkable.
11	A sunken building scrapes a seagoing party's hull. The ship takes 2d20 damage.
12	Mutant seaweed traps the ship for 1d6 days. On land, radioactive sea wrack forces a Radiation saving throw for the party.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

1d12	NECROPOLIS OR HEAVILY URBANIZED AREAS
1	1d2 *Manscorpions* lair here: AC 5, Move 20' Climb 20', HD 3, Atk: All at +5- 1d6/1d6/1d6+poison, Skill +3, Save 13+, Morale 9, poison is Toxicity of 10, Interval of 1 round, and Virulence of 1. For each failed save the victim loses 1d10 points of Dexterity. At Dexterity 0, they are immobile and helpless. Lost points return at the rate of 1d4 per day of rest.
2	2d8 *Raiders* hide in a ruined building: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
3	1d6 *Traders* seek to reach their hidden stash: AC 5, Move 20', HD 3, Atk: +3/1d8 Revolver, Skill +2, Save 14+, Morale 9
4	1 ancient *Security Bot* vainly defends a long-ruined building: AC 4, Move 20', 12 HP, Atk: +4/1d10+2 Laser Rifle, Skill +1, Save 14+, Morale 12. A live power source probably exists in the building.
5	3d6 *Heritor Bugs* erupt from disturbed rubble: AC 7, Move 15', 1 HP, Atk: +1/1d4 bite, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 10
6	1d8 *Tribals* are picking over the debris: AC 6, Move 20', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d6 spear, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
7	2d4 *Skewmen* scout for their village: AC 8, Move 15', HD 1, Atk: +1/1d4 club, Skill +1, Save 15+, Morale 8
8	1d6+2 *Wanderers* with PC classes of level 1d4+1 are plundering this wreckage.
9	A ruin collapses under the PCs. Each character must make a Luck save or fall 6 meters.
10	Patch of radioactivity. If the PCs don't possess a geiger counter, each must make a Radiation save.
11	Sudden electrical discharge from ancient cabling. The PC at the front must make a Luck save or take 1d10 damage.
12	Stumbled on a hidden lair. Roll 1d8 on this table and double the number of creatures present.
	Intelligent foes are equipped with hide armor and spears unless otherwise indicated.

Scrounger

LVL	HD	XP	LVL	HD	XP
1	1d6	0	6	6d6	32,000
2	2d6	2,000	7	7d6	64,000
3	3d6	4,000	8	8d6	128,000
4	4d6	8,000	9	9d6	250,000
5	5d6	16,000	10	9d6	370,000

Scrounger Ability

Flawless Skill

You may use this ability once per game day before rolling a skill check for a skill on the Scrounger class list. You will automatically succeed at the check unless you roll a natural 2 on the dice, given that the GM agrees that success was ever possible

Mutations and Stigmata

Str

Dex

Con

Int

Wis

Cha

System Strain

Max   Current

HP

Name

Level | **XP**

Background

Training

Home

Equipment

	Ready	Enc

Hunger | **Thirst** | **Toxins**

Skill	Lvl	Skill	Lvl
		Perception	
Artist		Persuade	
Athletics		Profession/	
Bureaucracy		Religion	
Business		Science	
Combat/Energy		Security	
Combat/Gunnery		Stealth	
Combat/Prim.		Steward	
Combat/Proj.		Survival	
Combat/Unarmed		Tactics	
Computer		Tech/Astro	
Culture/Criminal		Tech/Maltech	
Culture/Literacy		Tech/Medical	
Culture/Traveller		Tech/Postech	
Culture/		Tech/Pretech	
Culture/		Vehicle/Air	
Exosuit		Vehicle/Grav	
Gambling		Vehicle/Land	
History		Vehicle/Space	
Instructor		Vehicle/Sea	
Language			
Leadership			
Navigation		**Unspent Points**	

Class skills cost new level+1 to raise, others cost new level+2

Weapon	+Hit	Dmg	Range	Ammo

Armor | **AC**

SLAYER

LVL	AB	PHYS	MENT	EVADE	TECH	LUCK
1-3	+2	12	15	13	16	14
4-6	+4	10	13	11	14	12
7-9	+6	8	11	9	12	10
10-12	+8	6	9	7	10	8
13-15	+10	6	8	6	9	7
16-18	+12	5	7	6	8	6

