

Palladium Books® Presents: Rifts® Dimension Book 10

Hades

Pits of Hell™



ZELEZNIK
2006

by Carl Gleba

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Violence, War, Magic & the Supernatural

The *fictional* worlds of **Rifts®**, **Phase World®**, the **Three Galaxies**, the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** and other settings are violent, deadly and filled with aliens, war and supernatural monsters. Other-dimensional beings often referred to as “demons,” torment, stalk and prey on humans. Hell, demons, alien life forms, monsters, vampires, ghosts, ancient gods and demigods, as well as magic, insanity, psychic powers and combat are all elements in this book. *All of it is fiction.*

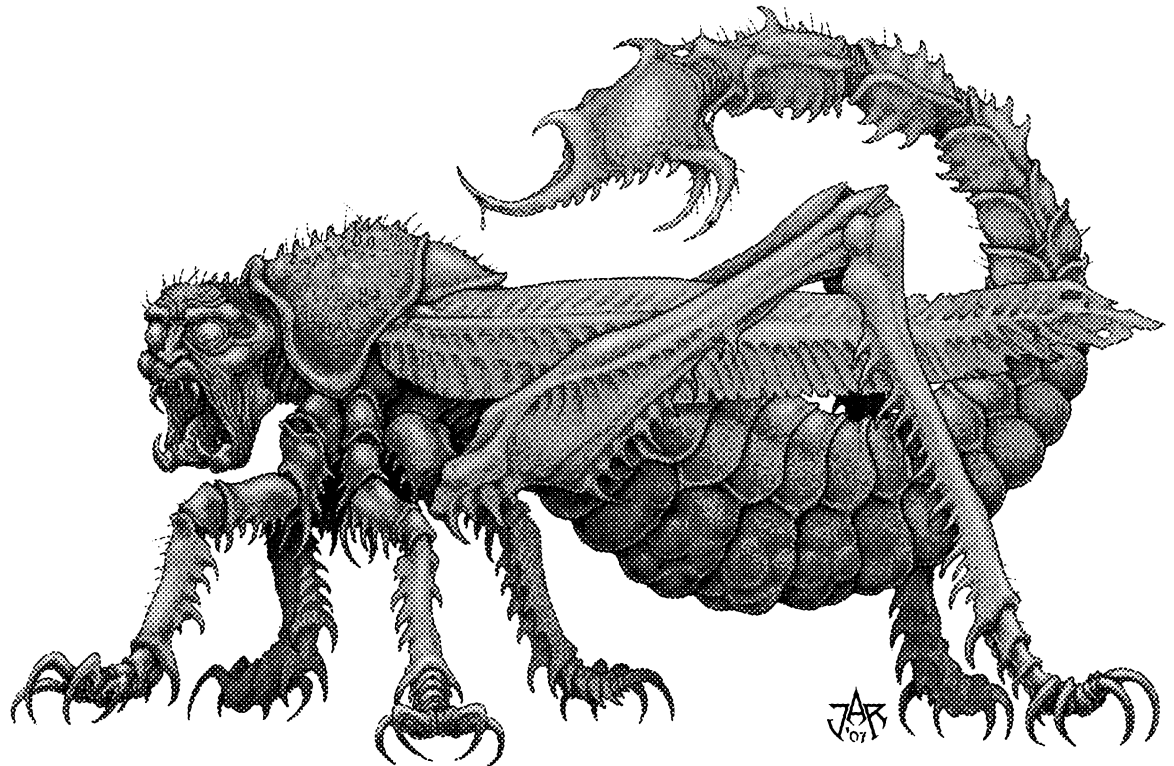
HOWEVER, the **Minion War™** series goes beyond the norm and actually depicts the planes of two hellish dimensions, and the terrible monsters that inhabit them and plague human beings. These monstrous beings are despicable and cruel. They have little regard for life, steal souls, engage in depravity, war, and disgusting acts, and are vile in the extreme.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my Dad, Joseph Gleba, a true warrior of light. My dad faced his own demons not for his health, not for his own sake, but for that of his family. He has shown that you never have to walk a path alone so long as you have family to walk it with you.

Special thanks to Pat Dodge, Justin Stringer and William Maxwell for facing the hordes of demons in Hades. Just wait till we get to Dyval, guys! I'd also like to thank Todd Yoho for his input, suggestions and acting as a springboard for ideas.

– Carl Joseph Gleba, 2006

The cover, by *John Zeleznik*, depicts a *Baal-Rog* demon riding a Netherbeast through the pits of Hell. He is about to engage a Deevil riding his own monster, as the matching cover to Dyval will reveal.

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Hades, Pits of Hell™

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Special Thanks to *Carl Gleba* for coming up with the idea for the Minion War and the Hell book series (wait till you see what else is coming), to *Jeff Russell* who did a truly amazing job on depicting the demon hordes, and especially Alex, Wayne, and Julius who gave this book their heart and soul, and all the rest.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2007*

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A few words from the author

Hades. The very name sends shivers down the spine. For as long as I've played Palladium Fantasy® and Rifts®, **Hades** has always been there in the background. A hell-spawned dimension not only dominated by demons, but in which the very land seems demonic and unnatural. What is this land like, and how does one survive where danger is around every corner? What are the people like, and are they as evil as the demons that rule the land? How do demons interact, and what would a demonic society be like? These questions and others have always intrigued me, and I decided to set out and answer them.

My player group's first venture into **Hades** was the result of a dimensional anomaly. The adventure lasted for several game sessions. Basically, the group needed to survive and escape. They had a blast, and once they'd escape, the players wanted to *go back!* Yeah, they're a little crazy, but great guys nonetheless.

It was fun for me, as a Game Master, not only having succeeded at presenting a challenge to some very experienced role-players (as well as higher level characters), but we had a great time and it made for some great role-playing and memorable experiences. This prompted me to further flesh out what I had already set up. I completely mapped out the dimension and prepared for a second jaunt into the realm of demons. The group did eventually return a second time after all; they had to retrieve some items they left after escaping the first time! Well, the second time they ended up having to depart early, not achieving their goal, and last I recall a third trip was planned. All in all, some very good times, and it was all attributed to a dimension full of demons with environmental challenges never encountered before.

A word of caution. Demons are challenging encounters to begin with, and then they're usually only encountered in small numbers, but in **Hades** they are everywhere!

Game Masters and players alike should be warned that the dimension Hades is not for the meek or faint of heart. It is a horrible place where despair, suffering, starvation, and torture are commonplace. This is obvious in numerous places. With that being said, it should come as no surprise that adventures that take place in Hades will, at the very least, be a challenge. I would suggest to any G.M. that Hades should only be made a setting for experienced role-players. I don't think Hades would go over too well with a bunch of newbies. Experienced players, on the other hand, should have a blast, even if their characters die in terrible ways. Characters should be level six, minimum, but I would suggest eighth level or higher. I intend for Hades to be epic in scope and campaigns that involve Hades should do so on a "cosmic" level.

The challenges of Hades are many. This setting is like no other. The very environment is a hostile one. Even if there were no demons, it would still be a challenge to survive from one day

to the next. Now add demons to the mix; vile beings who like to torment, bully, enslave and kill. There are simple death traps, to fire pits, forests of thorns, torture chambers, work camps, hell-spawned prisons, Gargoyle lairs, demonic kingdoms, and thronging demon hordes. Simply surviving day to day should be a challenge. And that doesn't even take into account the battle for one's sanity or very soul. So Game Masters, let your imagination run loose and use cunning and guile to torment and terrify the Player Characters. And players, be warned, and play smart. Hades can be a unique and fun experience or the quick, nasty death of your favorite character.

Of course, no matter how desperate and overwhelmed the Player Characters may become, they should have some type of fighting chance to escape.

So why adventure in Hades? I say why not! Perhaps the characters are on a quest that leads them to Hades. Do they cross the precipice of that Rift or do they turn back, calling the quest a fool's errand? Could revenge take the characters to Hades? Perhaps the characters have been bested constantly by a foe, and of all places he is vulnerable, it is in his home dimension of Hades. There could be dozens of reasons to travel to Hades, so let loose your imagination and prepare for the ride of a lifetime. Hades awaits!

- Carl J. Gleba, 2007

The first salvo

Alex remembered back to a time not too long ago. Orphaned at an early age, the young mage grew up in the streets of Tolkeen. The city he loved had been prosperous and grand, and as a youth he was ready to conquer the world. It hadn't dawned on him till now how profound the words of his patron deity were at the time of his *linking* many years ago. Alex had strived to find a powerful being with which he could form a link to the supernatural. As a *Shifter*, it was one of his unique gifts. The thought of linking to a *demon* was repulsive, so after much research he managed to find a deity of magic called *Thoth*. The deity was far from a virtuous god, but his curiosity in all things and his wealth of magic knowledge appealed to the young Shifter. Alex had to unravel the mystery of his Atlantean heritage to prove his worth to the god, but in the end, just before the link was complete, Thoth had posed this question to him.

"Alex, should I need you to be elsewhere and your home falls under siege, will you comply with my wishes or defy them to defend your home?"

At the time, Alex thought it another riddle, a test even, but after much thought he replied to Thoth. "Only if it were to serve the greater good, my liege."

The answer seemed to be correct, for not long after did Alex receive his boon, and his service to Thoth began.

Now he looked upon the ruins of the beautiful city that was once his home and knew what the god had meant. He had returned from Hades only a week after the *Coalition's final siege*. The King's Grand Tower had been toppled, the city was still burning, and the ley lines surrounding it churned like an angry sea. He was home, and now he had to make his way to the heart of this conflagration to report to his god.

Coalition patrols were everywhere. By the looks of things, the last days had been spent getting Tolkeen's people to safety. Guilt was surging through Alex as he wondered if he could have made a difference.

With the aid of magic, the Shifter was able to slip into the city unseen and find the remains of the small temple where he had made contact with his deity many times before. It was odd, but for the first time he realized this one location was really a doorway to a small pocket dimension. In a city with thousands of Shifters, Alex included, none had realized this fact. It was only among the ruins that it became obvious.

As if he were expected, a man wearing simple brown robes waited for him in a void of blackness within the small, pocket dimension. It was *Thoth*.

"There was nothing you could have done, Alex. The city was lost long ago, and if you had stayed, you too would have perished."

"I know," replied Alex. "I just wish I could have been here with my friends to fight by their side, perhaps I could have saved a few more lives."

The man in the brown robes walked to stand next to the young mage. Images of the fighting in Tolkeen played, like on some kind of projector, against the blackness. Alex could see his friends fighting side by side. They helped many people get to safety while others held off the Coalition soldiers.

"Your friends have survived. Rest assured they are safe, and out of harm's way, at least for the moment. Now my young friend, tell me what you have learned from your trip to Hades."

The images of the fighting faded and Alex turned towards the robed figure to tell him of what he had learned.

"As you feared, the Demon Lords of Hades have attacked Dyval. Their incursion has just begun, but from what I could see, they have many factories producing weapons and vast numbers of war machines. Millions of demon troops marched in formation towards **Demon's Gate**. It's not like what I've seen before, Master. This time there are so many ground soldiers they stretch to the horizon, and flocks of Gargoyles fill the skies as if they were clouds. Demon's Gate has become a *choke point*, and it's as if the Demon Lords can't move their troops through it fast enough."

The young mage stopped to catch his breath while Thoth stood pondering the dire news.

"It's only a matter of time, young Alex, before they start to come here to Earth. Once the Demon Lords realize that they can use the many ley line nexus points to reach thousands of worlds, they will launch an attack that could threaten all life on this planet. Earth will be drawn into the **Minion Wars** and all its people will suffer for it."

"If the demons of Hades come . . ." exclaimed Alex with sudden realization.

"So will the Deevils," said Thoth, finishing the Shifter's words.

Suddenly Alex was beginning to see the bigger picture. He had been so focused on his mission and distracted by the Siege on Tolkeen, he had not considered what it might all mean to him and his own homeworld.

"What more can I do?" the Shifter asked his master.

"Tell me more of what you have learned while in Hades. Tell me everything. Even little things you might otherwise think were unimportant."

"I have made contact with a small group of rebels," Alex recalled. "They called themselves the **Order of Light**. They were the ones who provided me with most of the information I gathered, outside of my own observations. It seems that the demons started this buildup many years ago, but no one realized their intention was to invade Dyval."

"Not quite no one, but continue," said Thoth.

"Their first attack against Dyval was to unleash thousands of Worms of Taut into the Deevils' home dimension. The demons called this the *Taut Offensive*. It was supposed to soften up the Deevils. This was followed by thousands of incidents upon countless worlds where demons attacked their Devil rivals or interfered in their affairs, turning events against them. I'm told thousands upon thousands of Deevils were caught unawares and were killed. Before the Deevils realized that what was happening was not an isolated incident, the Lords of Hades sent their forces to invade Dyval. Again, I'm told the level of violence is unbelievable and that the blood of Deevils and demons soaks the ground of Dyval."

"Even as we speak, demon hordes continue to pour into Dyval. For now, they are attacking via a magical divide through a canyon in a Dimension the demons call the Palladium World."

"The Great Rift, of course. I should have seen that," Thoth interrupted, half muttering to himself as much as commenting on Alex's report.

Alex paused giving his patron time to absorb the information. The deity motioned Alex toward him as they began to walk. "Please, continue your report. Have the demons have taken control of the Great Rift . . . the canyon?" asked Thoth.

"Yes, they have. It's one of the fronts they have won in what you call the Minion War."

Thoth looked perplexed, and this worried Alex all the more.

"Master, there must be something else I can do. We can't let this war reach Earth." Alex motioned to the destruction around them. "I can't let that happen to my planet. Tell me, what else can I do?"

Thoth patted the young man on his shoulder and said, "First, you must tell me all else you saw and heard while in Hades. When we are done, you must go to Dyval, and see what response the Deevils have planned for the demons. Learn as much as you can. We must figure out a way to stop this war before the whole Megaverse is in flames."

"I fear it is already too late, my Lord," Alex said, looking his master directly in the eyes.

"So do I, young Alex . . . so do I."



Hades, home of demons

Few dimensions throughout the Megaverse can inspire fear by name alone. *The dimension of Hades* is one such place, as it is home to hordes of demons and supernatural horrors the likes of which can only be imagined in one's nightmares. And a nightmare is exactly what it is to the millions of non-demonic inhabitants who are forced to worship the demons who thrive in this dimension of Hell. It is a place of sorrow and oppression. A realm where might makes right, and only the strongest survive for long.

As if living under the rule of demons wasn't bad enough, the very land seems to be lethal for mortals. The earth is parched and dry. Famine and drought are a palpable part of the atmosphere. Fear, pain and violence permeate the domain. Here demonkind rule and their anger and vengeance are horrible things to witness, let alone to be on the receiving end. Demons are wicked and cruel. Yes, they beat, torture, and kill without regret, but they are born tormentors who would rather make one's punishment a lingering one, and death is often a drawn out affair. They love it when a person pleads for death. It's sweet music to their ears, and they often deny the request. Better to make the poor soul suffer longer than put him out of his misery. Where's the joy in that?

It is the wicked nature of demons to bully and belittle, harass and torment, inflict suffering and, eventually, death. Generosity, charity, kindness and mercy are alien concepts in this world, and even many of the mortals trapped in Hades have lost faith in such virtues. Having grown up under the oppression of demons has stripped most of their humanity away, making some mortals more like demons in their own right.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that **Hades** inspires fear by name alone. Whether that name be Hades or one of its other names, such as *the Abyss*, *Hell*, or *Tartarus*, it is the same damned realm of suffering where the *demon hordes* reside. A horrible place where few go willingly, and from which fewer still can expect to return, if any at all.

Demons in the Megaverse®

Even before recorded history, there have always been *demons*. Humans have tried to deny their existence, claiming they were creatures of myth and legend or the fanciful imaginings of an overactive imagination, or the delusions of the insane and superstitious. Truth was, they were only fooling themselves.

Indeed, the return of magic that triggered the Great Cataclysm sent a ripple throughout the Megaverse. A ripple felt by most creatures of magic and supernatural beings. A ripple that brought demons and monsters in droves to come feast on the fears and bones of men as they faced the apocalyptic rebirth of their planet.

On other worlds, in other dimensions, some practitioners of magic have learned to summon and command such creatures of darkness. They fool themselves into believing that it is they who

control the monsters, and secretly pray that it is not really the other way around. (It usually is.) Some wretched people, desperate for power, or vengeance, or recognition, make pacts with Demon Lords and dark gods, pledging their service and very soul in return for the attainment of their heart's desire.

Throughout the Megaverse there are all types of supernatural beings called *demons*, but in truth, *true demons* originate only from the dimension of *Hades*. The demons of Hades have spread their influence throughout the Megaverse thanks to their sheer numbers and aggressiveness. Wherever they go, they spread pain and misery and breed wickedness and evil.

How demonic creatures came into being is a mystery not known to mortal beings. There are a number of popular theories, but none can be proved conclusively. Could such evil, supernatural beings have evolved? It's possible, though not by any means known to science. One popular theory in the *Three Galaxies* holds that they are the creation of a group of powerful *Alien Intelligences*. After all, demonkind always bow down on bended knee to such godlike monstrosities and serve them across the Megaverse. Some scholars even point to one world in particular. A place that, like Rifts Earth, a time long ago, *once* boiled in seething magic energies. Magic that has cooled over the eons and is quickly becoming the dominion of humans. Indeed, Hades is said to be a twisted, *demonic version* of that world, and ancient records on that world tell many a sad tale of demon armies summoned to do the bidding of men and monsters throughout the ages gone by. It is also said that the Demons of Hades and the Deevils of Dyval have waged war in that plane of existence, that portals to both exist, and that both races of infernals continue their rivalry to win the hearts and souls of its mortal population to this very day. However, Demons and Deevils existed long before the birth of that world, but then so did the Alien Intelligences who once ruled this realm. Those who believe this theory claim the Ancient Evils created both the demons of Hades and the Deevils of Dyval as their private armies shortly after the Megaverse came into being, and that the world referred to was the place of a rebellion and the Alien Intelligences' fateful undoing. As a result, it is a place of legend known to those few savvy to such affairs.

According to the legends of the Cosmic Forge, these nigh indestructible creatures of chaos said to have spawned Demon and Devil were somehow laid low, and without their masters to control them and give them purpose, both forces were free to do as they pleased and sow the seeds of envy, hate, and other evil throughout the Megaverse. Among these myths and legends is a tale of how one of the demon Generals, by the name of Modeus, stole a book of power that contained the names of every demon in Hades, and he has since used it to establish his hold over that dimension of Hell.

Another story, not necessarily unrelated, suggests that both Demons and Deevils were the hellspawn playthings of their creators, and used as playing pieces in a cosmic chess game. Some say that games continues, and that demons represent the playing pieces of one side and Deevils the pieces of the other. This theory is popular, because there has always been an age old rivalry

between demons and Deevils. A rivalry that has turned into outright war and erupted on many occasions throughout the history of the Megaverse. Mortal beings also get swept up in such cosmic chess matches, where they are manipulated by one side or the other, or by yet a third deific player said to represent order and goodness. Infernals are sent against humans to sway them in the chess match, and in acts of retribution by sore losers. The free will and unpredictable nature of mortals represent an X factor that can make the difference in the cosmic scheme of every chess match and that makes them valuable pawns and heroes whether they realize their purpose in the game or not.

Whether either theory is true, or perhaps a combination of them both, or none at all, is never likely to be known.

Ultimately, the origins of demonkind and their evil supernatural kin are lost to ages past. All that can be said for certain is that they seem to have always existed and continue to do so to this day.

Demon Society

Cities are typically run by either a *Duke* or a *Prince*, Greater Demons who have proven themselves to be more cunning or ambitious and ruthless than others of their kind. This is also true of officers within the demon armies.

Each city serves some specific purpose. They are also centers of commerce with each drawing upon some resource that the demons use in their campaigns of evil and war. Demon cities are generally ruled with an iron fist. Each Duke or Prince in charge has his own selection of minions who answer directly to him. The Greater Demons bully and belittle *everyone* below them, and the Lesser Demons harass and torment those beneath them, namely the lowest of the Lesser Demons among them, Sub-Demons such as Gargoyles, and slaves.

Each ruler makes his own laws, follows his own ambitions and pretty much has his own agenda. So long as it doesn't conflict with the plans of any of the true Demon Lords, regional rulers are free to do as they wish. The direct minions of the ruler are his enforcers who keep the peace and enforce his will, rules, and agenda. The rest are his subjects and they go about their lives as you might expect any civilized people.

As strange as it may seem, demons are social animals. They enjoy social interaction even if it's getting drunk, brawling and killing someone together. Most like to meet with their own kind to boast about their battles, brag about what service they performed, exchange tales of horror or triumph, exchange gossip and rumors, and talk about how they saw Modeus and Andras discussing battle tactics. In many ways, they are like human beings, with some semblance of society, however it is not a society based on mutual cooperation, trust, and order, but one ruled by fear, intimidation, reprisal and personal gain. Power and position are earned and maintained by being ruthless, bloodthirsty and cruel. You keep your troops or minions under your thumb, belittled, and afraid of you.

Among demonkind, asking for or doling out any measure of mercy, kindness or sympathy is a sign of weakness. Consequently, most demons see any type of kindness as a trick to lull them into a false sense of security or get them to drop their guard. It's one thing to steal something and get away with it, but to be given something? What's the catch? A bribe or payoff, on

the other hand, is a whole other thing entirely, and completely acceptable. So is winning through cheating, intimidation, betrayal, cunning, and outright brutality. This means suspicion, distrust and backstabbing are prevalent among demons in all levels of society.

Life for most demons in Hades is one of brutality, decadence, sloth, loathing and selfishness. When not forced to perform some menial day to day job, they indulge their darker sides in acts of cruelty or in some depraved or disgusting manner that only a demon could enjoy. Abused and abusive, every demon, from the most exalted to the lowest of the low, lives to subjugate, torment, and bully others. The most powerful bully and belittle the demons beneath them, the lowliest inflict abuse and wanton cruelty upon slaves and mortals. Indeed, when not involved in some self-serving activity, demons seem bent on indulging their primordial emotions to inflict sorrow and pain. This might explain why demons are often furious when summoned by a mere mortal: it is insulting, degrading and a mark of shame for an infernal to severe any mortal being, no matter how powerful he may be.

Slaves are brutalized, beaten, tortured, eaten, and generally treated like trash on a daily basis.

Demons only work together for a mutual benefit, self-benefit or outright fear. In battle they know that they can indulge their primal bloodlust and be complimented and rewarded for their savagery. They revel in the rush of battle and delight in slaughtering their opponents and feasting on their organs. Demons have a sense of pride, and like most armies, they take pride in winning their battles and seeing their commanding officer (or Demon Lord) pleased with their performance. Of course, being demons, they always expect some type of reward, and not just a simple pat on the back. No, demons always want something tangible, even if it's just feeding on the entrails of their enemies. They are known to fight to the death, but that's true only if they fear their master and his leaders more than their enemy. Consequently, demon hordes take their cues from their leaders and the situation at hand. If they are winning they continue to fight and look forward to pillaging, rape, and slaughter. If they are losing, they look to their leaders.

Defying an order means a long, torturous punishment worse than death, so the demonic shock troopers and minions unhappily press forward even if it means their swift doom. However, if a leader says retreat or if a leader falls and there is no clear leadership, anarchy reigns and the demon horde will do as it will with a mob mentality.

Slaves in Hades

To the surprise of most visitors, all manner of beings are found living in Hades. They represent the monsters' slave force. Human and D-Bee slaves can often be seen running about on some errand for their master, or performing some type of duty in service to their master. The occasional creature of magic and other supernatural being can also be found. The overwhelming majority (80%) of non-demons are slaves, and the rest are free-willed witches, demon worshipers, henchmen and minions who have made pacts or traded their souls in the service of demons. As a rule, such people are the lowliest of the low and suffer greatly under the whims and tyranny of their demonic masters.

Mortal slaves find life in Hades to be truly Hell. The physical environment is oppressive to begin with, compounded by the fact that most slaves are whipped and beaten daily to “motivate” them, and otherwise abused and mistreated. Unfortunately, most slaves are broken and give up long before they die. At least 15% adopt the demons’ example of might makes right, to become bullies and brutal themselves. These misanthropes do whatever is necessary to stay alive, including stealing food, water, and necessities, to becoming ruthless, soulless taskmasters, killers, tyrants and worse, themselves. Demons derive a sadistic sense of accomplishment whenever an idealistic mortal is turned into a monster like themselves.

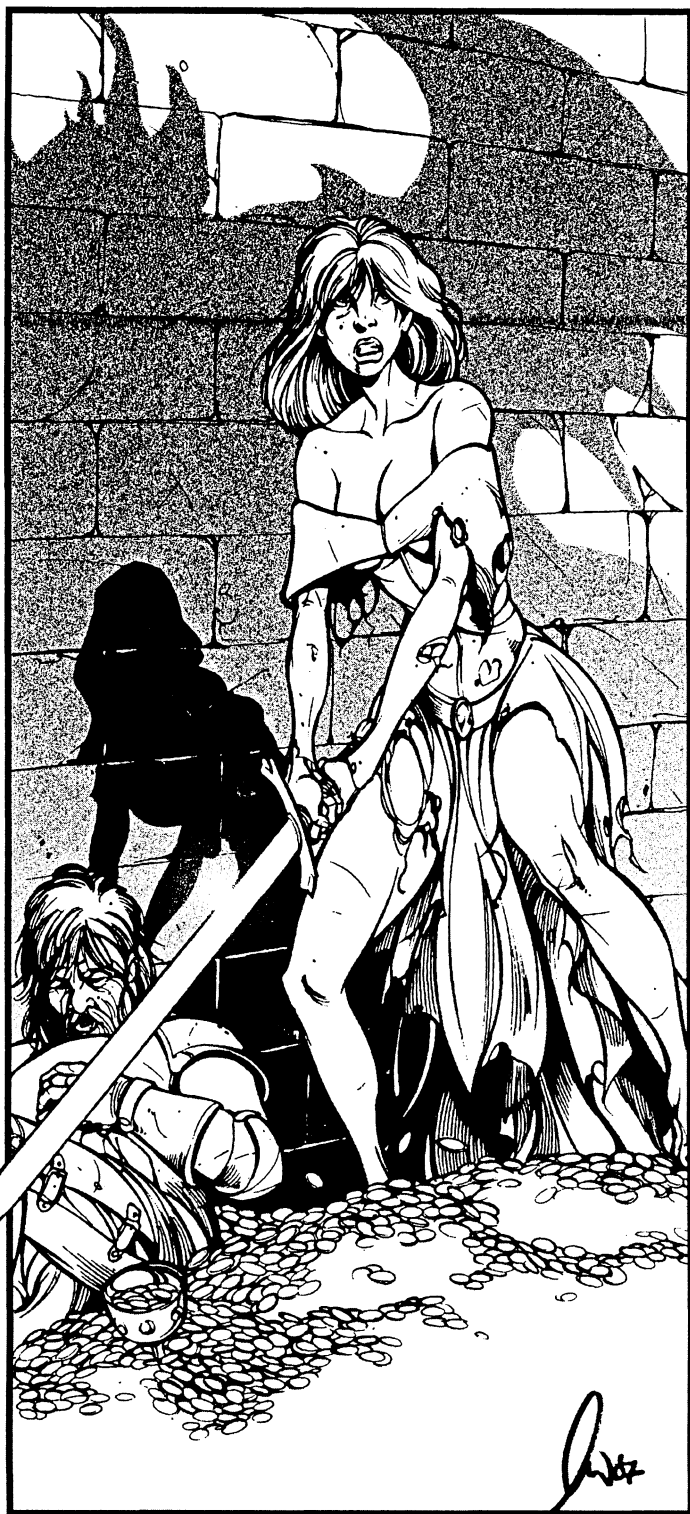
The proud result of generations of slavery is to have turned mortals into monsters. The typical alignment of a slave is Anarchist (40%), Miscreant (30%) or Diabolic (15%), at least for slaves who were *born and raised* in Hades. Those brought in “fresh” from other dimensions can be of any alignment, though half turn to selfish animals or desperate monsters within 1D6 years. These poor souls quickly learn that life in Hades is all about losing your sense of compassion and hope, and sticking it to the other guy first, stealing, lying and doing whatever it takes to survive in *Hell*. Those who manage to hang on to their compassion and humanity (and souls) seldom survive more than 1D4 years.

All of demonkind considers itself *better than any mortal* and they delight in tormenting them. The lowliest of slaves can be beaten or killed outright with no repercussions to Greater Demons, for it is presumed the demon had his reason. Likewise, a Lesser Demon may work or beat a slave to death without fear of punishment unless the slave was a favorite of a Greater Demon or Demon Lord. It varies from city to city, but that is usually the order of things in Hades.

Slaves are used in just about every capacity in demon society, from simple physical labor, gladiatorial combat, to every depravity, pleasure and use imaginable, including as food stock, but ultimately fill the roles that the demons do not want to do themselves. A slave’s life is often hard and arduous labor that starts at early dawn and continues into Deep Night. From simple ditch digging and harvesting the Orange Orchids in the Thorn Forest, to building grand monuments and weapons in the great foundries. If they’re lucky they’ll get a water break and a meal break, but that usually consists of slaves competing with other slaves for the meager portions that the demons provide. Even skill based services and the entertainment arts are fraught with verbal and emotional abuse, rape, beatings and terror. However, it is said, better to dig a ditch, haul garbage or clean the teeth of a demon than to serve in the house of demonic nobility, for there one is witness to, and sometimes forced to participate in, all manner of depravity and evil. It is a grim existence that is living hell.

All slaves are marked, usually with a *tattoo* or *piercing*, other times they are *branded* or the symbol of slavery is sliced into their bodies. This is in addition to bearing the scars of having been manacled and chained by metal restraints that cut and forever mark the skin at their wrists, ankles and/or neck, or the lash mark of the whip across one’s body. There is a universal symbol for “slave” in the demons’ language of Demongogian, and all slaves have it displayed prominently somewhere on their bodies. The most common places are the neck, upper arm, and

chest. Individual masters may add their *own mark* to show that they belong to a specific individual, Duke, Prince or Demon Lord. Any slave who hides the symbol(s) or tries to remove it is severely beaten or tortured. **Note:** People who are not demons and do not bear the *mark of a slave* are frequently detained and questioned at length, or regarded with uncertainty, fear and suspicion, especially by Sub-Demons and Lesser Demons. Mortals without the *mark of a slave* are usually powerful and evil wizards, warriors, and beings who assume the shape of men, but are not. All are considered dangerous, unpredictable, and servants of a Demon Lord or higher power. And on the rarest of occasions, intruders or invaders from one of the planes of men.



No slave may wander freely unmarked. A mortal without “the mark” is presumed to be a runaway slave who escaped before being processed, or something more dangerous. Slaves are usually locked in dungeons, pens, cages, corrals, barns and similar places when their work is done for the day, while “House servants” may have their own room in the servants’ quarters or be locked away in a tower or dungeon with basic to luxurious accommodations.

New slave stock is expected to be caged, penned and marked as quickly as possible. Once they have received the mark, they are evaluated, assigned a specific job by a Task Master, or sold to clients outside the community. Once a job is assigned, it is usually what the slave does for the rest of his life. Some act as couriers, others as physical laborers, and some even have administrative duties that they carry out for their demon masters. The types of jobs vary greatly, but are usually mundane or laborious. The worst jobs are so backbreaking that the average hard laborer lives only 1D6+1 years. Those given less backbreaking work still face long hours, six and seven day work weeks, abusive and unappreciative bosses, frequent needling and harassment, and regular punishment for not working to the satisfaction of their master. Thus, even they have a life expectancy of only 2D6+4 years. Of course, it is said that every month one serves in Hades is the equivalent to a year anywhere else.

Not all slaves are human or even mortal. There are actually many lesser supernatural races, creatures of magic and alien races (D-Bees) from across the Megaverse in Hades. Some are willing servants, others are slaves, and some are people who have opposed demonic rule, or ventured to Hades on their own, or servants who have done something to upset a Demon Lord and are in Hades to be punished. In the case of beings who have betrayed, attacked or opposed demonkind only to fall victim to their might, they are given the option of torture and slow death (as in months or years), or to serve in the Minion War as a slave. Such individuals may agree to serve to escape a dire fate and dream of an opportunity where they can escape or turn against their evil masters. Most die in service to a Demon Lord before such an opportunity arises, but these *unwilling servants* and *slaves* may do what they can to help other *visitors* and *enemies* of demonkind to escape their fate or destroy their master (or at least foil his plans). *Forced slavery* includes conquered people and is a way for the demons to conscript troops and keep their forces strong. When given the option to fight in the Minion War or be a slave in Hades till the day they die, or suffer a prolonged, torturous death, most victims opt to fight and dream of escape.

Generational Slaves

Typical Generational Slave O.C.C.s are *Vagabond* (any, but typically Vagabond Laborer, Vagabond Peasant, or Vagabond Farmer), *Mercenary Soldier*, *Grunt*, *Bounty Hunter* or *Bandit*.

The most skilled servants are the equivalent of *Vagabond Scholar/Storyteller*, *Vagabond Entertainer*, *Vagabond Handyman*, *Barmaid* (server), and *Operator*. The type of Vagabond and his “job” is reflected by the type of skills selected.

Most slave work involves *serving* demons, *fighting* and *unskilled physical labor* like hauling goods, digging, mining, building, butchering, farming, blacksmithing, cooking, etc.

Note: Players should consult with their Game Master before creating a character that is a Generational Slave. While it is rare, the occasional slave may have specialized skills and be the equivalent of a Body Fixer, Rogue Scholar, Rogue Scientist, Professional Spy or other O.C.C., but these are considered elite, specialized slaves and are treated better than most, often getting special treatment and who are usually 100% loyal to their demonic masters!

Newcomers captured from other worlds and enslaved can be any O.C.C. (or R.C.C.) that is typical of their race and society. However, they too are usually put to work in hard labor or combat situations that probably do not take advantage of their skills and training.

Those mortals and other beings *born into slavery* and raised in Hades only know life in Hell. These people have adapted to demon society and live a dog-eat-dog lifestyle. However, also like their demon masters, they have, to some degree, adapted to the environment of Hades, giving them some advantages newcomers and visitors do not share.

1. Resistant to heat, exhaustion and dehydration and do not suffer the usual penalties associated with exhaustion or dehydration from the oppressive heat. They are able to tolerate higher temperatures than most mortals and work at peak efficiency.

2. Resistant to fire and heat. Damage from normal fire is reduced by one quarter. So, for example, instead of four points of damage from a fire blast the character would take three points of damage.

3. Fasting and minimal need for water. Likewise, Generational Slaves survive twice as long without food and water. Their bodies have become more efficient at retaining water, their lung capacity is greater and they sweat less. They pant like dogs and have learned to eat insects, such as cockroaches, beetles, and worms for additional nourishment and fluids. **Note:** Panting breathing by Hades Generational Slaves may be mistaken by off-worlders as hyperventilation, but it is a way to reduce the body’s temperature.

4. Generational slave bonuses: +1D6 to P.S., +1D4 to P.E., and +2D6+6 to S.D.C., due to a life of hard labor.

5. Adapted to seeing in dim light and interpreting shadows and sound. The lighting in Hades is usually dim, like twilight or dusk, and Generational Slaves have adapted to this poorly lit environment. Humans and most D-Bees born on Hades can see well in dim and smoggy environments that off-worlders would find impossible to see more than 50 feet (15.2 m) ahead, and very difficult in which to read or perform detailed work. In short, Generational Slaves can read, sew, see details and do skilled work in light as dim as a single candle, where most people could not. Likewise, their eyes are not bothered by smoke or air made dim by smog, soot particles or smoke. Beings with Nightvision can see 2D6x10 feet (6.1 to 18.3 m) farther than normal for their race, and all such slaves get a **bonus** of +1 on initiative, +1 to Perception Rolls and +1 to dodge, and penalties are *half* when blinded or in total darkness.

6. Resistant to sulfur and foul odors. Half the penalties and half the duration of those penalties. However, their sense of smell is damaged, only about half as keen as normal for their race.

7. Alignments: Anarchist (40%), Miscreant (30%), Diabolic (15%), Aberrant (5%) and other (10%). Many Generational Slaves are as evil and selfish as the demons they serve. Demon society is all they have ever known, so they live by the same might-makes-right and self-serving rules of the land as demons.

Penalties: On the other hand, their eyes are sensitive to sunlight, and require sunglasses or other form of protection to shield their eyes from light. In daylight and bright indoor lighting the light hurts their eyes, they squint and can only see about 500 feet (152 m) and are -1 on initiative, -2 to Perception Rolls and -1 to strike, parry, dodge and all other combat rolls.

Runaway slaves, especially Generational Slaves, are sure to invoke the rage of their masters, and are hunted down or have a price put on their head. If recaptured, they will be tortured, beaten, forced to do the least desirable or most punishing work, and even the slightest act of defiance, betrayal or attempt to escape again will result in their death.

The Demon Hierarchy

One would suspect beings of anarchy and chaos would live like barbarians, but that is not the case. Most demon armies, military units and cities are run very much like a *military force*. The demons of Hades have a long established hierarchy that dates back to before Modeus established himself as the Lord of Demons. This hierarchy isn't an official ranking system, yet all the inhabitants of Hades adhere to it as an unspoken rule.

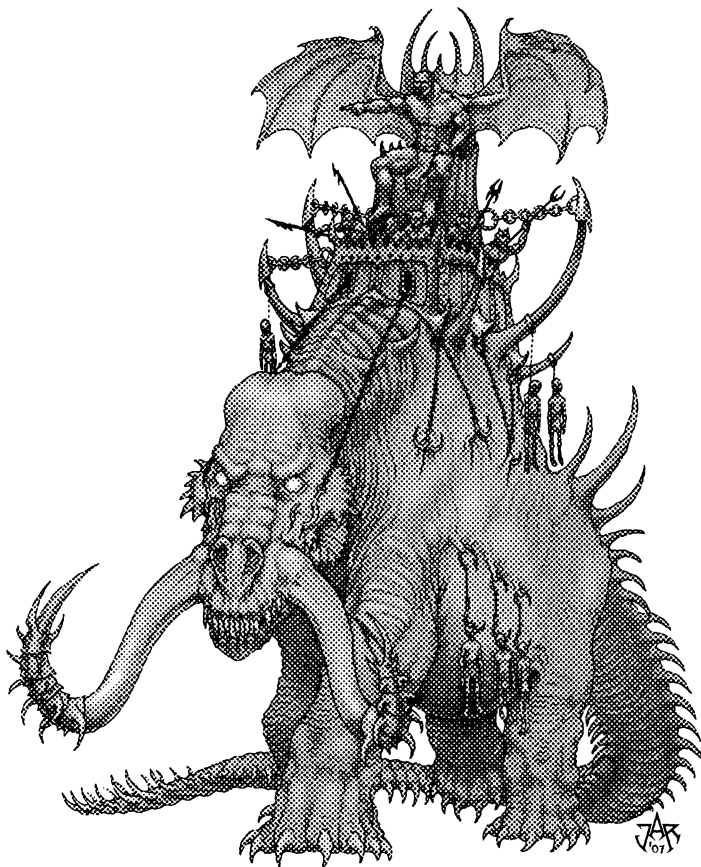
Even though they use titles like *Prince* and *Duke*, the demon hierarchy is best compared to a *military ranking system* instead of class-based nobility. Driven by basic instincts and desires, their emotions are untamed and often unchecked. All are loose cannons easily set off, even among their own kind. The militaristic hierarchy helps establish the pecking order within demon society, and without it, chaos would reign.

Demons live by the old adage that *might makes right*. It is the unspoken code by which they live and function. The strong command and rule over the weak, and one attains power by defeating or destroying his rivals and superiors. Thus, small units of demons operate more like a *wolf pack* than a true team or fighting unit. Even the smallest groups of demons, mixed or all the same species, live and function like a wolf pack, with the strongest to the weakest representing the structure of *the pack* or unit. Also like a wolf pack, once the power structure and caste positions within the pack have been established, they are expected to be followed. Questioning or challenging leadership or positions higher than your own results in swift, punishing reprisal or death. Rule over a demon pack, army or city may be challenged through physical combat or treachery, though a winner through treachery and betrayal must have the power to support and protect his position once it has been taken, lest other demons who don't respect the new leader challenge him in open combat or warfare. Thus, rule through brute force, intimidation and fear is the law of the land. Oddly enough, it is a structure and way of life that has worked for these brutal beings for countless eons.