LVL	HD	XP	LVL	HD	XP
1	1d6	0	6	6d6	32,000
2	2d6	2,000	7	7d6	64,000
3	3d6	4,000	8	8d6	128,000
4	4d6	8,000	9	9d6	250,000
5	5d6	16,000	10	9d6	370,000

SLAYER ABILITY

RED HAND

Once per fight, you may use this skill before rolling your attack. You will hit your target on anything but a natural 1 on the hit roll. This ability can only be used when you are trying to kill someone, and will not work with nonlethal attacks or mere trick shooting.

MUTATIONS AND STIGMATA

NAME

LEVEL — XP

BACKGROUND

TRAINING

HOME

STR		INT	
DEX		WIS	
CON		CHA	

SYSTEM STRAIN   Max   CURRENT

HP

EQUIPMENT

	READY	ENC

HUNGER   THIRST   TOXINS

SKILL	LVL	SKILL	LVL
ARTIST		PERCEPTION	
ATHLETICS		PERSUADE	
BUREAUCRACY		PROFESSION/	
BUSINESS		RELIGION	
COMBAT/ENERGY		SCIENCE	
COMBAT/GUNNERY		SECURITY	
COMBAT/PRIM.		STEALTH	
COMBAT/PROJ.		STEWARD	
COMBAT/UNARMED		SURVIVAL	
COMPUTER		TACTICS	
CULTURE/CRIMINAL		TECH/ASTRO	
CULTURE/LITERACY		TECH/MALTECH	
CULTURE/TRAVELLER		TECH/MEDICAL	
CULTURE/		TECH/POSTECH	
CULTURE/		TECH/PRETECH	
EXOSUIT		VEHICLE/AIR	
GAMBLING		VEHICLE/GRAV	
HISTORY		VEHICLE/LAND	
INSTRUCTOR		VEHICLE/SPACE	
LANGUAGE		VEHICLE/SEA	
LEADERSHIP			
NAVIGATION		UNSPENT POINTS	

CLASS SKILLS COST NEW LEVEL+1 TO RAISE, OTHERS COST NEW LEVEL+2

WEAPON

WEAPON	+HIT	DMG	RANGE	AMMO

ARMOR

AC

Speaker

Lvl	AB	Phys	Ment	Evade	Tech	Luck
1-3	+1	16	12	14	15	13
4-6	+3	14	10	12	13	11
7-9	+5	12	8	10	11	9
10-12	+7	10	6	8	9	7
13-15	+9	9	6	7	8	6
16-18	+11	8	5	6	7	6

Lvl	HD	XP	Lvl	HD	XP
1	1d6	0	6	6d6	32,000
2	2d6	2,000	7	7d6	64,000
3	3d6	4,000	8	8d6	128,000
4	4d6	8,000	9	9d6	250,000
5	5d6	16,000	10	9d6	370,000

Speaker Ability

Speaker's Voice

Once per game day, you can automatically convince a single intelligent NPC to feel friendly or intimidated, assuming that result is in any way plausible under the circumstances. Swayed subjects will cooperate in ways that seem reasonable to them. It is not necessary to share a language with the target, though complex requests may require it. This suasion lasts until circumstances make a different attitude appropriate. Alternately, you may use this ability once per game day to reroll a failed skill check related to cultural awareness or personal relations.

Mutations and Stigmata

Name

Level [ ] **XP** [ ]

Background

Training

Home

Str [ ] [ ]

Dex [ ] [ ]

Con [ ] [ ]

Int [ ] [ ]

Wis [ ] [ ]

Cha [ ] [ ]