Demons who prove themselves to be especially resourceful, ruthless and otherwise capable (capable of controlling their own men as well as enforcing the will of their master), become the

Warlords, Captains and Generals in service to their Duke or Prince.

In fact, all of demon society operates on a militaristic caste system. *The higher* one is in the caste, the more powerful the demon. Position, favor and rank are usually based on demonic race. The more powerful and respected the race, the greater the level of power, personal freedom, and responsibility bestowed upon them. It breaks down into five main categories, *Demon Lords, Greater Demons, Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons* and *slaves*. However, within the ranks of the demons themselves, there are many subtle lines of power that a *lesser* must never cross – unless he can get away with murder and leave no witnesses behind.



The Hierarchy of Hades, from the lowest to the exalted:

Slave: The lowest in the ranking system are mere slaves. They are the suffering mortal masses forced to serve the demons of Hades. A slave has no possibility for advancement other than Slave Master, and that is rare. The majority of slaves are broken and too frightened to defy or challenge their masters, thus they live their lives as drones doing as they are told.

Humans and mortals (D-Bees) from across the Megaverse, as well as creatures of magic and other supernatural beings, may be enslaved and forced to do the bidding of their demon masters. Likewise, demons who have failed, defied or betrayed their Demon Lord may also get put into slavery as punishment. Demons, however, rarely make good slaves and are typically killed outright by their masters and conquerors.

Slaves account for a large percentage of the Hades population and, several times throughout the history of Hades, have revolted. Slave uprisings usually end in the murder of tens of thousands of slaves and the punishment of many thousands more. Many rioting, renegade and escaped slaves are rounded up and placed in food pens, like cattle, to be butchered and eaten in the near future. Many are the slaughterhouses where humanoid beings become some demon's next meal. Other captured renegades are sent to fight in gladiatorial arenas located throughout around Hades for the amusement of the demonic horde. The slaves of Hades suffer more than just a harsh life, it's one stained with constant fear, despair and hardship.

Slave Master: The highest station a slave can hope to achieve in demon society is that of Slave Master.

A Slave Master is assigned the task of overseeing large groups and work forces of slaves, and seeing that they fulfill their duties. Slave Masters are still slaves themselves, and are elevated only slightly higher than other slaves. Most are afforded certain privileges, like a choice of better food, sleeping accommodations, booze, or a mate, but little else.

Slave Masters tend to be practitioners of magic, Witches, powerful D-Bees and lesser supernatural creatures who are not demons themselves.

A loyal and dutiful Slave Master may curry his master's favor to be spared punishment for slave revolts, but as a rule, Slave Masters are expected to keep the slave hordes in line, productive and quiet. This means they have the authority to assign and reassign work, impose punishments, and even have other slaves beaten and killed. When there is trouble among the slaves, the Slave Master is expected to deal with it or face the punishing consequences of his master. It is not uncommon for a Lord to summarily execute an incompetent Slave Master and replace him with someone new.

As one might think, Slave Masters are generally *despised* by their fellow slaves. They are considered sellouts and traitors who kiss the boots of demonic scum in exchange for power and a few creature comforts. Monsters and lesser supernatural creatures often enjoy their role as Slave Master and like lording over slaves and inflicting punishment. As long as their charges are more miserable than they, they are happy.

Sub-Demons: In Hades, the *Gargoyle race* (Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, Gargoylites, Gargoyle Mages, and Gargoyle Lords) is the primary Sub-Demon of the realm. However, *Brodkil*, *Daemonix* and similar low-powered *supernatural beings* are relegated to the category of **Sub-Demon**.

"Most Sub-Demons" are ancient, evil, supernatural beings and barbaric cousins to demonkind. The equivalent of the *Neanderthal* to the human race. They are usually more simple-minded, savage and barbaric than demons (who can be frighteningly cunning and sophisticated), and serve as grunts and shock troops for the more powerful demons.

Sub-Demons are generally less powerfully built, less magical, ancient, archaic beings whose intelligence, magic, and raw power are *lower* than *Lesser Demons*. This makes them vulnerable to their more powerful and versatile demonic cousins, and as such they are, in effect, forced into quasi-slavery as *second-class citizens* of Hades. They are free, and ranked above slaves, but just barely. They're treated as if they were idiots and louts,

and used as muscle and cannon fodder, and little else. Even the smallest, stupidest Lesser Demons are their betters and deemed superior in the demonic pecking order. Gargoyles, Brodkil and other Sub-Demons understood and accepted their fate eons before the ancestors of humans crawled out of trees, but they hate their lot in life and despise their bullying demon cousins. In a society where "might makes right," Gargoyles and other "Sub-Demons" are examples of the losers who get the short end of the stick. They simply lack the power and cunning to be anything but at the bottom of the wolf pack. While they are allowed to have rank and rule their own kind (e.g., other Gargoyles), they are NEVER allowed to rule or lead other demons, not even Lesser ones, nor even mortal worshipers and henchmen.

Despite having one of the largest populations in all of Hades they are still looked down upon and scoffed at. Perhaps it is their sheer numbers that intimidate the Demon Lords or perhaps it's just outright bigotry. No one knows why these Sub-Demons are not an accepted part of demon society, and Gargoyles and their kin will never accept this.

Demon Worshipers, Witches and Mortal Servants: These are mortals who willingly embrace, serve and/or worship demons as their lords and masters. They are free-willed humans and D-Bees who have chosen to serve demons and include the likes of Witches, Necromancers and other evil misanthropes, human and inhuman. Most see serving demons as a means to riches, power, revenge or all of the above. Some delude themselves that they are serving a higher power for some greater purpose. Many are just as wicked and treacherous as the demons they serve.

Although such henchmen are generally viewed as pathetic lesser beings even by the demons they serve, they may achieve elevated positions and ranks within demon society, such as low ranking officers in the demon army, special agents (i.e., spies, assassins, enforcers, commandos, etc., especially in the realms of mortals), and even Warlord or Duke of an infernal realm, though the latter is rare indeed.

The Fallen (Demon Outcasts): Perhaps one of the most dreadful of stigmas, at least to demons, is to be classified as a *Fallen*. These underlings are usually Lesser Demons like those found in the Fire Flats of Hades who are *mutants* or *aberrations* even among demonkind. They are undesired and unwanted, *rejected* from mainstream demon society. If demons weren't cruel enough creatures to begin with, *the Fallen* are even worse. Their bitterness and envy of other demons make them all the more vile and cruel. They feel they've been given a raw deal in Hades and take it out on *everyone* they can. Only the rare Fallen have been able to elevate themselves, some as high as Marquis, Duke and Prince. It happens, but not often. Most, however, are considered lowlives, pawns and lowest of the low – demonic henchmen to be funneled to fight in the Minion War. **Death Demons** and **Taursis** are both considered members of the Fallen. Death Demons because they can inflict their undeath plague onto other demons, and Taursis for their wild behavior and uncontrollable mutations.

Minion or Lesser Demon: Minion is the rank assigned *all* Lesser Demons of Hades, from *Lasae* and *Demon Flies* to *Alu* and *Aquatics*. Lesser Demons are the grunts, privates and corporals in the demon army. A few may rise up in the hierarchy or distinguish themselves in combat, espionage and other service to

their lord. However, this is the exception, not the rule, as most are craven, slovenly beings who care only about fulfilling their bloodlust and own desires. Among those who advance to higher positions, they seldom earn a post higher than the equivalent of *sergeant* or *Task Master*. Minions/Lesser Demons make up the *largest percentage* of demons in Hades and there never seems to be a shortage of them. Sub-Demons and Fallen are the next most numerous, in that order.

Demon Task Master: If Lesser Demon Minions are the privates and corporals in the demon armies, then Task Masters are the *sergeants*, *staff sergeants* and *lieutenants*. Task Masters are more responsible and disciplined than most minions. Consequently, they are given positions as supervisors, foremen and squad leaders over Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons, Fallen, subservient mortal henchmen and slaves.

All Task Masters serve a “Master” – a Greater Demon (their commander) – and a Demon Lord, Alien Intelligence or Dark God, the ruler to whom they have sworn allegiance (or who has impressed them into servitude). As a demonic foreman or sergeant, they command small groups of lesser beings from squad (6-10 demons) to platoon-sized (40-60 troops). As the name implies, Task Masters are given the privilege to lead small groups and combat forces. This may include slaves, workers, and domestic servants to squad leader of demon soldiers, demonic guardsmen, hunting pack/trackers, torturers, human henchmen, worshipers and so on. Violent work and combat missions may range from a simple assault, hit and run attack, ambush, diversion, robbery, strong-arm intimidation, and similar basic grunt work to acts of retribution (i.e. beat, torture, frame or kill somebody who offended or wronged their Master or Demon Lord), spying/espionage, to blackmail and murder, even suicide missions.

Most Task Masters hold lower positions (i.e., the supervisor or third in command) only because *Greater Demons* tend to see them as lesser beings, rivals and upstarts and make a point to keep them under their heel. Thus, a Task Master is seldom allowed to gain much in the way of true power or expansive authority over Minions. This is the highest rank a *Lesser Demon*, *Sub-Demon* or *Fallen* can usually attain. It takes an exceptional minion to be ambitious enough to elevate himself to this rank and a spectacular and cunning one to rise beyond it.

Master is the rank automatically assigned to all **Greater Demons**. Though they too are ruled by base emotions and foul desires, they recognize they serve a higher purpose and possess the raw power, brains and savvy to do great things if they put their mind to it. They are even more aggressive and cunning than other demons, and most have great ambition, crave power and love to lord over lesser beings. Consequently, Greater Demons function as the “Masters” or commanders who organize, control and lead large groups and armies of Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons, Fallen and mortal henchmen. **Baal-Rogs**, **Demon Locust**, and **Raksasha** are generally regarded as “Grand Masters” and have the greatest potential to rise to the highest ranks within demon society as Generals, seconds-in-command, Dukes and Princes of the demon hordes. The **Gallu Bull** tends to function in the role of Captain, Major, or Colonel. Likewise, **Magots** may hold a similar position, though they typically lead shock troops and first strike infantry forces. **The Jinn** may hold a position of Captain to General, but most are

ill-equipped at leading large forces of troops (they don’t have the patience or disposition), and make excellent heads of espionage, sabotage and assassination teams and operations. **Night Owls** may hold any high rank but tend to be regarded as military and espionage *advisors*.

Unless he has failed or defied his Demon Lord, a Master may command groups ranging from elite squad/special forces to a massive army of lesser beings. Greater Demons also enjoy the privilege of autonomy and may work alone and go on solo missions or establish an elite squad composed entirely of Greater Demons working as equals in a team or with one as a chosen team leader. This arises from their keen sense of power, purpose and birthright as a higher being. In fact, when frustrated on the battlefield by their minions, Greater Demons, especially Gallu Bulls, Magots, and Jinn, have been known to simply abandon their legion of Lesser Demons to go off and fight by themselves. The most powerful and dangerous Masters are those who covet power and display ruthless cunning.

Duke and Marquis: Dukes and Marquis control the various demon cities found in Hades. The majority are Greater Demons appointed by one of the Demon Lords of Hades. It’s not a bad position and most enjoy a comparatively sedentary life of political strategy and tactics, internal government intrigue and administering a city.

Masters appointed Duke outside of Hell are usually Greater Demons who have shown exceptional leadership abilities and skill at leading Lesser Demons in large military campaigns.

Their career as a Duke of Hell or Lord and Duke of a conquered land may be cut short by an enemy, rival or a jealous Prince who is fearful that his Duke is becoming too powerful and might someday challenge his authority, and decides it is better to eliminate him before he becomes a problem in the future.

Dukes are roughly the equivalent of a Colonel in the army and usually have a great deal of responsibility and power, and command entire armies. Those in the Minion War are either master tacticians or leaders of elite squads of demons. Many Dukes are more politician than military commander, and seem to possess the charisma to charm even their most hated rivals, or the ability to scare and intimidate the hell out of them.

Prince or Princess of Hell is a position generally held by Greater Demons who have earned their title in war or the cut-throat arena of dirty politics. They crave power and position, tend to be ruthless and paranoid, and will not relinquish their position without a fight. Most are skilled in the arts of trickery, lies, manipulation, skullduggery, and ruthless sacrifice of lesser beings as pawns on a chess board. Their ultimate goal: to remain on top by any means necessary.

The title of Prince or Princess comes with tremendous power and the ability to command hundreds of thousands of minions. In terms of power, a Prince is second only to the *Demon Lords*. A few even cultivate worshipers and mortal followers, which if nurtured and expanded properly, can lead to a boost in power. Those who gather worshipers find that they have developed one of the following Deific Powers: Bio-Regeneration: Deific, Create Deific Portal, Create Minion, Mobile Sphere of Destruction, and Manifestation. As Demon Princes have not fully developed their powers, it costs them three times the cost listed for each power and they are often used very sparingly. (**Note:** *Prototypi-*

cal Deific Powers can be found starting on page 89 of **Dragons and Gods**, a sourcebook for *The Palladium Fantasy RPG®*.)

At any given time there are only around 50-60 Demon Princes/Princesses in Hades. They all answer to one of the 18 *Demon Lords* and are all expected to appear in court at least once a year to proclaim their loyalty and servitude. It's usually an informal occasion, but depending on the Demon Lord it can just as easily be a tongue-lashing.

Demon Royalty are high level – 1D6+8 levels – know how “the game” is played, know their place, and most seem to be content with it. Still, a few covet more power and dream of usurping for themselves a position as a Demon Lord. Of course, that means eliminating an existing Lord of Hell and taking his place. All Demon Royalty do not have followers, but ALL have their share of enemies who despise them and long for the day they fall from grace and are demoted, a fate worse than death.

Demon Lord: At present there are 18 Demon Lords of Hades. To be a Demon Lord one has to have followers and worshipers from which to gain deific powers. No one knows the exact minimum number of followers needed, just that tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, are required. Each of the Demon Lords is worshiped by the Lesser Demons and, to some degree, the Greater Demons of Hades, as well as mortal worshipers who embrace chaos, wickedness, greed and vice. There have been many a Prince that have coveted the position of being a Demon Lord and rumors suggest that there was a *Prince Modeus* long ago, before he became absolute ruler of Hades.

Only **Demon Lords** can grant promotions of high rank (Captain and greater) and royalty. This is usually done as a bribe or as incentive to do their bidding, or as reward for a difficult job well done. Rank can also be used as a weapon or tool to play one demon against another. This can lead to infighting and constant backstabbing among lower ranks, but is good for culling the weak from the demon hordes and eliminating traitors and potential rivals, as well as to identify the most ambitious and potentially dangerous demons within their ranks. Demon Lords are also the ones who can strip other demons of their rank. Although most who fall out of favor tend to be killed outright, the Demon Lord may let a demon live but strip him of his rank and demote him. This may be done when the Lord is feeling magnanimous, but most likely when he wishes to humiliate the offending party. The repercussions of stripping a demon of his rank can sometimes be more painful and damaging than killing him outright, and demons, after all, enjoy inflicting pain and suffering. Politics is a dirty thing in Hades, and every good leader is expected to have his share of enemies. Demons lead by using force, fear, intimidation, temptation, empty promises and hatred. Thus, cunning and guile are traits that make for a long lasting Demon Lord.

Demon Names

Obscure magic lore tells of how to hold power over a demon, and certain other demonic creatures. For Hades demons specifically, their “true name” is the key. Even a mortal who knows a demon's true name can command him as a subordinate. Thus, the name or names by which a demon is commonly known, is NOT his true, given name, but a name he has taken upon himself or which was given to him by mortals. It is also why demons, especially Demon Lords, may be known by many

different names. The creature's true name is a precious secret buried deep within him. It cannot be pulled from him by Telepathy or mind control, nor by any known magical means (not Words of Truth, Domination, etc.). Most will die under torture rather than spit it out. No, most must be tricked into revealing their name, or the name must be acquired from somebody or something (i.e., a rare ancient book or magic artifact of great power) who already possesses the powerful knowledge.

Many scholars have pondered the question, why is this the case? Is it a curse from the gods? Were demons somehow created or engineered that way? Is it just another one of their supernatural vulnerabilities, or simply a psychological illness? More likely, it is the result of some twisted bargain with some type of powerful Alien Intelligence who needed a simple and elegant mechanism by which to control the demonic hordes he sought to command (and create?). No one knows the reason for this weakness and the demons, if they know, refuse to elaborate on this point.

While this may sound like a grave weakness (and most demons consider it as such), demons make a point of, **a)** keeping their name secret, **b)** killing all lesser beings who learn their secret, and **c)** destroying all documentation, books or artifacts that might reveal their secret. Thus, this knowledge is rare and kept secret, as those in possession of it don't wish to be tortured and killed. Only mages and scholars steeped in Demon Lore even know about this weakness, and even fewer have any knowledge of a demon's name. Thus, even spells like *Summon Greater Familiar* only provide limited control over the demon it summons, and there is a very good chance that the demon can twist his mortal master's words or break his hold over him. Then again, demons appreciate evil, power and cruelty, and, especially lesser minions, may come to enjoy serving an evil mortal. The same holds true of *summoning circles and magic*, though some can be made to include a demon's true name.

Once a specific demon is summoned via the use of his true name, the fiend is under the immediate control of the individual who summoned him. The demon is compelled to obey the summoner's commands, but is allowed to twist them in reasonable ways should the command be unclear. Furthermore, the demon under the control of another continues to follow his nature, so a command to retrieve a magic item may involve plenty of bloodshed and trouble in its acquisition, even if more subtle ways of acquisition were available. A demon under the command of another individual (mortal or supernatural) can be made to attack fellow demons, defy his demonic Master and Lord, and commit all manner of atrocities. Not that they would object too much to committing foul acts, but it is doing things that are contradictory to their nature which are often the most difficult for the demon.

Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons and the Fallen are most likely to accept a mortal master, as they are used to a life of servitude. To them, might makes right, and if this person wielding their true name is more cunning or powerful than they, then it is their punishment and failing to serve a being they might despise. Likewise, lesser minions are more easily tricked into revealing their true name (or the name of a hated rival or enemy) than a Greater Demon or Demon Lord. Note that most lesser minions will NOT know the true name of any Greater Demon or Demon Lord, and the threat of speaking the true name of a Greater Demon in front of any intelligent being is usually enough to get

him to comply to any demand. Of course, such leverage and humiliation will also make that Greater Demon an enemy for life.

Like most enchantments, even this knowledge cannot be used to force a demon to commit suicide. However, they can be banished or commanded to leave a particular dimension never to return (although the demon's interpretation of "never to return" is "until the day that individual dies" or "leaves that land."). A demon cannot, however, be banished from Hades, because it is the monster's native home. They can be commanded to remain in Hades, but that only lasts until a Demon Lord, or someone else who knows their true name, commands otherwise.

Only one individual may command a named demon at a time. If, for example, say another mage who knows a demon's true name tries to summon or usurp command, he can't do it. The individual currently in command retains control because the demon was under his thrall first. The only exception is a Demon Lord or god who summons or commands the demon. Otherwise, the demon must obey He Who Knows Thy Name until he dies, leaves that plane of existence or releases the demon. **Note:** Such authority over a demon cannot be *given* to another person (especially a mortal) by commanding the demon to "obey Robert and do anything he bids you to do." The demon may agree, but it is a ruse. His true name must be known and used in a mystic ritual for one person to control him at any given time.

Wielding power over demons is alluring and intoxicating to most mortals, but is also very dangerous. Even a Lesser Demon is like commanding a wild animal eager to tear out the throat of its "so-called master." The demon can NEVER be completely broken, domesticated, or controlled. Demons are a supernatural force for evil and it is their nature to harm, kill, and destroy – it can never be purged from them or completely controlled. Any mortal who thinks otherwise is fooling himself and headed toward eventual sorrow and treachery at the hand of his demonic servant. If the demon is able to communicate back to Hades, or other demons learn that such knowledge has been leaked out, the mortal who possesses the knowledge is often hunted down with extreme prejudice. Demons pretty much have standing orders to report all such things to their superiors, if not to a Demon Lord directly. It's one of the few universally agreed upon edicts of the Demon Lords. Since all demons look down on mortals, it is not a mortal's place to command their demonic betters. On the other hand, when another demon learns a true name, he will abuse its power to the extreme. They may only know the names of one or two Lesser Demons or Sub-Demons, but those two demons are loyal and will help keep the rest faithful or in check.

Over the millennia, demons have developed "nicknames," "traveling names" and "common names" they use to be recognized and communicate with the world outside of Hades. These names never have anything to do with their "true name" and are often a title, nickname or label placed upon the creature by an outsider or for some notorious feats or reputation, such as the Destroyer, Double Fist, Rumbler, Kraal the Cruel, Rathus the Betrayer, and so on. Sometimes a demon's common name may represent his rank and/or title, such as Lord of the Dead, Commander of Magots, Prince of Lies, and similar. Such a rank or title may be earned through deeds, or given by a Demon Lord.

It should be noted that throughout this book the *common names* of many demons are revealed. However, unless specifi-

cally stated, their *true names* are not known, nor published in any works such as the *Journals of Sir Garrydn*. They are presented only to put a name to a face. It is at the Game Master's discretion if their names are known (most are not). **Note:** Only Demon Lords seem to be immune to this weakness, at least when it comes to mortals. Their deific powers counteract this, protecting them from harm. While powerful magic could be used to *summon* one, only a fool would even dare to do so, because there would be no battle of the wills and the Demon Lord would be a free, evil force to do as he would please to the summoner.

One Hundred Demon Names

These names are provided for the Game Master's use only. You can decide whether or not they are known or unknown. You can use them to flesh out a reoccurring NPC villain, obscure knowledge gained from an ancient scroll, or as a reward or boon from a super powerful being. Just keep in mind that true demon names are very rare and demons do not take too kindly to having their names bantered about.

Acham, Alrinach, Alocer, Any, Anamalech, Aquiel, Arachula, Ardad, Ascaroth, Asmodeus, Astaroth, Archamond, Baal, Bechard, Bechet, Belial, Beelzebub, Braathwaate, Bucon, Byleth, Cheitan, Chemos, D'geal, Dakar, Danaroth, E'Zal, Endikee, Erizeal, Fegal, Faramor, Farengar, Fegas, Geas, Gnarl, Ganthrax, Gester, Gulag, Hallow Fang, Harrow, Heartbreak, Highgar, Icen, Iago, Iczar, Izen, Jasco, Jagger, Joint Breaker, Judus, Killian, Korton, Kormith, Lanithro, Lotho, Long Cry, Mammon, Mastiphal, Moloch, Night Maar, Night Shaad, Naga, Neapriion, Ollagone, Oser, Olum, Pollux, Pollio, Quake, Quint, Quilex, Rixit, Rinith, Rallenell, Rothagar, Rinclyth, Saalah, Soxrox, Sanundrum, Silica, Sorum, Tenebrion, Talc, Talon, Toro, Tegor, Tyrax, Utrax, Usil, Unicrow, Venomith, Verdelet, Vreetox, Vrax, Willcon, Xrax, Xion, Yutal, Zerg, Zylo, and Zerb.

Disclaimer and Warning: Though some of it is inspired by myth and legend, *this book*, the magic, demonic characters and all the subject matter contained within it is *fictional* – NOT REAL. We do not promote or encourage the idea or practice of demon worship or magic, nor inhumanity to one's fellow man.

Death of a Demon

Demons are truly ageless beings, so it might come as a surprise that they *can be killed!* Of course, due to their unique nature, they can only be killed in their home dimension. This suggests that on some level, they are connected to Hades and their dimension of Hell in some physical way. Gift or curse, demons can fight mercilessly and to the death in other dimensions without fear of losing their lives. They suffer the pain of the ordeal and appear to *die*, dissipating into a pile of ash or a mist, both of which smell of sulfur before vanishing altogether from the realm of men, but reappear, as a spirit-like essence to be reborn in their home dimension of Hades. If the demons of Hades were created by god-like beings as shock troops in some cosmic battle between good and evil, chaos and order, then their design was ingenious, for they would die in the realm of mortals only to reappear in the domain of Hell to be reborn a few decades later to cause trouble and destruction anew. Of course, that is but one theory, and there is no Alien Intelligence or deity who



claims responsibility for the creation of demonkind. Though many dark gods and evil forces summon and use demons, it is the Demons Lords of Hades who rule the majority of their people and claim sovereignty over all demons in the Megaverse, even though some may, at any given time, call another being their Master.

This pseudo-immortality always returns the slain monster to life back in Hades, but kill that same demon in Hades, and he or she is slain once and for all. There is no resurrection or return to life in the pits of Hades.

While demonic pseudo-immortality may seem like a tremendous advantage at first blush, it is not something a demon wants to experience on a regular basis. *First*, demons feel pain just like humans, and death is painful. *Second*, the return to Hades is as a disoriented, discorporate essence floating around Hades in a state of semi-aware half-life for decades before being able to become whole again via a painful rebirth process. During this ghost-like period, known as *The Discorporation*, the demon is effectively a wandering entity without power or influence in the physical realm of Hades. The majority seem to end up on the **Isle of the Dead**, where they eventually undergo rebirth. To the demon, it feels as if only a few weeks or months of being in a daze has passed when it has really been decades or centuries. Once the demon has regained its senses, it is able to be *reborn*, but that too is a humiliating and painful experience.

The long rebirth. Most demons try and find a comparatively quiet place to go through the re-manifestation process. A drop of blood is needed from which to regrow, but the process takes *months*, during which the monster is at one half his normal abilities, looks freakish, and is vulnerable to attack and torment.

The host mother. To hasten the process, most demons, especially Greater Demons, try to find a *womb* to inhabit and grow. As cruel as it sounds, demons have no compunction about violating a mortal life in this fashion. The female need not even be pregnant, as the demon becomes the surrogate infant magically implanted in her womb. (A woman slave or worshiper in Hades needs an 18 or higher to save against demonic impregnation; a female non-slave needs a 14 or higher to save and bonuses to save vs possession apply.) *Using a host to regenerate* enables the demon to steal the woman's life essence, making her progressively weaker and sickly, while the demon within grows strong within. Using a host, the demon can be birthed as an monstrous infant in less than a month or so. The birthing process is always painful for the female host, but is only deadly if the demon chooses to make it so (which is about half the time).

Once spawned from a living host, the reborn monster grows within an hour to appear as a deformed version of itself, but reaches full maturity and strength within 24-48 hours. During this period, the demon has only half his usual M.D.C. (or Hit Points, S.D.C. and A.R.), as well as half his normal level of P.P.E., I.S.P., and magic knowledge. Furthermore, the beast returns to life one experience level less than he was at the moment of death and bears a permanent scar. If the long rebirth is used, the demon appears deformed for months.

Rebirth Data, Appearance, Penalties & Scar

Discorporation Period: Lesser Demons: 1D4x10+20 years. Greater Demons: 1D4x10 years. Demon Lords & Dark Gods (includes the Lords of Hades, such as Modeus and Andras, for example): 1D4x1000+100 years. While these beings are supremely powerful, death does take its toll, causing them to drift much longer than their minions. In essence, their life force is far more complex than an ordinary demon and it takes them far longer to regain their full awareness.

Rebirth Gestation Period: Lesser Demons: 2D4+3 months without a living host, 3D4+21 days inside the womb and 48 hours of deformity and weakness after birthing from a womb.

Greater Demons: 1D4+1 months without a living host, 3D4+10 days inside a womb and 24 hours of deformity and weakness after birthing from a womb.

Demon Lords: 4D6+4 days without a living host, 2D4+3 days inside the womb of a living host and 2D6+12 hours of deformity and weakness after birthing from a womb.

Physical Deformity During Rebirth: Applies during the Gestation/Rebirth period outside the womb, whether it be months or the first 24-48 hours outside after birthing from a womb.

Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons and the Fallen: Alu have no body hair and are even more emaciated looking than usual; they can be quite a comical sight to other demons. Lasae do not have their vicious spikes and have a soft exoskeleton. As a result, they inflict one third damage on their attacks. Shedim have no feathers and look like a giant, plucked chicken. Ghouls/Nasu appear to be skeletal children. Mares/Nightmares are half their normal height and lack their usual hunched back posture. Labassu and Banshees appear as a mist with only vague human features. Aquatics remain at half their normal size and have the hindquarters of a tadpole. Succubus and Incubus appear as bats with the beautiful face of a human infant. Demon Bats are half

their normal size and have only 1D6 small teeth, no fangs. Demon Flies and Couril are larvae with only a hint of stubby, useless wings on their backs and six insect legs. Reborn Taursis are essentially reborn into a new body that will have different mutations each time, and are half their size. Gargoyles appear one third their size and have misshapen vestigial wings. Gurgoyles and Gargoylites have no wings or tails at all and appear at half their normal size. Others appear at half their size. **Note:** All these deformities disappear when the rebirth process is finally complete.

Greater Demons & Demon Lords: Appear as a child-like version of their natural self, which is an insult to their ultimate power.

Penalties: M.D.C./Hit Points/S.D.C./A.R., Natural Horror Factor, P.P.E., I.S.P., skills, attacks per melee round, bonuses and ranges are ALL *half*. Spell knowledge and psionic powers are half the normal number (pick which ones remain in effect, and which are temporarily gone), and shape-changing and teleportation of any kind is impossible until fully restored. The full range of power and abilities for demons return only when full rebirth has been completed. This means demons, especially Greater Demons and Demon Lords, hide until they are full grown, lest one of their enemies or rivals strike them down while not yet fully restored.

Scar of Rebirth (Permanent): Each rebirth leaves the monster with a lasting scar or an open wound, that is a source of ugliness and/or chronic pain, as well as being a constant reminder of past defeats. Roll to determine the type scar or deformity, or pick one. Scarring is accumulative, one for each passing on the mortal plane of existence. The typical Lesser Demon will have a dozen or more, Greater Demons 2-8, and Demon Lords 1-4.

01-20% A small permanent scar about the size of the demon's pinky finger. It never vanishes despite the demon's bio-regenerative powers.

21-40% A boil filled with pus, keeps coming back even if lanced.

41-60% A small cut/wound that never closes and weeps slime or pus several times a day.

61-80% A small cut or scar that drips blood when the demon becomes angry, frustrated or scared.

81-00% Claws, nails or teeth appear brown and rotting at its base.

Demonic Retribution for Death

Killing a demon in the mortal plane of existence and sending it back to Hades can have lasting repercussions, with the demon seeking revenge. *Most Lesser Demons and Sub-Demons* forget about the incident. After all, decades have passed since their death and rebirth, and the person responsible is probably dead himself or an old person. Furthermore, as foot soldiers, Lesser Minions don't really have many avenues for personal revenge, and the odds of one happening to cross paths with the person in the future are not likely. *Greater Demons* are another story. They have long memories and hold a grudge. They are also in positions of power that should allow them the ability to seek personal retribution. If not on the specific person who killed him, then on a family member or descendant of that person. This is particularly true if the demon runs afoul of his killer or a member of the killer's family in the future. Then again, many

Aberrant Greater Demons respect a worthy opponent and may let bygones be bygones, or see a "rematch" with the person or his descendant as fate and part of an intriguing, cosmic game.

The Minion War™

An ongoing war between the demons of Hades and the minions of Dyval has been fought for countless eons. There are no records to indicate when the fighting first began, and as far as the ageless demons of Hades and minions of Dyval are concerned, they have been fighting for *an eternity*. This may or may not be the case, but whatever the truth, the fighting has escalated since Modeus became ruler of Hades.

Until recently, the war was isolated to skirmishes and hit and run tactics which never really resulted in anything substantial. Whenever the Deevils or demons would gain a foothold, inevitably the other side would rally or subvert the other's actions, and the pendulum would swing back to the other side's favor. Both antagonists constantly worked at foiling the plots and schemes of the other in an eternal rivalry of endless practical jokes played on one another and isolated skirmishes. This has been the way it's been for at least 100,000 years.

Furthermore, there was an *unspoken agreement* between the two sides not to attack or invade the other's home realm. This has changed since Modeus has taken charge. The skirmishes increased from small unit attacks to mass actions involving thousands. When it seemed that war would break out on numerous fronts, conflict was diverted to the **Great Rift** in the *Land of the Damned* of the *Palladium World*. There demons and Deevils unleashed their hordes by the tens of thousands to test the others' resolve. The area was perfect, being a remote location where a private, little war could be waged. Fortunately, the *Land of the Damned* is cut off from the rest of the *Palladium World*, and few people in the rest of the world even know the Great Rift and the battle twixt demon and Deevil even exist, let alone has raged for thousands of years.

The Great Rift has been a good location for Deevils and demons to field troops, test strategies and new weapons, and get a feel for what each other could throw into the mix. The goal for both warring factions in this conflict is simple, take the *Great Rift*. A task easier said than done. Essentially, this was the beginning of what would turn into an everlasting and escalating war. As part of the "rules of the games" no more than six factions would exist there at any given time. As new factions arrive, old factions leave the fighting, or two smaller factions merge into a larger one. Both sides have funneled troops into the Great Rift for thousands of years without ever gaining a lasting advantage over the other, and yet the battle continues (and will probably continue with no end in sight).

The battle for the Great Rift has been a *stalemate* with no one side gaining more of an advantage than the other. However, Modeus, having finally tested the mettle of his demon hordes, grew impatient, and throwing caution to the wind, decided the time for invasion had come! All that was needed was a portal to

Dyval. Nobody other than Abdul-Ra had been to Dyval (and he was a prisoner at the time), so they could not just use Dimensional Teleport to appear. A gateway to Dyval had to be found. And with one swift order, thousands of demon scouts were sent looking for a portal that would lead them to the doorsteps of the Deevils' home dimension. With but a single order from Modeus, thousands of demons were dispatched throughout the Megaverse to find another location where a direct attack on the Lords of Dyval could take place.

The First Dimensional Offensive

It would take a considerable amount of time, but eventually, five key locations would be identified as major gateways to Dyval.

The first and obvious portal was the one within the *Great Rift* of the **Palladium World**. However, the Great Rift was already a battlefield and the warriors of Dyval were too intractable to make launching an invasion from this portal a reality. The Lords of Dyval would be instantly aware of any incursion that took place at the Great Rift and defenders would swarm over an invasion force before they could establish a serious foothold into the *Dyval Hell*. On the other hand, it would be the obvious choice, and would draw many of Dyval's defenders, leaving the other portals undefended and wide open for launching an attack. The distraction at the Great Rift could be invaluable.

A second direct portal was found on **Rifts Earth**, in the Black Forest of Germany. There, at the *Tree of Darkness* (see **Rifts® Sourcebook Three**, **Mindwerks™** for details), hundreds of supernatural beings lingered. Within the bowels of the tree, a relatively unguarded portal was found. A tree limb with the head of a horned demon is the doorway to Dyval. Very close by is a similar portal to Hades from which the demons could emerge and amass in large numbers very quickly. This location was ideal, but required the cooperation of the *Tree of Darkness*. Given the evil nature of the tree, striking a bargain was quick and easy. **Note:** There are many other dimensional Rifts that could be used to invade Dyval (and Hades) and they will be strategic targets in the future, but the Black Forest Rift is a direct link to Dyval, and that's what's needed to launch the attack.

The third and fourth portals to Dyval were found in the **Three Galaxies**, specifically **Phase World** and the planet of **Monde**. Phase World was too busy and heavily trafficked as a dimensional nexus in and of itself, plus the Lords of Phase World would not take kindly to fielding an invasion force. However, demons could arrive there relatively unmolested and use Phase World as a means to arrive on the planet Monde undetected by the Deevils. They could then use the portal on Monde to invade Dyval.

Finally, on **another Earth** planet of humans, in another dimension, a **fifth portal to Dyval** was found located in the sewers of a place called *Century Station* (see the **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebook **Century Station™**). Here, however, the Deevil scourge had already established a foothold, as if waiting for demons to arrive. Could it have been they already knew about the portal and had taken means to guard against an invasion through it? Or worse, was it possible that a traitor or spy among the demons had warned the Deevils of their plans? Or was it mere coincidence that the minions of Dyval were already

present on the planet? Whatever the case, it was another portal from which the demons could begin their offensive into Dyval.

There are, undoubtedly, other suitable portals, but for now, these would do fine.

A Bold Plan

Four different locations would be the initial kickoff of the invasion of Dyval. Troops were being gathered and all was falling into place. The legions of Hades would invade Dyval. Once again, it was time for the ranks of demons to rise and march to the Demon's Gate in the Abyss of Hades. Once at Demon's Gate, the hordes would be split up. The largest force would be sent to the **Great Rift** in the **Palladium World**. There, with an arsenal of new weapons, the largest mass action in the history of the Great Rift would take place. A staggering 100,000 demons would be sent. Thousands more would simultaneously be sent to the world of **Heroes Unlimited Earth**, **Phase World**, **the Three Galaxies**, and finally **Rifts Earth**.

The Mission: To capture and hold each respective portal long enough to invade Dyval en masse with millions of demon troops! **Wave one** would secure the portal and open it. **Wave two** would be the shock troops to actually enter and attack Dyval, pouring in from three of the five portals. (The portal at the Great Rift in the *Palladium World* would be largely a diversion, unless they got lucky. The portal at *Phase World* would serve as a quick means to access the *planet Monde* and the portal there used to invade Dyval.) Wave two operatives would also hold the portals in the corresponding dimensions and prevent the minions of Dyval from closing or claiming them. Finally, **wave three** would be the *demon invasion force* to march across Dyval, laying siege to its citadels and conquering them one by one.

Modeus hoped that new allies and recruits could be picked up along the way and join them in the conquest of Dyval. Some of these "recruits" would be from worlds conquered just prior to the Dyval invasion, others would be people and planets willing to serve Hades or join in the invasion and destruction of Dyval, whether they be demon worshipers, mercenaries or other enemies of Dyval. Thus, the Lord of Hades has started a sweeping campaign in other demon-held worlds for recruiting troops, supplies and supporters. Anyplace where there is a demon cult, a church of darkness, or enemies of Dyval (including heroes and champions of light), word is being spread and recruits are being gathered. All this is in addition to the efforts being undertaken in Hades itself. Modeus once again tries to organize the Demon Lords into a single pantheon and get them all to join in this bold campaign of conquest and destruction. The promise of power is very alluring to the demons and those who worship them. Likewise, the thought of wiping out one demonic race is attractive to heroes even if it means temporarily joining forces with demons. Hades is quickly becoming the focal point to coordinate and gather all such forces to the demon cause.

A shrewd and cunning warrior and general, Modeus is no fool, and has taken certain precautions assuring he can conduct the Minion War on his terms. While the Gods of Light may be aware that the Minion War is flaring up, Modeus has convinced various parties that he and his demons have no intention of disrupting the cosmic balance, and that his invasion of Dyval, if

successful, could help bring increased order to the Megaverse. In short, he's convinced them to stay out of this war and to let the chips fall where they may. For the most part, the Gods of Light see the Minion War as something that should occupy two major forces of evil for centuries, and if they are lucky, the two will cripple each other, for eons to come, if not destroy one another.

As one final bit of insurance, Modeus has an ancient relic that is sure to keep the Gods of Light at bay. Through various third parties, Modeus has come into possession of the **Skull of Osiris**. While he has no interest in the skull himself, it is of great value to Isis and the Gods of Light. If for some reason they begin interfering in the Minion War, Modeus plans on using it as a bargaining chip or an ace up his sleeve.

The Taut Offensive

It takes a great deal of time and effort to get troops in place to mount such an offensive. This is even more difficult when dimensional barriers block the way. To keep demons combat ready and avoid boredom and the trouble that comes with it, *General Zukel* instructed his armies to round up hundreds of thousands of Worms of Taut. All kinds were collected and brought to various holding areas, where the demons were told, when they had gathered enough, the monsters would be sent through dimensional portals right into Dyval. The Worms would surprise and slay many, softening up the enemy for the main invasion force riding in a short time later. At least that was the plan.