System Strain Max | Current

HP

Equipment	Ready	Enc

Hunger		Thirst		Toxins	

Skill	Lvl	Skill	Lvl
Artist		Perception	
Athletics		Persuade	
Bureaucracy		Profession/	
Business		Religion	
Combat/Energy		Science	
Combat/Gunnery		Security	
Combat/Prim.		Stealth	
Combat/Proj.		Steward	
Combat/Unarmed		Survival	
Computer		Tactics	
Culture/Criminal		Tech/Astro	
Culture/Literacy		Tech/Maltech	
Culture/Traveller		Tech/Medical	
Culture/		Tech/Postech	
Culture/		Tech/Pretech	
Exosuit		Vehicle/Air	
Gambling		Vehicle/Grav	
History		Vehicle/Land	
Instructor		Vehicle/Space	
Language		Vehicle/Sea	
Leadership			
Navigation			

Unspent Points

Class skills cost new level+1 to raise, others cost new level+2

Weapon	+Hit	Dmg	Range	Ammo

AC

Armor

Survivor

		XP	
Name			
Level			
Background			
Training			
Home			

Lvl	AB	Phys	Ment	Evade	Tech	Luck
1-3	+1	12	12	14	14	13
4-6	+3	10	10	12	12	11
7-9	+4	8	8	10	10	9
10-12	+6	6	6	8	8	7
13-15	+8	6	6	7	7	6
16-18	+10	5	5	6	6	6

Lvl	HD	XP	Lvl	HD	XP
1	1d6+2	0	6	6d6+12	32,000
2	2d6+4	2,000	7	7d6+14	64,000
3	3d6+6	4,000	8	8d6+16	128,000
4	4d6+8	8,000	9	9d6+18	250,000
5	5d6+10	16,000	10	9d6+20	370,000

Survivor Ability

Hard to Kill

The first time you are reduced to zero hit points in a day, you immediately regain 1 hit point for each experience level you possess. Optionally, you may allow yourself to fall unconscious from the injury, in which case you will appear dead but will awaken ten minutes later with 1 hit point. This ability does not work against injuries that a human could not possibly survive.

Mutations and Stigmata

Str		Int	
Dex		**Wis**	
Con		**Cha**	

System Strain Max Current

HP

Hunger **Thirst** **Toxins**

Skill	Lvl	Skill	Lvl
Artist		Perception	
Athletics		Persuade	
Bureaucracy		Profession/	
Business		Religion	
Combat/Energy		Science	
Combat/Gunnery		Security	
Combat/Prim.		Stealth	
Combat/Proj.		Steward	
Combat/Unarmed		Survival	
Computer		Tactics	
Culture/Criminal		Tech/Astro	
Culture/Literacy		Tech/Maltech	
Culture/Traveller		Tech/Medical	
Culture/		Tech/Postech	
Culture/		Tech/Pretech	
Exosuit		Vehicle/Air	
Gambling		Vehicle/Grav	
History		Vehicle/Land	
Instructor		Vehicle/Space	
Language		Vehicle/Sea	
Leadership			
Navigation		**Unspent Points**	

Class skills cost new level+1 to raise, others cost new level+2

Equipment Ready Enc

Weapon	+Hit	Dmg	Range	Ammo

AC

Armor

Population	
Government	
Origin	
Tags	**TL**

	Tier	Prog.	Ruin Sources
Food			
Influence			
Morale			
Security			
Tech			
Total Progress		**Total Ruin**	

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Things

Complications

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The world is an open grave

Green glass plains and trinitite pearls necklace the throats of torn cities. Prismatic jungles heave with nanite-infested life, thick with twisted bodies and fever-hot madness. The ancient towers of Old Terra are cast down into the mire and the stars above no longer send their ships of steel and burning light.

Humanity has been reduced to struggling enclaves and fugitive tribes. Left to scavenge the bones of their former glory, mankind yet fights the New Earth with steel, salvage, and a burning defiance. If the motherworld means to end her children, she's going to need a bigger apocalypse.

Other Dust is a stand-alone, fully-compatible companion game to the Stars Without Number sci-fi RPG. Within its pages, savage mutants, crazed psychic overlords, runaway war machines and the relentless decay of a shattered world all conspire to snuff the last few embers of humanity. Yet heroes remain among the scattered survivors, and their courage and will to defy the coming night might yet save their people from a waiting doom. Use the tools this book provides to rebuild societies, reforge their ancient bonds, and bring a new dawn to a thousand points of night!