As fate would have it, some overzealous demons misinterpreted an order and launched the Taut Offensive. 50,000 demons, mostly Ghouls, Nasu, Gurgoyles and Shedim, followed after the Worms and joined the attack. Once one holding area of Worms were unleashed, the others followed suit in a domino effect of confusion, and so the invasion of Dyval was on — but months before the main offensive could be in place. While the Taut Offensive worked in surprising the denizens of Dyval, killing tens of thousands and wreaking havoc, without the invasion force in place, the Deevils were able to respond within a matter of days, hunted down and killed the 50,000 demons (once in, they had no way out of Dyval and no additional troop support), and slew half the Worms. The rest were corralled or allowed to run amok in places where their damage was negligible. Perhaps needless to say, this alerted the Deevil Lords that the demons were planning a major attack against Dyval. If this wasn't the first sign of an impending all-out-war, they reckoned, it was certainly a breach of the unspoken agreement not to attack each other in their home realm. As is their nature, the minions of Dyval have responded quickly by amassing their own armies, striking out at locations across the Megaverse and preparing for the worst.

The demons have yet to feel the full force of Deevil retribution or a full scale counterattack. In their arrogance, the Demon Lords believe the minions of Dyval must be frightened, broken and confused. And even if they are preparing for war, they will never be able to do so in time to thwart the demon invasion force. Thus, the Demon Lords are convinced their fundamental plan can still work, and it remains in motion, even as the denizens of Dyval prepare for the coming invasion.

The Taut Offensive, while stupid and premature, did inflict some damage to Dyval and give Hades a first strike victory. It has also rallied the demon hordes, and excitement about a war designed to conquer Dyval has spread through Hades like wildfire. For the first time in ages, the splintered demon factions and hierarchy are united under one common cause: the conquest and/or destruction of Dyval. It is a war supported by the majority, and welcomed by all people of Hades. General Zukel's ill-executed offensive has galvanized the demons of Hades and forces the War Council at the *city of Gamora* to implement war tactics and strategies as quickly as possible. Screams for blood and war fill the air. The time to act has come.

The Demon War Machine

Not since the days of yore have demons fielded a fighting force of this magnitude. The ongoing battle in the dimensional gash that is the *Great Rift* is an easy task involving a few thousand demons at any given time. Invading the Deevils' home dimension is something else entirely. It will involve millions upon millions of Gargoyles, demons, Netherbeasts, the Fallen, and even mortal henchmen and pawns. Modeus, with his inner circle, has reorganized the entire military structure of Hades, developed new equipment to field, and recruited henchmen from across the Megaverse.

Indeed, in addition to the invasion force and major battles on at least three fronts, possibly five, there will be countless small but important skirmishes erupting across the Megaverse. Some will be battles of will, others battle for entire planets. Some conflicts will be shows of power to win the support of outsiders, others may involve quests for ancient magic that might turn the war in the favor of one side or the other, and still others may be targeted assaults against key leaders, heroes, enemies, resources and places that might sway the advantage or momentum to one side or the other. A few will be atrocities and side stories in a dark corner of the war that have little significance to the war effort, but plenty of significance to the innocent people being used, abused, tormented, enslaved or killed.

Each Demon Lord is responsible for organizing his own armies and contributing them to the war cause. Each army would be 50,000 troops. Each Demon Lord is responsible for at least *30 armies*. The armies are broken down further into areas of specialties, regiments, battalions, companies, and squads. Of course, keeping demons organized as fighting units is another problem entirely. The hope is the use of War Drums (see the equipment), strong and frightening leaders, combined with the excitement of going to war, will be enough to keep the demon hordes united and motivated. That's why the Brek-Shall, Soul Catchers and other demons seldom unleashed into the outside world have been recruited to serve as leaders and special forces.

Minions of Hades by Race & Hierarchy

Slaves

- Mortal or infernal (forced labor)
- Slave Master

Sub-Demons

- Gargoylite (tricksters & tempters)
- Gurgoyle (wingless warriors)
- Gargoyle (winged warriors)
- Gargoyle Mage (leader, spell caster)
- Gargoyle Lord (commander, warrior)

Exalted Worshipers (misguided and evil)

- Worshiper/Follower (dedicated, evil henchmen)
- Witch (lesser mortal servant)
- Demon Priest (lesser mortal servant)
- Demon High Priest (elite mortal servant)

The Fallen – Demon Outcasts

- Individuals fallen out of favor and shunned.
- Tauris
- Death Demon

Lesser Demons

- Demon Bat (reconnaissance, scouts, spies)
- Demon Fly (scouts, spies, messengers, cargo haulers)
- Tauris (centaur-like, warrior, shock troop; one of the Fallen)
- Alu, Demon Hound (warrior/infantry soldier)
- Aquatic (marine warriors).
- Banshee, Harbinger of Death (intimidation & terror)
- Couril, Demon Faerie (spies, lookouts & informers)
- Ghouls and Nasu (disposal of remains)
- Labassu, Spirit (guards, patrol and messengers)
- Lasae (torturers, interrogators, spies and assassins)
- Mares/Nightmares (saboteurs, torturers, psychological warfare)
- Shedim (warriors/infantry soldier)
- Succubus and Incubus (shape-changers, spies/undercover ops, assassins, & manipulators)

Greater Demons

- Brek-Shall (elite warrior/berserker, Sergeant)
- Death Demon (undead plague, terrorist, assassin, the Fallen)
- Soul Catcher (warrior, special ops, assassin)
- Baal-Rog (warrior, Commander)
- Demon Locust (leaders, destroyers, schemers)
- Gallu, Demon Bull (Lieutenant, warrior)
- Jinn, the Elemental Demons (Captain, vengeful, killer, wild card)
- Magot (living tank, petrifier, devourer, warrior)
- Night Owl (General, strategist, schemer)
- Raksasha (General, schemer, ruler, shape-changer)

Demon Royalty

- The Four Demon Beetles (Demon Lords of Chaos; wild card)
- Duke or Marquis (typically a Greater Demon)
- Prince (typically a Greater Demon)

Demon Lords – The Supreme Rulers of Hades

Demon Squads

While there will be swarming attacks with hundreds of thousands to millions of demonic warriors on both sides, many confrontations will involve close combat and small squad operations (especially where *player characters* and *role-playing games* are involved). These teams will typically involve squads (6-16 troops), a platoon (40-60 troops) or a company (120 to 240 troop).

Specialized squads and companies are designed for special operations such as *Reconnaissance*, *Seek and Destroy*, *Assassination*, *Intelligence Gathering/Scouting*, *Espionage*, *Sabotage*, *Rescue*, *Surgical Strikes*, and so on.

Such groups are likely to include demons and operatives with specialized skills, magic, powers and dispositions best suited for the task at hand. Specific types of demons are chosen, and in many cases, the members of the most elite squads may be hand-picked by their Commander, Duke, Prince or Lord, and some may answer only to a top official in the demon hierarchy.

Of course, rivalry between the different Demon Lords of Hades and their underlings remains, so some Special Forces groups may not answer to another military commander or even another Demon Lord, and groups within the demons' invasion force may be at odds with *each other* or not trust or like one another. Some Demon Princes and Dukes have used the Minion War to get rid of their own "problems" by forcing slaves, prisoners, rivals and undesirables into military service. Their hope: a) to get them out of town and out of their hair at least for now, and b) that they perish in combat and never return.

Common Demonic Military Combinations. Though the creation process is less than perfect, some formidable forces and specialized squads, especially those built around Greater Demons, are in place. The following are some of the most notable.

Reconnaissance Groups

The purpose of any reconnaissance group is to acquire "intelligence" – information – on the local environment, resources, danger, and especially enemy operations. Small squads are quick, flexible and mobile. Reconnaissance groups are supposed to slip into enemy (and unknown) territory, gather intelligence and slip out unseen by the enemy to report their findings. However, since demons are generally undisciplined, hot-tempered and primordial forces of emotion and evil, they often engage the enemy with the slightest provocation and attack out of anger, revenge, blood lust or glory seeking. The result is some of these groups end up dead or alerting the enemy to their army's presence rather than fulfilling the parameters of their mission.

Light Air Reconnaissance Squad: Four Demon Bats, two Demon Flies, two Gargoyles, and a Gargoyle Lord or Mage as Squad leader.

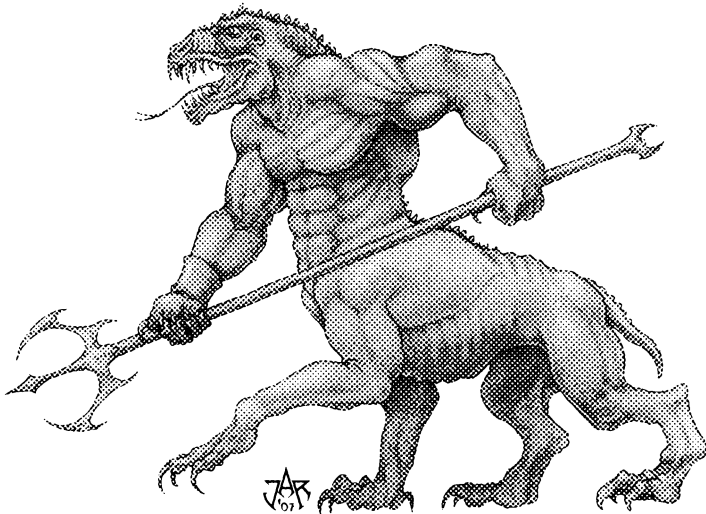
Heavy Air Reconnaissance Squad: Four Gargoyles, two Demon Flies, two Couril or Gargoylites, one Labassu, and one Jinn (Air) or Baal-Rog as Squad Leader.

Gargoyle Air Reconnaissance Squad: Six or eight Gargoyles or Gargoylites, and one Gargoyle Mage or Gargoyle Lord as Squad Leader. **Note:** Many demons see Gargoyles as expendable recon groups and will often dispatch any six for recon purposes.

Light Ground Reconnaissance Squad: Two Alu, two Shedim, two Gurgoyles, two Couril (or Demon Flies) and one Gallu Bull as Squad Leader.

Heavy Ground Reconnaissance Squad: Four Alu, four Shedim, and two Taursis, two Lasae, one Labassu, one Succubus/Incubus, one Gargoyle Mage or Lord, one Brek-Shall or Baal-Rog or Night Owl as Squad Leader.

Elite Reconnaissance Squad: Two Demon Flies (or Demon Bats), two Gargoylites, two Gargoyle Lords, two Lasae, two Night Owls or Baal-Rogs and a Raksasha as Squad Leader.



Seek and Destroy Squads

There are times when key Deevil bases, commanders, or units are located, or in certain cases, need to be found. It is the job of Seek and Destroy units to find these enemies and eliminate them. Seek and Destroy units often vary and can be combined with Reconnaissance or Infantry units. Many demons want to be on a Seek and Destroy Squad, because they think it is glamorous and fun where they can reap a lot of glory, and inflict collateral damage on their enemies.

Light Seek and Destroy Squad: Four Lasae, four Alu, two Gargoyles or Gargoylites, one Mare, one Labassu or Demon Fly, with a Shedim or Succubus as Squad Leader.

Heavy Seek and Destroy Squad: Six Alu, six Shedim, four Taursis or Brek-Shall, and two Gallu Demon Bulls, with a Baal-Rog Squad Leader.

Elite Seek and Destroy Squad: Four Alu, four Gallu Bulls, two Brek-Shall or Baal-Rogs, two Shedim, two Succubus, two Death Demons or Demon Locusts, two Gargoyle Lords or Mages, and a Baal-Rog or Night Owl as Squad Leader.

Commando/Special Forces

Elite squads are usually a mix of demons who have specialized skills or abilities suited for a particular task. They may provide specialized intelligence gathering, first strike capabilities, special operations, offer troop support or add firepower. These groups can vary greatly.

Commando Assassination Squad: A typical Assassination Squad is composed of two Lasae, two Succubus/Incubus, one Soul Catcher, one Raksasha and a Baal-Rog or Night Owl as Squad Leader.

Commando Assault Team: Two Brek-Shall, two Shedim, two Gallu Bulls, two Lasae, one Soul Catcher, one Gargoyle Lord or Mage, and a Baal-Rog as Squad Leader.

Espionage Undercover Squad: Two Succubus/Incubus, one Raksasha, two Couril, two Lasae, one Mare or Gargoylite, one Labassu or Soul Catcher, and possibly two Alu or Gallu as muscle/support. Squad Leader could be a Night Owl, Baal-Rog or a Raksasha.

Espionage Spy Team: One Succubus/Incubus, two Couril, one Demon Fly or Gargoylite, one Lasae, two Alu, and a Baal-Rog, Night Owl or Raksasha as Squad Leader.

Infiltration & Sabotage: Four Succubus/Incubus, two Raksasha, one or two Soul Catchers, one Gargoylite, one Jinn, one Couril, and a Raksasha or Baal-Rog as Squad Leader.

Magic Squad – These specialized demons are usually in groups of 6-10. Two Gargoyle Mages, one Gargoylite, one or two Jinn, one Soul Catcher, one Couril and a Raksasha, with as Night Owl or Demon Locust as Squad Leader.

Infantry

The main fighting forces.

Light Infantry Squad: Eight Alu or Shedim, four Gurgoyles, two Lasae, and one Gallu Bull or Gargoyle Lord as Squad Leader.

Lightning Infantry Squad (small, fast and deadly): Eight Lasae, two Couril, two Demon Flies, two Labassu, and one Gallu Bull or Brek-Shall as Squad Leader. x4 for a platoon.

Light Gargoyle Infantry Company: 50% Gurgoyles, 35% Gargoyles, 5% Gargoylites, 5% Gargoyle Mages, and 5% Gargoyle Lords. Captained by a Gargoyle Lord. A company has 120-240 troops.

Light Infantry Company, Mixed: 30% Shedim, 30% Alu, 30% Gurgoyles, 5% Taursis, 5% Lasae or Gargoylites commanded by either a Baal-Rog or Gallu Bull.

Light Infantry Company, One-Breed: 90% of the troops are all one of the following: Alu, Shedim, Taursis, Gurgoyles, Lasae, or Couril. 10% some other Lesser Demon (probably fliers, like Gargoyles, Gargoylites, Demon Bats or Demon Flies). Captained by a Gallu Bull or Brek-Shall.

Armored Infantry Company: 60% Magots, 20% Taursis, 20% Demon Locusts. Commanded by a Baal-Rog or Demon Locust.

Chaos Infantry Company: 30% Death Demons, 30% Demon Locust, 30% Magots or Brek-shall, and 10% Jinn or Soul Catchers. Commanded by a Brek-Shall or Night Owl.

Dead Brigade (Light Infantry): 70% Ghouls and Nasu, 30% animated dead. Captained by a Gallu Bull or Soul Catcher. This is not a skilled fighting force and is generally used as cannon fodder and sheer weight of numbers. Many also be used to clean up a battle field and dispose of bodies.

Deathbringer Infantry Company: 40% Death Demons, 20% Tauris, 20% Shedim, 10% Gallu Bulls, and 10% Ghouls. Captained by a Brek-Shall or a Demon Locust.

Heavy Gargoyle Infantry: 60% Gargoyles, 20% Gurgoyles, 10% Gargoyle Mages or Gargoylites, 10% Gargoyle Lords.

Heavy Infantry Company, Mixed: 30% Gallu Bulls, 30% Brek-Shall or Baal-Rogs, 20% Magots or Demon Locust, 10% Soul Catchers, 10% Jinn or Death Demons. Commanded by a Baal-Rog, Demon Locust or Raksasha.

Heavy Infantry Company, One-Breed: 90% of the troops are all one of the following: Baal-Rogs, Brek-Shall, Death Demons, Gallu Bulls, Soul Catchers, or Gargoyle Lords. 10% Demon Locust, Magots, or Jinn (any). Commanded by a Brek-Shall, Baal-Rog or Demon Locust.

Cavalry Companies

Air Cavalry Gargoyle Company: 65% Gargoyles, 20% Gargoylites, 10% Gargoyle Mages, 5% Gargoyle Lords. Captained by a Baal-Rog or Gargoyle Lord. A company has 120-240 troops.

Light Air Cavalry Company: 40% Gargoyles, 30% Demon Bats, 20% Demon Flies, 5% Baal-Rogs, 2% Labassu, 2% Couril and 1% Jinn (Air). Captained by a Baal-Rog or Gargoyle Lord.

Heavy Air Cavalry Company: 40% Demon Locusts or Night Owls, 40% Baal-Rogs, 10% Gargoyle Mages or Lords and 10% Jinn (Air). Captained by a Baal-Rog, Demon Locust or Night Owl.

Light Cavalry Company: 10% Gargoyles, 40% Tauris, 50% Shedim or Alu riding Netherbeasts. Captained by a Gallu Bull or a Baal-Rog.

Heavy Cavalry Company: 20% Tauris, 30% Magots, and 50% Gallu Bulls or Baal-Rogs or Brek-Shall riding Netherbeasts! Commanded by a Baal-Rog, Raksasha or Demon Locust.

Non-Demon Troops

Any combination of mortal slaves, followers, worshipers, allies and mercenaries can be assigned to or turned into armies, companies and squads. While Hades is a place filled with demons, not all troops are of supernatural beings.

One of the largest resources demons tap are mortals and primitive beings who lust for power, glory, respect and recognition. Others are hapless slaves forced to fight, while others are fiends and supernatural creatures who have allegiance only to whoever is lining their pocket at the time. Still others are followers who worship demons as demigods and deities, and are only too happy to serve their unholy masters. Some demons will, on occasion, use mercenaries, promising them whatever spoils of war they can claim for themselves, but such "hired guns" are unusual and often isolated to a specific world or dimension. The mercs are often the victims of demon lies and ma-

nipulation. **Note:** Demons and Deevils are happy to *use* just about anyone and anything to get their way and generally see any ally that is not a demon of Hades as cannon fodder, pawns and henchmen. All are considered as expendable fodder to be disposed of as needed, and not to be trusted.

Listed below are *some* guidelines and beings who may be enlisted in the Minion War as it sweeps across the Megaverse®.

From the Palladium World: Minotaurs, Melech, Loogaroo, Scarecrow, Gromek, Ogres, Trolls, Orcs, Goblins, Bug Bears and Ratlings are among the most willing mortals to serve demonic forces, followed by humans, Lizard Men, Kobolds, evil Giants, Coyles, and others.

Wolfen, Kankoran, Bear Men, Eandroth, Titans, Elves, Dwarves, Gnomes and Rahu-Men, as a people, will avoid alliances with demonic beings, and if anything, will oppose them and fight to keep innocent people safe and their world free of infernal beings. Faerie Folk, Centaurs, Grimbor, and Troglodytes tend to stay out of such conflicts entirely.

Aberrations, Blighters, Blood Wraiths, Bone Fiends, Eviscerals, Festulents, Gravediggers, Harbingers, Jaliquettes, Mortoiis, Rawheads, Revenants, Sladkas, Sleepwalkers, (see **Rifts® Dark Conversion** for stats) and other demonic creatures common to the Land of the Damned or the Palladium World may be willing to serve demons for the chance to kill, wreak havoc, enjoy murderous fun or to escape bondage.

From the Earth Dimension of Heroes Unlimited: Most ordinary human beings and all heroes will reject and oppose demons and all forces of darkness. However, there will be some people and many villains (not all) willing to serve demons and Deevils, and others who can be tempted or secretly manipulated by them.

The supernatural beings from the Earth Dimension of Nightbane® are a force unto themselves and will not ally themselves to either side in the Minion War. Any appearance of either infernal on Earth or the Nightlands will be seen as an invasion and dealt with accordingly. Likewise, the Nightbane and other factions are not likely to join forces with the demons of Hades or the minions of Dyval.

The supernatural beings from the Earth Dimension of Beyond the Supernatural® are a completely different set of demonic beings, but some of them, on an individual basis, might be persuaded to join demons or Deevils, but not en masse. Sowki, Dimensional Ghouls, Grave Ghouls, Gremlins, Goqua, and Demon Spiders are more inclined to join demons. Burrowers, Dybbuk, Dar'ota, Hell Hounds, Malignous, Nacarant and Mindolar are more likely to join Dyval. Other supernatural beings of the new *Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition* are like to stay out of the conflict and will not ally themselves to either side in the Minion War.

Phase World and the Three Galaxies: Most Cosmo-Knights, the CCW, United Worlds of Warlock, human beings, heroes and other good people will reject and oppose demons and all forces of darkness. However, there are plenty of mercs and opportunists who might be attracted to the conflict, and humans and other races who can be secretly manipulated and used by demonic (and Dyval) forces.

The Kreeghor of the Transgalactic Empire are too proud to serve any master (demon or otherwise), though there may be some within the TGE willing to join the forces of darkness (and

if the right offer came along, who knows). Likewise, the Splugorth are a power unto themselves.

The supernatural beings of Wormwood are infernal rivals, not allies, to demons or Deevils, and the heroes of that realm oppose all supernatural evil.

The villainous forces from the Dimension of Skraypers may be included to join forces with one side or the other on an individual basis. However, the Tarlok will see both factions in the Minion War as potential invaders and rivals, and respond accordingly. Most heroes will oppose evil and demonic invaders, but are not likely to leave their home dimension.

From Rifts Earth: C'ro Demon Mages, Neuron Beasts, Brodkil, Black Faerie, Witchlings, Grave Ghouls, Poptal "Dragon Slayers," Were-beasts, evil Dragons, Simvan, Srynn Cannibals, Tautons, Oni One Hundred (Japanese Imps, Hannya Demon, Oni Master, Oni Mystic), and other evil beings are all likely to sell their services to one side or the other.

The Coalition States and Free Quebec will freak out when demon and Deevil hordes make a bid to conquer parts of Rifts Earth and seize control of various Rifts. These two high-tech military powers will once again join forces to engage and oppose a greater evil.

Most other humans, D-Bees, kingdoms and heroes around the world, from Cyber-Knights and Juicers to Demon Slayers and Warlords of Russia, will reject and oppose demons and all forces of darkness. However, there will be some people and many villains (not all) willing to serve the forces of Hades and Dyval, and others who can be tempted or secretly manipulated by them.

For the most part, members of the *Federation of Magic* will not worship, ally or bow down before demonic or Deevil forces, but some factions may be willing to work with them, if the price is right.

Vampires are a power unto themselves and another long-time rival of both the demons of Hades and the minions of Dyval and would never work with either infernal in the Minion War. If anything, they might take localized action to undermine them as the opportunity presents itself.

The Minions of Splugorth will not be happy to see Earth invaded by either of the old rivals from Hades or Dyval. Their minions will not join either side and, in fact, may be sent out on missions to subvert and undermine the operations of both.

Daemonix (Feculence, Manslayer, Immolator, Hang Dog, and Basal) *might* be persuaded to join the side of Dyval (they hate demons), but only if treated as equals (i.e. Lesser Dyvalians).

The Gargoyle Empire will be unhappy with the Minion War spilling onto Rifts Earth, and in an effort to maintain their autonomy will either try to remain neutral or throw in with minions of Dyval.

The Brodkil Empire is likely to submit to whichever force beats them into submission first.

The Yama Kings and the infernals of China have their own problems and generally regard the forces of Hades and Dyval as their rivals. The same is true of forces in India and elsewhere.

The demons of Russia, on the other hand, may be willing to serve one side or the other if it is made worth their while.

Lesser Chaos Demons such as Firethorn, Hang-Jaw Demon Rats, Razoredged Prowler, Savage Fury, Spiked Strangler, Bumble Ball, Grave Treader, Grim Hunter, Heckler, Hell's Wrath, Nightwind, Raging Doom, and Shimmering Slayer (see **Rifts® Chaos Earth**) might be persuaded to join demons or Deevils. However, they have not been found on Rifts Earth since the Great Cataclysm and early decades of the 200 Years Dark Age. They are found in other dimensions.

Exalted Worshippers

Demon High Priest

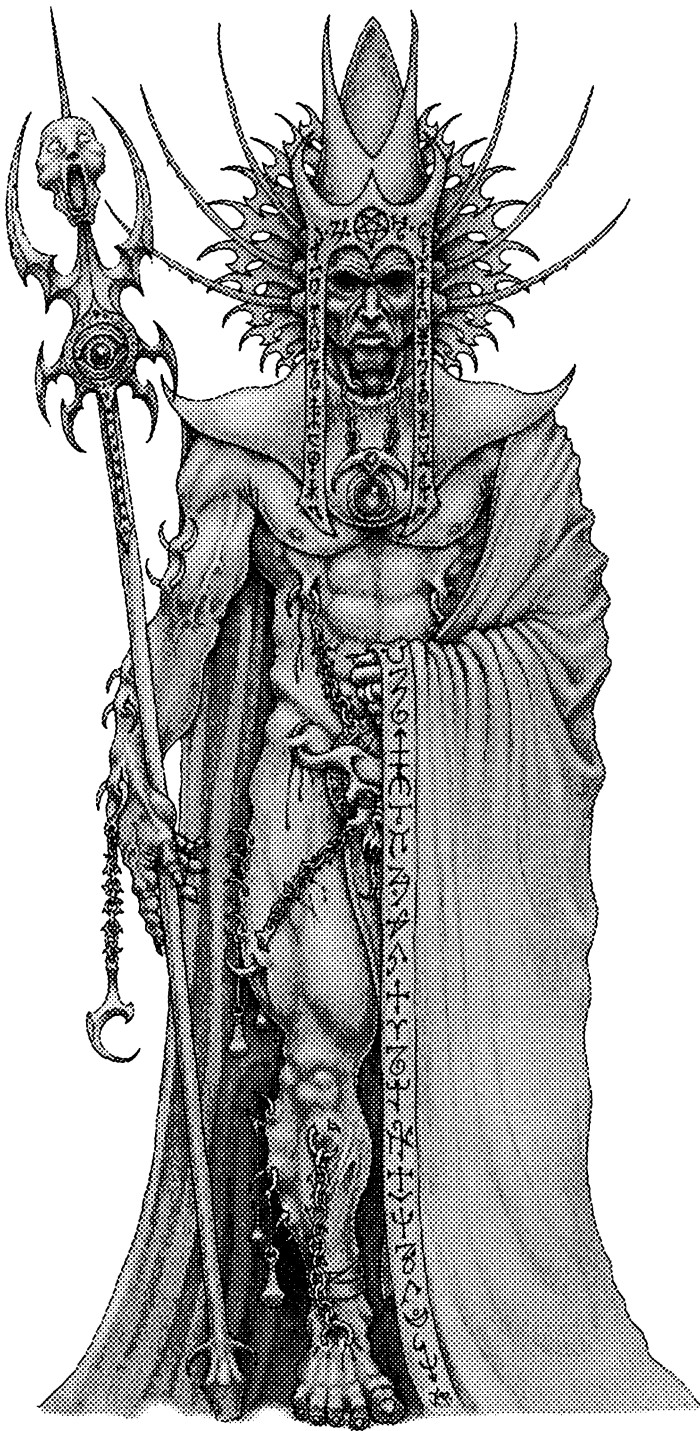
Non-Player Character (NPC) & Villain

By Carl Gleba and Kevin Siembieda

With the decline of demon worship around the Megaverse, it was decided that a new approach was needed. Several attempts at starting an official religion or pantheon that worshiped demons have failed over the years, but Modeus is giving it another try. For the longest time, demons relied on their Witches to act as the eyes and ears of the religion. In most cases it was the Witch's job to gather followers and further the worshiping of demons. However, Witches, while they serve a useful purpose and epitomize demonic sensibilities, are, at best, unreliable. There is no organized demon religion, so it makes attracting and keeping worshipers difficult, especially when you have to hide from your enemies. Ah, but an organized religion, with devout followers and a priest to lead them, that has potential, and it is the approach that Modeus is taking on the subject. It might be slow to catch on at first, as are all religions, but with a dedicated priest and not some rogue Witch, there is a real chance for an organized religion to take off.

This experiment was started on Hades several centuries ago among the slaves and Sub-Demons and has met with reasonable success. It was only in the last decade that Modeus decided to unleash his Demon High Priests upon the Megaverse to breed more worshipers.

Demon High Priests are part evangelist, part profiteer, part snake oil salesman, and all evil. They are akin to a Bishop and are the leaders of their diabolic church. Their message: selfishness, wealth, greed and retribution are good. Mercy, compassion and charity are for fools and weaklings. The strong are wolves among sheep who *take* what they want and walk over the bodies of the weak, meek and merciful on their way to the top! And worshiping demons and praying to Lord Modeus can help you achieve your dreams. The tactics they use in obtaining followers are at best underhanded and deceiving, but then most demons are the symbols of power, deceit, and cunning. The Demon High Priest always seeks worlds with conflicts, or even instigates them. Typically, one side in a conflict is selected for conversion, and the Demon High Priest may offer his services as a healer and advisor, but may also include providing *muscle* in the form



of summoned demons, magic leveled against their enemy, or even a favor from one of the Demon Lords, although the latter is rare.

Once the Demon High Priest is firmly entrenched, he usually appoints a local priest and trains him personally. Finally, several loyal followers will be granted a special boon from their demonic god in the form of power. Essentially, the High Priest identifies some of the more ardent followers, the ones who won't waver when things get rough, and offers them a pact. After several years, a Demon High Priest should have a growing congregation, complete with a dozen or so Demon Priests and perhaps two dozen Witches.

These tactics work well in dimensions where the names of Modeus and Andras don't ring of fear. Worlds such as Palladium are much more difficult to convert, especially with such a

large presence from the Church of Light, and other so called good religions who are mortal enemies of demonkind. Currently, several worlds in the Three Galaxies and a few other select dimensions have the religion in full force. There are at least two to three planets in each of the Three Galaxies of Phase World devoted to the new *Church of Strength and Dominance* (demon worshippers). Each is led by a High Priest and over a hundred priests and hundreds of Witches. For now, they remain an untapped resource should Modeus need them. In the meanwhile, he is content to let them grow and flourish and branch out.

Abilities and Powers of the Demon High Priest:

1. Initiation of Pain: Like a Major Pact, the High Priest must dedicate his life to the worship and service of Modeus and the new pantheon of demons. As a result, there is a long and painful initiation. Torture is dished out on a daily basis for several months, till the priest reaches the breaking point. The result is a tolerance for pain like no other. This can be a good and a bad thing. In the future, minor cuts and abrasions are not even felt, nor are first degree burns or the onset of frostbite.

This also means that the priest can endure fighting well below zero Hit Points (P.E. attribute number x2), does not lapse into a coma, and can recover lost Hit Points (or M.D.C. if a Mega-Damage being) below zero via normal rest and healing. Being able to push oneself beyond the normal limits of pain and endurance gives the Demon High Priest an edge that can catch enemies off guard and spell their doom. They can also endure the most painful of interrogations without cracking, or pretend to crack and reveal only what they want to reveal as part of a trap.

Initiation Bonus: +6 to save vs any situation that requires a save vs pain, +4D6 to S.D.C., +1D6+3 to Hit Points, +15% to save vs coma/death, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, resistant to heat and toxic gases (half damage/effect/penalties and can breathe toxic fumes for 1D4+2 minutes without any ill effect).

2. Healing Touch: Demon High Priests are also granted the power to heal and are instructed to give this gift out freely and without charge, but only to those who can be converted to darkness.

The Healing Touch restores 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points (1D4 M.D.C. to supernatural creatures) and cost 5 P.P.E. per touch. By spending 20 P.P.E., the priest can instantly restore 2D6 Hit Points and 4D6 S.D.C. (2D6 M.D. to supernatural beings and other M.D.C. beings). The healing touch can be used as often as once per melee round, and counts as one melee attack/action. Since the healing is not "divine" healing, it requires the Demon High Priest to expend his own P.P.E. to make the magic work.

3. Supernatural Strength: At third level the Demon High Priest receives the gift of Supernatural Strength. One of the tenets of the church is *strength*, be it through sheer brute force, strength in numbers, or strength in hate. This allows the priest to "practice" what he preaches. By invoking the name of his Demon Lord and spending 10 P.P.E., the priest's P.S. becomes Supernatural and stays that way for 10 minutes per level of experience. This is often used by the priest not just in combat situations, but to impress followers and the masses in general with feats of strength, and during sermons or public rallies as a display of his gods' power.

4. Demon Blood: With a prayer and cutting a Lesser Demon and making him bleed (must be at least 2D4 M.D.), the Demon High Priest can collect half a glass of demon blood (about four ounces) and give a taste to “true believers.” A single drop of this blood (prepared through prayer) gives the true believer Supernatural Strength and 1D4x10 extra S.D.C. for 1D4+2 minutes. The disgusting ritual is useful in defending secret sanctums and churches that fall under attack as well as exacting retribution. If the Demon High Priest drinks all the blood himself, he gets Supernatural P.S., and his Hit Points and S.D.C. are turned into M.D.C. for 1D6+12 minutes.

5. Retributive Punishment: Similar to the Demon Death Blow of some Demon Slayers and Paladins (see the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, page 89, for details), a *Demon High Priest* can channel his demonic master’s dark energy into a devastating attack against creatures of light, angels, avatars, and gods of light to inflict grave Mega-Damage, or severe Hit Point damage to priests and champions of light.

Using either a weapon or a physical attack, the Demon High Priest is able to pierce the armor (or Natural A.R.) of any foe and do damage direct to Hit Points against mortal opponents, or M.D. to supernatural beings. The damage is like an icy knife piercing through the body and the victim needs to save vs magic (15 or higher) or suffer terribly. A successful save means the victim only suffers the normal damage from that type of attack/weapon and the icy cold is shaken off instantly. **Note:** Each Retributive Punishment counts as two melee attacks whether the victim saves or not.

A failed saving throw means the victim not only takes severe damage, 1D4x10 S.D.C. or M.D. (double damage to good gods and their avatars) depending on the nature of the victim, but is also temporarily *sapped* of 1D4 points of P.S. Should multiple Retributive attacks whittle P.S. down to nothing, P.E. is sapped next (at the same 1D4 rate), and then Spd. Temporarily adjust bonuses appropriately. The victim’s strength and endurance return at a rate of 1D4 points per hour. The effects of this attack are accumulative. When P.S. is reduced to half, the victim’s own counterattacks inflict half their normal damage. If reduced to 5 or less, his blows only inflict 1D6 points of damage (not applicable to modern weapons). If P.E. is reduced by half, the victim’s attacks per melee and all combat bonuses are reduced by half. If reduced to 5 or less, the victim has only two attacks per melee round and NO bonuses of any kind! Battering Spd to half reduces the victim’s Spd accordingly, and reducing it to 5 or less, the character sees his attacks per melee reduced to one and he can barely stand on his feet. Reducing Spd beyond this point (with P.S. and P.E. already reduced), the victim passes out for 2D6 minutes. While unconscious he is completely helpless unless someone else comes to his aid, and can be robbed, stripped, chained and taken prisoner, beaten or killed.

6. Summon Demons: To aid in various tasks, the Demon High Priest may summon as many as two Lesser Demons or one Greater Demon per level of the priest’s experience to serve and help him. **Duration:** The demon will remain for one full day (24 hours) per level of the priest and do his bidding without a battle of the wills.

Demon High Priests are expected to treat demon helpers with respect and courtesy, even if it is a Lesser Demon. Indeed, Demon High Priests are indoctrinated to accept that even a

Sub-Demon has more worth than he, and that these demons are advisors and helpers sent to get the Master’s work done, not to serve the High Priest as his slaves. The Demon High Priest can send the demon on missions and short quests that may exceed the usual duration, but the High Priest is expected to have a live sacrifice waiting for the demon when it returns.

Such a summoning can be attempted in one melee (15 seconds) if necessary, but only two Lesser Demons or one Greater Demon appears. Base chance of success is 20% +5% per level of experience; +10% if a human sacrifice is made.

The proper ritual takes one hour and success means the Demon High Priest can summon as many as is possible for his level of experience. Base chance for success is 40% +5% per level of experience. Increase the chance for success by +10% for each human sacrifice made during the ritual. **Note:** The same demons keep reappearing and the priest will come to build a relationship with them.

7. Spell Casting: P.P.E.: P.E. attribute x3 +1D6+4 per level of experience. The Demon High Priest is taught the following spells to assist him in his mission. Calling (8), Cleanse (6), Death Trance (1), Domination (10), Lantern Light (1), Sense Evil (2), Tongues (12), Trance (10), and Turn Dead (6).

At fifth level he acquires Escape (8) and Charismatic Aura (15); at eighth level, Mask of Deceit (15) and Sheltering Force (20); at 11th level, Animate and Command Dead (20) and Constrain Being (20); and at level 14, Agony (20) and Paralysis: Lesser (5).

8. Bonuses: +1D4 to M.A. and P.E. attributes, +1 to save vs magic at levels 1, 4, 9, and 13. In addition to the +2 vs H.F. from the Initiation of Pain, +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15, and +2 to save vs possession.

9. P.P.E. Supplemental: The Demon High Priest knows all about P.P.E. doubling at the moment of death and how the blood sacrifice of large animals, or better yet, humans and other intelligent beings, releases their *doubled P.P.E.* at the moment of death. The Demon High Priest can use that P.P.E. in magic rituals, but he can also absorb the doubled P.P.E. released from one victim slain by his own hand. This absorption can be performed as often as once every minute (4 melee rounds), and can lead to a gruesome bloodletting. P.P.E. acquired from ritual sacrifices or absorbed from a murder can be used immediately or held for 30 minutes per level of the Demon High Priest. As much as four times his own P.P.E. can be held in reserve.

Demon High Priest

Note: These characters are servants of demons and pure evil. As such, they are NPC villains, and should not be allowed as player characters. There can’t be such a thing as a “good” Demon High Priest.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q., M.E. and P.E. of 13 or higher.

Alignment Restrictions: Only evil alignments.

Gender: Any, male or female.

Race: Any mortal race is a potential candidate; S.D.C. or M.D.C. beings can apply.

O.C.C. Skills:

Barter (+16%)

Begging (+16%)

Dance (+20%)

Language & Literacy: Demongolian (+30%)

Language & Literacy: Native Tongue (+20%)

Language: Two of choice (+20%).

Law (15%; so it can be manipulated)

Lore: Demons and Monsters (+25%)

Lore: Hades (+10%)

Math: Basic (+20%)

Pilot: One of choice (+10%).

Public Speaking (+20%)

Seduction (+10%)

Sing (+15%)

W.P. Knife

W.P.: One of choice (any).

Hand to Hand: Basic (cannot be upgraded).

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 6 other skills, +1 additional skill at levels 3, 7, 12, and 15. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Disguise, Escape Artist, Intelligence, Interrogation, and Undercover Ops only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only.

Mechanical: None.

Medical: First Aid or Paramedic, but the latter counts as two skill selections (+10%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Boxing, Gymnastics, or Wrestling.

Pilot: Any basic type of vehicle, except Military type vehicles, Robots, or Power Armor.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Any (+6%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+5%), but Lore skills are at +10%.

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: Select four skills from the Secondary Skills List on page 300 of the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, +1 additional Secondary Skill at levels 4, 8, and 12. These skills are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: A set of traveling clothes, a traveling robe or cloak with a hood, a ceremonial robe, boots, belt, backpack, two holy symbols dedicated to a particular Demon Lord, light M.D.C. armor (20-35 M.D.C.), and one weapon per Weapon Proficiency. Demon High Priests covet power and magic and will, over time, acquire at least a few magic weapons, and at level five, one Unholy Weapon is granted through their deity.

Money: 8,000 to 12,000 per month as a salary, plus has the resources of each dark church or cult the Demon High Priest establishes and of which he has direct leadership (as in 80%

of the valuables). Typically this character has substantial resources to fall back on, from treasure and credits to worshipers and minions. A tithe is collected from all members of the congregation, so raising funds is not very difficult. Typically has access to 3D6x10,000 credits at any give time.

Cybernetics: None; avoid getting any as they interfere with their abilities.

Experience Table – Demon High Priest

1	0,000 – 2,300	9	71,801 – 96,900
2	2,301 – 4,600	10	96,901 – 137,000
3	4,601 – 9,200	11	137,001 – 188,100
4	9,201 – 18,400	12	188,101 – 229,200
5	18,401 – 26,500	13	229,201 – 279,300
6	26,501 – 36,600	14	279,301 – 340,400
7	36,601 – 51,700	15	340,401 – 400,000
8	51,701 – 71,800		

Demon Priest

Non-Player Character (NPC) & Villain

The Demon Priest is a more mundane dark preacher who assists the Demon High Priest and handles the day to day operations of recruitment campaigns and running churches.

Demon Priests are mortal, and have all the same skills at half the bonuses listed for the Demon High Priest, but do not have any of his special powers and abilities, and have not gone through the same agonizing Initiation or training in the pits of Hell. They are recruited from worshipers and indoctrinated and trained by the Demon High Priest.

Other than what's listed below, the character has all the basic O.C.C. and Related Skills and dedication to evil as the Demon High Priest previously stated out.

Also known as Black Priest.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q., M.E. and P.E. of 13 or higher.

Alignment Restrictions: Only evil alignments.

Gender: Any, male or female.

Race: Any mortal race.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 to M.A. and P.E. attributes, +2D6 to S.D.C.

O.C.C. Skills: Same as the Demon High Priest at half his bonuses.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Same as the Demon High Priest at half his bonuses at level one. Plus select two additional skills at levels 2, 5, 9, 13 and 15 as listed under the Demon High Priest at half his bonuses. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Secondary Skills: Same as the Demon High Priest.

Spell Casting: P.P.E.: P.E. attribute x2 +1D6+2 per level of experience. The Demon Priest is taught the following spells to assist him in his mission. Cleanse (6), Death Trance (1), Lantern Light (1), Sense Evil (2), Tongues (12), and Trance (10).

At fourth level he acquires Turn Dead (6), at sixth level, Armor of Ithan (10) and Light Healing (6), at eighth level, Cloak of Darkness (6); at tenth level, Escape (8) and Charismatic Aura (15); and at thirteenth level, Sheltering Force (20).

Standard Equipment: Same as the Demon High Priest minus the magic weapon.

Money: Priests get 3,000-6,000 credits a month plus free room and board, food, and general assistance from the community and church. However, the vast majority (as in 80-90%) of all tithes, donations and loot (some demon worshipping churches and cults rob, kill and loot the bodies of victims) goes to the Demon High Priest, who uses it for the dark church, additional recruitment, and his own needs. The typical demonic church has access to 1D6x10,000 credits at any given time.

Cybernetics: None, and will avoid getting any as they interfere with their abilities.

Demons by Species

Sub-Demons

Gargoylite
Gurgoyle
Gargoyle
Gargoyle Mage
Gargoyle Lord

The Fallen – Demon Outcasts

Individuals fallen out of favor and shunned.
Taursis
Death Demon

Lesser Demons

Demon Bat
Demon Fly
Taursis (one of the Fallen)
Alu, Demon Hound
Aquatic
Banshee, Harbinger of Death
Couril, Demon Faerie
Ghouls and Nasu
Labassu, Spirit
Lasae
Mares/Nightmare
Shedim
Succubus and Incubus

Greater Demons

Brek-Shall	
Death Demon (one of the Fallen)	
Soul Catcher	
Baal-Rog	
Demon Locust	Magot
Gallu, Demon Bull	Night Owl
Jinn, the Elemental Demons	Raksasha

Most heroes and adventurers in **Rifts®** (and many other RPG settings) are aware that demons exist. They know they are cruel, vengeful monsters, vindictive and bickering predators and manipulative tempters.

Demons with a specific and well known allegiance, such as the demons of **Hades** and the Deevils and other minions of **Dyval**, are well known because they are involved in skullduggery across the Megaverse and because they and their fellow demons have formed a sort of *pantheon* or “family” of creatures via a lasting alliance and association with each other. This also applies to the so-called *Russian Demons*, *China Demons*, *Daemonix*, *Vampires* and *Splugorth*, among others. Some of these “families” of demons are known as “archaic demons,” supernatural beings whose existence dates back *before* the reign of the current leaders and powerhouses in the demonic realms today. Archaic demons are generally more animal-like, primal, instinctive and predatory than the “modern” demons of **Hades** and **Dyval**, but can be just as nasty and deadly. (And who is to say how many other species of Hades demons have gone extinct over the eons, or exist only as a tiny handful?)

However, there are demons and monsters even within the well known families of **Hades** demons and *Dyvalians* that few experts know about. These are beings who seldom leave the embrace of Hell and typically serve as Lesser Minions and/or special operatives.

We present these little known, new demons, at the *beginning* of each of the three subsets of Hades demons: *Sub-Demons*, *Lesser Demons*, and *Greater Demons*.

Conversion Notes

Damage is listed as Mega-Damage (M.D.) for the **Rifts®** and **Phase World®** settings, but conversion to S.D.C. settings like **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Nightbane®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™** and similar settings is *super easy*. Unless listed otherwise, damage is a straight *point to point conversion*. So if a bite attack does 2D6+2 M.D., it does 2D6+2 S.D.C./Hit Point damage in non-Mega-Damage worlds that are S.D.C. settings. As supernatural beings, the demons’

physiology *adjust* to their environment and are Hit Point and S.D.C. beings on S.D.C. worlds and M.D.C. beings in Mega-Damage environments.

Hit Points, S.D.C. and Armor Rating (A.R.) are listed in each description.

Skills, Magic and Psionics all function essentially the same in M.D. or S.D.C. environments, only the type of *damage* (M.D. or S.D.C.) or type of *physical protection* (M.D.C. or S.D.C.) varies.

Appearance, disposition, abilities and everything else are the same in either environment.

Sub-Demons

By Kevin Siembieda

The Gargoyle Species

Gargoyles and their kin have been a conquered people as long as any of the current Lords of Hades can remember. They are *Sub-Demons*, supernatural beings with a limited range of power, magic and intelligence. Like most Sub-Demons, they are believed to have been spawned in an era of darkness and chaos that predates the “true demons” who lord over them. As such, they tend to rely more on instinct, brute strength and sheer weight of numbers rather than intellect, cunning, trickery and magic. *True demons* think of Gargoyles in a similar way as modern humans think of the *Neanderthal cavemen* of Earth’s past: savage, unsophisticated and inferior brutes. Only in the case of demonkind, Gargoyles are not extinct, but live to serve their superiors as cannon fodder, servants, lackeys and inferiors forced to do work demons refuse to do for themselves.

In the Hierarchy of Hades, Gargoyles rank below *Lesser Demons* and rate barely above slaves and the Fallen. Still, in Hades, where rank and power represent one’s place in society, it is better to be a Gargoyle than a slave or Fallen.

Gargoyles consider the dimension known as Hades to be their home. However, it is unclear whether or not Hades is their place of origin conquered and claimed by the vanquishing Demon Lords, or whether Gargoyles are transplanted from some other realm. According to Gargoyle myth, they are descended from an ill-fated Gargoyle invasion force that had tried to conquer Hades eons ago, and failed. Thus, it is their fate to forever serve demonkind. If the latter is true, the Gargoyle’s birthplace is long forgotten and probably devoid of Gargoyle-kind, for they roost in the mountains and caves of Hades, nowhere else.

Many Gargoyles have come to accept their fate as a vanquished people and serve their demonic masters with a good measure of obedience and loyalty. As the servants and henchmen of true demons, Gargoyles are sent across the Megaverse, sometimes as spies and henchmen, other times as vast armies, millions strong. They have accepted their place as inferior creatures destined to serve greater demonic beings. This belief is so ingrained that the Gargoyles of Hades may even deny any kinship to off-world Gargoyles who might possess a greater sense of independence, sometimes insisting that they are two distinctly different races. Thus, while all Gargoyles resent being treated so

shabbily by their superiors (and true demons are superior in raw strength and magical powers), only a small percentage hate all of demonkind. That small percentage dreams of escaping servitude, building their own demonic empire and living free to do as they please, but it is a pipe dream, nothing more. Gargoyles who prove to be too rebellious and treacherous are tortured and killed as an example to keep the rest of them in line. It is a process and pecking order that has worked for many millennia.

There are five types of Gargoyles (listed by order of rank from lowliest to the elite): Gargoylites (impish), Gurgoyles (wingless), Gargoyles (winged), Gargoyle Mages (spell casters and advisors) and Gargoyle Lords (leaders).



Gargoylites

Gargoylites are small (only three feet/0.9 m tall), pudgy, impish little versions of Gargoyles that some misguided people have even accused of looking “cute.” Indeed, unlike their giant cousins, Gargoylites (pronounced “gar-goy-lie-teeze”) often smile and seem friendly, helpful, soft-spoken and even shy. Nothing like the massive, muscular giants who dominate this demonic race of beings. It is all a trick to get humanoids to underestimate and trust them, so they may manipulate, influence, trick and guide fools to their doom.

Gargoylites, when pronounced correctly, the name reveals its nature, a Gargoyle that “lies” and “teases” lesser beings. A selfish trickster and deceiver who likes to manipulate and play games with mortals by telling them lies and teasing them with bits of information and half-truths that make the foul little monster seem to be helpful and on their side. Then, when it has won a mortal’s confidence, it encourages acts of greed, revenge, be-

trayal, theft and murder, or plays on a person's fears, insecurities, hate and desires.

Gargoylites don't seek power nor do they desire to rule over others, rather they delight in games of intrigue, manipulation and abuses leveled against gullible and stupid mortals. They are also greedy in the extreme, and have a particular weakness for precious and semiprecious stones, expensive jewelry and rare magic items and collectibles.

Their deceptive natures make them natural spies, infiltrators, thieves and saboteurs, and they are often put to such work by their demonic masters, Gargoyle Lords, and mortals (Shifters, Summoners and other powerful beings) who enlist Gargoylites as their henchmen.

Alignment: Most are Anarchist (60%) or Miscreant (20%), but they can be any.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+2, M.E. 3D6+1, M.A. 3D6+2, P.S. 1D6+18 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd running 3D6; flying Spd 1D4x10+10 (14-35 mph/22.4 to 56 km).

Size: 3 feet (0.9 m) tall; 90-120 pounds (40.5 to 54 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D4x100 even for these diminutive fellows. (Has 5D6 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 6D6 S.D.C., and an A.R. 13 in S.D.C. world settings.)

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E.: 4D6

Disposition: Smooth and consummate liars, who will trick, deceive and betray an associate with smiles on their faces. Masters of seeming sincere, innocent and harmless, but in truth, are selfish cutthroats, crooks, spies and tricksters.

Average Life Span: 400 to 600 years, but some have been known to live over a thousand years.

Natural Abilities: The ability to fly (despite how disproportionately small their wings may be), nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m), superior hawk-like day vision enabling them to see a football-sized target (0.3 m) up to two miles (3.2 m) away, can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) gliding with their wings, turn invisible at will, and bio-regenerate 6D6 M.D. every hour. Their short, stubby, little wings appear to be useless but can carry the Gargoylite and as much as 500 pounds (225 kg) additional weight with ease, although they cannot sustain long flights (30 minutes maximum). The short tail is ineffective in battle.

Special: Metamorphosis into Stone: The Gargoylite possesses powers very similar to the Gargoyle Lord. Metamorphosis into living stone can be performed three times per day (+100 M.D.C. and +1D6 M.D. to punches and kicks when stone, but reduces Spd by one-third). Can fly in stone form, but at half speed. The duration is limited to six hours per metamorphosis. Impervious even to Mega-Damage heat, fire, lava, and acid when turned to stone.

Special: Fire Breath: 4D6 M.D., range: 60 feet (18.3 m), but only once per melee round (counts as one melee action/attack).

R.C.C. Skills (Spy/thief/scavenger): Barter (+20%), Concealment (+5%), Escape Artist (+10%), Gemology (+25%), Intelligence (+10%), Land Navigation (+10%), Language Native Tongue: Demongolian 95%, Language Other: Dragonese/Elven and Gobblely, both at 98%, and two additional Lan-

guages: Other (+10%), Literacy Other: Dragonese/Elven 90%, Math: Basic (+15%), Pick Locks (+10%), Pick Pockets (+5%), Palming (+10%), Prowl (+10), Climb (+10%), Seduction (+12%), Swim (-10% penalty), Tailing (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), W.P. Knife and W.P. Energy Pistol (Handguns in S.D.C. settings), plus can select six additional Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 1D4+1 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters should start at first level and use the same experience table as the Dog Boy.

Attacks per Melee: Four to start, +1 at levels 4, 8, & 12.

Mega-Damage: Restrained claw attack inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. damage plus P.S. bonus. Full strength claw/punch or kick inflicts 2D6 M.D. Power Punch does 4D6 M.D. Bite does 1D6 M.D., or by weapon. Gargoylites can also perform a flying tackle that does 1D6 M.D. and has a 50% chance of knocking down an opponent who is under 12 feet (3.6 m) tall (victim loses one attack and initiative), but counts as two attacks.

Bonuses (in addition to those from attributes and skills): +4 on Perception Rolls, +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +4 to dodge while in flight, +3 on all saving throws, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to toxic gases, resistant to heat and fire (half damage; no damage when stone), and cannot be turned to stone by magic or the Gorgon's glare.

Vulnerabilities: Underestimate their opponents, and their greed can be used to lure them into traps, betraying their master or taking foolish risks.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P. is 6D6. Meditation, Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), See Aura (6), Object Read (6), Telepathy (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Fatigue (4) and Resist Thirst (6).

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: In addition to serving Gargoyle Mages and Lords, Gargoylites may serve masters other than their own kind, and sometimes go off adventuring on their own in search of gems, jewels and magic. In fact, they sometimes join mortal adventurer groups, tagging along for a piece of the spoils. This is not a good thing, as Gargoylites are usually out for themselves and will cheat and steal from their "partners" and "teammates." Furthermore, when push comes to shove, the creature is likely to betray the group for his own ends, and there is always the very real possibility that the little cretin is secretly working for a rival or enemy of the group, quietly undermining their efforts or reporting their every move. Then again, since a Gargoylite's loyalty *can be bought*, it is possible to buy his loyalty and help or to even betray his master (provided a better offer doesn't come along). Of course, such duplicity is always a dangerous game, and Gargoylites are masters at "double-dealing" and can change sides as easily and frequently as a human changes his socks.

Rivals & Enemies: As denizens of Hades, they consider all minions of Dyval their sworn enemies, but especially hate *Imps*, *Deevils* and *Devilkins*, and see them as their arch-rivals. They are also jealous of the *Succubus* and *Incubus*, and

envious of anyone who possesses great wealth in gems and/or magic items.



Gargoyles

Gargoyles might be considered bats out of Hell. They are huge, muscular humanoids who tower 10-20 feet (3-6.1 m) tall. They have a somewhat reptilian appearance with a long, snaking tail, dark green or grey-green skin and blazing yellow eyes. Their large maws are filled with sharp teeth and fangs, they have long, pointed ears, and a pair of devil-like, curved horns. Of course, their most striking features are their massive, bat wings. When crouched on all fours, they look very much like something you might expect to see leering down from the spires of a gothic cathedral.

Gargoyles and their kin are archaic demons who predate the demons of Hades. This means they tend to act on instinct and emotion and are less powerful than the true demons that would later come to dominate the supernatural world. This relegates them to the category of “Sub-Demons” – minor supernatural beings less powerful than Lesser Demons and given to brute strength and combat rather than cunning or magic.

One of the Gargoyles’ instincts is a pack mentality, which is why they gather in *vast flocks* and are the perfect soldiers in a demon army. Although a bit smarter than their wingless, Gurgyle brethren, Gargoyles prefer to follow, not lead, and automatically look for powerful leaders to guide them. Among their own kind that would be the Gargoyle Mages and Gargoyle Lords, who most obey without question. In Hades, the subservient Gargoyle Lords answer to Greater Demons, Dukes, Princes

and Demon Lords. Gargoyles are often used as front-line infantry troops in wars and military campaigns against mortals and rival supernatural beings. They are also used by true demons, dark gods and powerful mortals as guards, enforcers, henchmen, scouts and flunkies to do their bidding. Gargoyles, by nature, respect and fear beings more cunning and powerful than they, and may willingly serve such beings. They are also impressed into duty by such powerful beings who use them in their wars of conquest.

Left to their own devices, they gather into large flocks and family clans, prey upon lesser beings (e.g., mortals, slaves, the Fallen and others weaker than they), and squabble amongst themselves.

Gargoyles have a low to average intelligence, but they are not stupid. They instinctively turn to smarter, more powerful members to lead them, and use their abilities and air superiority to their full advantage and know how to use their superior numbers to overwhelm the enemy. Like rats, if you see one Gargoyle, you can count on there being several others nearby. If you spy a group of 12 or more, you can count on a Gargoyle Mage and/or a Gargoyle Lord being among them, and probably a Gurgylite or two, with an equal number of Gurgoyles lurking nearby. Gurgoyles (wingless Gargoyles) and the high flying Gargoyles embrace each other as brethren and work in tandem to confuse and crush their enemies. One functions as agile ground troops able to scale and penetrate most fortifications, the other as an air-infantry that attacks from air to ground, moves fast and can circumvent ground based obstacles to strike the enemy from above, while the Gurgoyles lay siege to the front gates.

Gargoyles can be very treacherous and are always ruthless, especially in battle. They are aggressive predators who work well as individuals, small groups, and entire armies. They love to fight and kill, and live for war. When they die, they die with a toothy grin etched across their lips and a defiant look in their eye. Part of their pack mentality is to secure territory, mate and expand. Thus, they and their kin welcome the War against Dyval and enjoy spreading across the Megaverse to reap terror, crush their Dyval enemies and conquer lands . . . and entire worlds if they can.

Both Gargoyles and Gurgoyles are carnivores who feast on the flesh of any living creature who falls prey to them, from humans and D-Bees to dragons and other demons, to cattle and wildlife. Although Gargoyles and Gurgoyles possess some natural and psychic abilities, they also use melee weapons, favoring pole arms, spears, large swords and chain weapons, but many are also familiar with the use of basic energy weapons, and some may also use body armor (but not power armor). That having been said, they have little use for, or knowledge of, technology, and primarily use whatever weapons are given them by their masters, or what they come across on the battlefield. When modern weapons are used, Gargoyles prefer heavy weapons like rail guns, pulse rifles, particle beams and plasma weapons, as well as Vibro-Blades, Rune weapons, and other magic weaponry. **Rifts® Note:** The Gargoyles of the *Gargoyle Empire* on Rifts Earth are among the most organized, technologically advanced and civilized (by demonic standards) anywhere in the Megaverse. Yet even they are barely more than savage tribes who can hardly remain united to work toward a common goal.

The longer the humans of the New German Republic hold out, the less cohesive and united the tribes become.

Alignment: Any, but Anarchist (30%), Miscreant (20%), Diabolic (15%), and Aberrant (25%) are typical.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+2, M.E. 3D6+1, M.A. 2D6+2, P.S. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd running 5D6, flying Spd is 2D4x10+14 (23-65 mph/36.8 to 104 km).

Size: 3D4+7 feet (10-20 feet) tall (3 to 6.1 m), wingspan is 18-24 feet (5.5 to 7.3 m), and weighs 1200 to 2000 pounds (540 to 900 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+100. (Has 1D6x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 2D4x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. 14 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 16.

P.P.E.: 3D6

Disposition: Instinctive and aggressive predators and warriors who live to do battle, kill and conquer. Relentless and merciless in combat, but lack finesse and resourcefulness.

Average Life Span: 300-500 years, but some have been known to live as long as one thousand.

Natural Abilities: Winged Flight: maximum altitude is 15,000 feet (4572 m), glide (silent; +10% to Prowl), power dive (counts as three melee attacks, is +3 to strike and inflicts damage equal to Power Punch +10 M.D.), hover and glide assisted leap (100 feet/30.5 m). Nightvision (3000 feet/914 m) and superior hawk-like day vision enabling them to see a football-sized target (0.3 m) up to two miles (3.2 m) away. The tail is not prehensile, but is agile and strong enough to strike or trip an opponent. Climb rocks and mountainous terrain (no more than a 75 degree angle) at *half running Spd*, run across narrow ledges and beams no more than a few inches wide at two-thirds their normal Spd, and scale sheer, vertical cliffs/walls at half speed. Impervious to fire and heat, though *magic fire* does full damage, bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D. every hour and can completely regrow a lost ear, horn, tail, finger, hand or foot in 48 hours; regrows an arm, leg, eye, tongue or jaw in 96 hours.

R.C.C. Skills (Warrior): Barter (+12%), Climb 95/90%, Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect Concealment (+10%), First Aid (+5%), Horsemanship Exotic 60/50%, Hunting, Land Navigation (+30%), Language Native Tongue: Demongogian, Language Other: Dragonese/Elven and Gobblely (+20%) and two other Languages of choice (+10%), Prowl (+10%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+20%), Swim (a penalty of -10%), Track (people, +10%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), W.P. Pole Arm, W.P. Spear, W.P. Sword, W.P. Chain, W.P. Energy Weapon of choice and two additional W.P.s of choice (any). The character can also select six additional Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 1D6+1 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters start at level one and use the same experience table as the Psi-Stalker.

Attacks per Melee: Five attacks per melee, +1 at levels 2, 5, 8, 12 and 15.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. plus the following: +1D6+4 M.D. for a claw strike, tail strike is the same as a punch and counts as one melee attack, bite does 3D6 M.D., or by weapon.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm and entangle, +4 to pull punch, +1 to save vs psionic attacks, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to fire and heat, though *magic fire* does full damage, resistant to cold (half damage), impervious to disease, toxic gases, and most types of poisons and toxins that are not magical in nature.

Vulnerabilities: Obedient soldiers, they lack resourcefulness, military expertise or a full understanding of strategies and tactics. Without a strong leader they break rank, become unsure of themselves and are easily divided, pushed back or defeated.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P. is 1D4x10 + M.E. attribute number. Meditation, Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), Telepathy (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Fatigue (4) and Resist Thirst (6).

Cybernetics & Bionics: Not possible.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. Prefer mountains, canyons, and forest environments to inhabit, but will fight anywhere.

Alliances and Allies: Generally speaking, Gargoyles prefer to stay with their own kind and serve Gargoyle Lords, Gargoyle Mages and the Lords of Hades. However, they may serve other supernatural beings, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and practitioners of magic who wield considerable power, including mortals. Gargoyles frequently join forces with other supernatural beings and monstrous D-Bees, and are especially friendly toward other giant beings, mutant animals, and so-called Lesser Demons because they are on more of an equal footing with them. The Splugorth employ and command a few million, and Gargoyles fought in the Coalition War on the side of Tolkeen. Gargoyles are always loyal to their *tribe or flock*, even if that community has been adopted and is composed primarily of non-Gargoyles.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally speaking, Gargoyles do not get along well with most true supernatural beings. They hate vampires, see Brodkil as rivals, and detest most minions of Dyval, especially Devilkins, Dire Harpies and Beasts. They also dislike those who use magic and words rather than fists and weapons.

Notes: Males and females look nearly identical, only females tend to be a bit less muscular, have smaller horns and are a bit more fleshy or soft looking. Gargoyles are hatched from eggs and females do *not* have breasts, nipples or a belly button.

Gurgoyles

Wingless Gargoyles

Simply put, Gurgoyles are wingless Gargoyles. They possess most of the same abilities as their winged brethren and belong to the same tribes.

Although they are wingless and somewhat smaller than their brothers and sisters, Gurgoyles are stronger, fleet of foot, superb climbers, and just as ruthless and deadly in combat. Gurgoyles



serve as the foot soldiers of the marauding hordes, and while mortals would like to think they are jealous and resentful of the winged Gargoyles, they are not. Gurgoyles have a strong sense of purpose (warriors) and unity (to the tribe, and demonkind), so they work in concert with Gargoyles and other demons to destroy the enemies of Hades and the foes of their masters.

Gurgoyles are true grunts who love to brawl and fight, and live to wage war, kill and conquer. However, they are simple-minded grunts who have no head for strategy and tactics, nor ability to rule, which is why they defer to the winged Gargoyles, Lords, Gargoyle Mages or other “masters” to give them orders and purpose. Gurgoyles aren’t stupid, they are just followers who need someone to lead them. Like Gargoyles, they feast on the corpses of those who fall before them, from animals to humanoids.

Alignment: Any, but Anarchist (30%), Miscreant (20%), Diabolic (15%), and Aberrant (25%) are typical.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 2D6+24 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd running 6D6+12.

Size: Gurgoyles are 8-12 feet (2.4 to 3.6 m) tall and weigh 800-1000 pounds (360 to 450 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D4x100+42. (Has 1D6x10 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 1D6x10+40 S.D.C., and an A.R. 12 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D6

Disposition: Aggressive, always ready for action, and ruthless in combat, but lack finesse and resourcefulness.

Average Life Span: 300-500 years, but some have been known to live as long as one thousand.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision (2000 feet/610 m) and superior hawk-like day vision enabling them to see a football-sized target (0.3 m) up to two miles (3.2 m) away. The tail is not prehensile, but is agile and strong enough to strike or trip an opponent. Gurgoyles can leap 40 feet (12.2 m) high or across, navigate and climb rocks and mountainous terrain (no more than a 75 degree angle) at *full Spd*, run across narrow ledges and beams no more than a few inches wide at two-thirds their normal Spd, and scale sheer, vertical cliffs/walls at half speed. Bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D. every hour and can completely regrow a lost ear, horn, tail, finger, hand or foot in 48 hours; regrows an arm, leg, eye, tongue or jaw in 96 hours.

R.C.C. Skills (Warrior): Barter (+12%), Climb 98/95%, Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect Concealment (+10%), First Aid (+5%), Forced March, Horsemanship: Exotic Animals 70/50%, Hunting, Language Native Tongue: Demongogian, Language Other: Dragonese/Elven and Gobblely (+20%) and two other Languages of choice (+10%), Prowl (+10%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+20%), Swim (+10%), Track (people, +10%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), W.P. Sword, W.P. Pole Arm, W.P. Spear, W.P. one Energy Weapon of choice and two additional W.P.s of choice (any). The character can also select six additional Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 1D6 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters start at level one and use the same experience table as the Psi-Stalker.

Attacks per Melee: Five attacks per melee, +1 at levels 3, 7, 9, and 13.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. plus the following: +1D6 M.D. for a claw strike, tail strike is half that of a punch, bite does 2D6 M.D., or by weapon.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm and entangle, +4 to pull punch, +1 to save vs psionic attacks, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to fire and heat, though magic fire does full damage, resistant to cold (half damage), impervious to disease and most types of poisons and toxins that are not magical in nature.

Vulnerabilities: Obedient foot soldiers, they lack resourcefulness, military expertise or a full understanding of strategies and tactics. Without a strong leader they break rank, become unsure of themselves and are easily divided, pushed back or defeated.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P. is 1D4x10 + M.E. attribute number. Meditation, Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), Telepathy (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Fatigue (4) and Resist Thirst (6).

Cybernetics & Bionics: Not possible.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. Prefer mountains, canyons, and subterranean environments to inhabit, but will fight anywhere.

Allies and Alliances: In addition to serving Gargoyle Mages and Lords, Gurgoyles may serve masters other than their own

kind, typically someone powerful and in need of demonic foot soldiers. This includes other supernatural beings, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and other mages who wield considerable power. They may also serve a mortal who is a natural military leader or is, himself, a powerful warrior. Gurgoyles frequently join forces with other supernatural beings and monstrous D-Bees. They are especially friendly toward other giant beings, mutant animals, and so-called Lesser Demons because they are on more of an equal footing with them. The Splugorth employ and command a few million, and Gurgoyles fought in the Siege on Tolkeen. Gurgoyles are always loyal to their *tribe or flock*, even if that community has been adopted and is composed primarily of non-Gurgoyles.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally speaking, Gurgoyles do not get along well with most true supernatural beings. They hate vampires, see Brodkil as rivals, and detest most minions of Dyval, especially *Deevils*, *Devilkins* and *Gorgons*. They also dislike those who use magic and words rather than fists and weapons.



Gargoyle Mage

The Gargoyle Mage is endowed with natural magic abilities through a supernatural link with Elemental forces. These powers are similar to the human Warlock, except their magic is limited to *one* specific area of magic, *Earth*. The Earth based magic of the Gargoyle Mage and the Gargoyle Lord's ability to turn into

living stone suggest Gargoyles, as a race, may be somehow related to Elementals. Gargoyles just accept these abilities without question, consider themselves to be *demons*, and do not worship or identify with Elementals. Only about one in 20,000 Gargoyles is a "Mage." They look exactly like any other winged Gargoyle and can be male or female. The Gargoyle Mage is often the most charismatic member of the clan and uses it to his advantage. A Gargoyle Mage may become the Supreme Lord of an entire flock, but is typically counsel to a Gargoyle Lord, High Lord, Duke or Prince of Hell (and is often the *real power* behind the throne).

While the typical Gargoyle and Gurgoyles exhibit a "flock" mentality and loyalty to the tribe, the Gargoyle Mage is an independent and free spirit who often sets out to establish his or her own kingdom or power bloc. In fact, the Gargoyle Mage may even encourage lesser beings like humans, Orcs, Goblins and D-Bees to worship him as a god or demigod, and enjoys the adoration of others. When not in a position of absolute power, the Gargoyle Mage is likely to be a second-in-command or a bold, independent adventurer or defiant rogue.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist (30%), Aberrant (30%), Miscreant (25%) or Diabolic (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+6, M.E. 3D6+3, M.A. 2D6+6, P.S. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd running 5D6, but speed flying is 2D4x10+10 (20-60 mph/32 to 96 km).

Size: 3D4+7 feet (10-19 feet) tall (3 to 5.8 m), wingspan is 18-24 feet (5.5 to 7.3 m), and weighs 1200 to 2000 pounds (540 to 900 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+150. (Has 1D4x10+40 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 2D4x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. 14 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 3D6x10 +P.E. attribute number and 2D6 P.P.E. per level of experience.

Disposition: Cold, calculating, resourceful and selfish. Craves power and enjoys manipulating and/or ruling others.

Average Life Span: 300-500 years, but some have been known to live as long as one thousand.

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+150 on Rifts Earth. (Has 1D4x100 for Hit Points, 3D6x10+120 S.D.C., and an A.R. 14 in S.D.C. settings.)

Natural Abilities: Same as the *Gargoyle*, plus magically understands all languages, but only at 65%, and Fire Breath (special): 4D6 M.D., range: 90 feet (27.4 m), but only once per melee round (counts as one melee action/attack). *Also see Magic.*

R.C.C. Skills (Warlock and Scholar): Astronomy (+10%), Climb 95%/90%, First Aid (+10%), Intelligence (+12%), Land Navigation (+18%), Language: Magically Understands and Speaks All at 65%, Literacy Native Tongue: Demon-gogian (+20%), Literacy Other: Dragonese/Elven (+10%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%), Lore: Magic (+15%), and two Lore Skills of choice (+10%), Math: Basic (+30%), Math: Advanced (+15%), Prowl (+10%), Research (+15%), Streetwise (+10%), Swim (-10% penalty), Track (people +5%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), Climb (+10%), W.P.

Pole Arm or Staff, W.P. one of choice (any), plus can select twelve additional Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 2D4+2 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player characters start at first level and use the same experience table as the Dragon.

Attacks per Melee: Five physical +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 16.

Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., or via magic or weapon. Mages love to acquire magic weapons and magic items.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on Perception Rolls, +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to dodge while in flight, +4 to save vs magic, +3 on all other saving throws, +12 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to heat and fire and even magic fire does only half damage, impervious to disease and toxic gases too.

Magic: P.P.E. 3D6x10 + P.E. attribute number and 2D6 P.P.E. per level of experience. Possesses *all level 1-3 Earth Elemental Magic spells* (see **Rifts® Book of Magic** or the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** for descriptions), can speak to all Elemental beings, and has an 80% chance of seeing even an invisible Elemental and sensing their presence within 1000 feet (305 m).

Psionics: I.S.P. is 1D6x10 + M.E. attribute number and +6 I.S.P. per level of experience. Meditation, Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), Telepathy (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Fatigue (4) and Resist Thirst (6).

Cybernetics & Bionics: Not possible.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. Prefer mountains, canyons, and forest environments to inhabit, but will fight anywhere.

Allies and Alliances: Gargoyle Mages answer to Gargoyle Lords as well as serve Demon Lords, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and other beings who wield considerable power, including humans. However, they are ultimately out for themselves and the acquisition of power. Gargoyle Mages don't mind being the unseen power behind the throne, as long as they possess real power and influence. As a result, Gargoyle Mages may make a deal with anyone if it suits their own, hidden agenda. Of all the Gargoyle species, the Mage is most likely to leave the flock to explore and establish his own power base, crime network, secret lair, cult or kingdom, in other parts of the Megaverse.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally speaking, Gargoyle Mages do not get along well with most true supernatural beings. They hate vampires and detest most minions of Dyval, especially *Deevils*, *Devilkins*, *Beasts* and *Serpents*.

Gargoyle Lord

Gargoyle Lords are the natural leaders of the Gargoyle race. They are smarter, stronger, more charismatic and more formidable than their lesser brethren. They have a good head for military strategies and tactics, general organizational skills, and possess powers not shared by others of their kind, most notably, a greater range of *psionics* and *metamorphosis into living stone*. Cunning and resourceful, they relish their role as leader and enjoy commanding thousands to millions of warriors.

Gargoyle Lords are considered to be of *royal heritage* and *elite warriors*. One out of every hundred Gargoyles is a Lord, one out of every 4,000-8,000 Gargoyles is recognized as the flock *High Lord*, effectively a general or royal duke. The ultimate leader of any massive flock will be an experienced *Gargoyle Lord* or *Gargoyle Mage* known to his people and elevated to the position of *High Lord*. Other Gargoyle Lords with less experience command smaller, family clans, tribes, flocks and elite bands of warriors. A *Supreme Lord* is effectively the emperor of several million Gargoyles, and he (or she) answers to a Demon Lord. Gargoyle Lords (and Mages) also rule and lead Gargoyles, and a Lord may be male or female.

Although Gargoyles and Gurgoyles possess some psychic abilities, it is only the *Gargoyle Lords* who possess an impressive degree of psionic power and only the Gargoyle Mage can wield magic. A Gargoyle Lord looks like a winged Gargoyle except they range in color from light green to emerald, have a pair of large horns at the top of their head, and the head has 3-5 small horns running down both sides of the face from the cheek along the lower jaw, and two protrude from the chin.

Also known as Warlord, High Lord & Supreme Lord.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist (40%), Aberrant (30%) or Miscreant (20%).

Attributes (Lord): I.Q. 2D6+5, M.E. 3D6+2, M.A. 2D6+3, P.S. 2D6+24 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 2D6+18 (supernatural), P.B. 2D6+1, Spd running 4D6+10, but speed flying is 2D4x10+30 (35-77 mph/56 to 123 km).

Size: 1D6+14 feet (15-20 feet/4.6 to 6.1 m) tall, and weighs 1-2 tons.

M.D.C.: 1D4x100+300, also see *Stone Metamorphosis* (which adds another 200 M.D.C.). (Has 1D6x10+40 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 3D4x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. 14 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 16 (17 when turned to stone).

P.P.E.: 6D6 + P.E. attribute number.

Disposition: Natural leader; decisive, resourceful, and ruthless. They have a good mind for organization, strategies and tactics. All other members of the Gargoyle race respect, fear and obey the Gargoyle Lords, even the Gargoylites.

Average Life Span: 500-800 years, but some have been known to live as long as one thousand.

Natural Abilities: Winged Flight: maximum altitude is 25,000 feet (7620 m), glide (silent; +10% to Prowl), power dive (counts as three melee attacks, is +4 to strike and inflicts damage equal to Power Punch +10 M.D.), hover and glide assisted leap (100 feet/30.5 m). Nightvision (4,000 feet/1219 m) and superior hawk-like day vision enabling them to see a football-sized target (0.3 m) up to two miles (3.2 m) away. The tail is not prehensile, but is agile and strong enough to strike or trip an opponent. Climb rocks and mountainous terrain same as the Gargoyle, turn invisible at will, teleport-self twice daily (range 2400 feet/732 m, 93% accuracy, 100% with direct line of sight), and magically understands all languages, but only at a base level of 60%. Bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D. every hour and can completely regrow a lost ear, horn, tail, finger, hand or foot in 18 hours; regrows an arm, leg, eye, tongue or jaw in 36 hours.



Stone Metamorphosis (special): The ability to turn into living stone at will! The transformation can be performed three times per day, +1 at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 20. The transformation adds 200 to the M.D.C. (or 200 S.D.C. and increases A.R. to 18 in S.D.C. environments) and adds +1D6 M.D. to damage from punches and kicks, but reduces running Spd by one-third, and flying Spd and altitude in stone form is half. The duration of the transformation is limited to six hours per metamorphosis.

Fire Breath (special): 4D6 M.D., range: 90 feet (27.4 m), but can only be performed once per melee round and counts as one of the Lord's melee attacks.

R.C.C. Skills: Climb 95%/90%, Detect Ambush (+15%), Detect Concealment (+15%), Dowsing (+10%), Horsemanship Exotic (+15%), Intelligence (+20%), Interrogation (+15%), Tracking (people, +15%), Land Navigation (+10%), Language: Magically Understands and Speaks All at 60%, Literacy Native Tongue: Demongogian (+20%), Literacy Other: Dragonese/Elven (+10%), Lore: Psychics and Psionics (+15%), Math: Basic (+20%), Prowl (+10%), Public Speaking (+20%), Seduction (+10%), Swim (-10% penalty), Wilderness Survival (+15%), W.P. Sword, W.P. Whip, W.P. one Energy Weapon of choice and three other W.P. of choice (any), plus can select eight additional Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 1D6+3 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs (1D6+5 for High Lords). Player characters start at level one and use the same experience table as the Dragon.

Attacks per Melee: Six to start, +1 at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 11 and 15.

Mega-Damage: Punch, kick, wing strike, tail strike and head butt as per Supernatural P.S., but a claw strike does an extra 2D6+3 M.D., a butt with horns does an extra 1D6 M.D., while a bite does 4D6 M.D. Flying tackle or ram does 3D6 M.D. (5D6 M.D. if in stone form) and has a 01-85% chance of knocking down opponents under 30 feet (9.1 m) tall; the victim loses two attacks and initiative, but it counts as two melee attacks.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +1 on Perception Roll, +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry and dodge, +6 to dodge while in flight, +5 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +3 on all saving throws, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to fire and heat, and even magic fire does only half damage (no damage when turned to stone), and impervious to disease, toxic gases and cannot be turned to stone by magic or the Gorgon's glare.

Magic: None. *Only Gargoyle Mages* can learn magic.

Psionics: I.S.P. is 1D6x10 + M.E. attribute number and an additional 8 I.S.P. per level of experience. Electrokinetics (varies), Intuitive Combat (10), Meditation, Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), Telepathy (4), Radiate Horror Factor (8), Remote Viewing (10), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Fatigue (4), Resist Thirst (6), See Aura (6), and a total of three of choice selected from the Physical or Sensitive category.

Vulnerability: Magic Holy Weapons do double damage, Rune and other magic weapons inflict their usual damage, S.D.C. weapons made of stone do equivalent M.D. damage (i.e., if the weapon normally does 2D6 S.D.C., it now does 2D6

M.D. In an S.D.C. setting, weapons of stone inflict double damage).

Cybernetics & Bionics: Not possible.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. Prefer mountains, canyons, and subterranean environments to inhabit, but will fight anywhere.

Allies and Alliances: Even the Gargoyle Lord answers to one of the Demon Lords, Dukes or Princes of Hell. Gargoyle Lords may serve masters other than their own kind, typically someone powerful and in need of demonic foot soldiers. This includes the Splugorth, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and other mages who wield considerable power. They are accepting of non-humans, other giant beings, mutant animals, and so-called Lesser Demons, provided they accept the Gargoyle Lord as their leader. Always loyal to their *tribe or flock*, even if that community has been adopted and is composed primarily of non-Gargoyles. **Note:** Gargoyle Lords are likely command a legion of Gargoyles and Gurgoyles, scores of Gargoylites and Gargoyle Mages. The Supreme (or Ultimate) Lord is usually 9th level or higher, and commands an entire flock of 4D4x100,000 (sometimes double that). They may also command other Sub-Demons, the Fallen, slave armies and occasionally, Lesser Demons.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally speaking, Gargoyle Lords are resentful and envious of most greater supernatural beings. They hate vampires and other Sub-Demons, and detest most minions of Dyval, especially *Dire Harpies, Beasts, Serpents and Deevil Lords*. They also dislike those who use magic and words rather than fists and weapons.

Lesser Demons

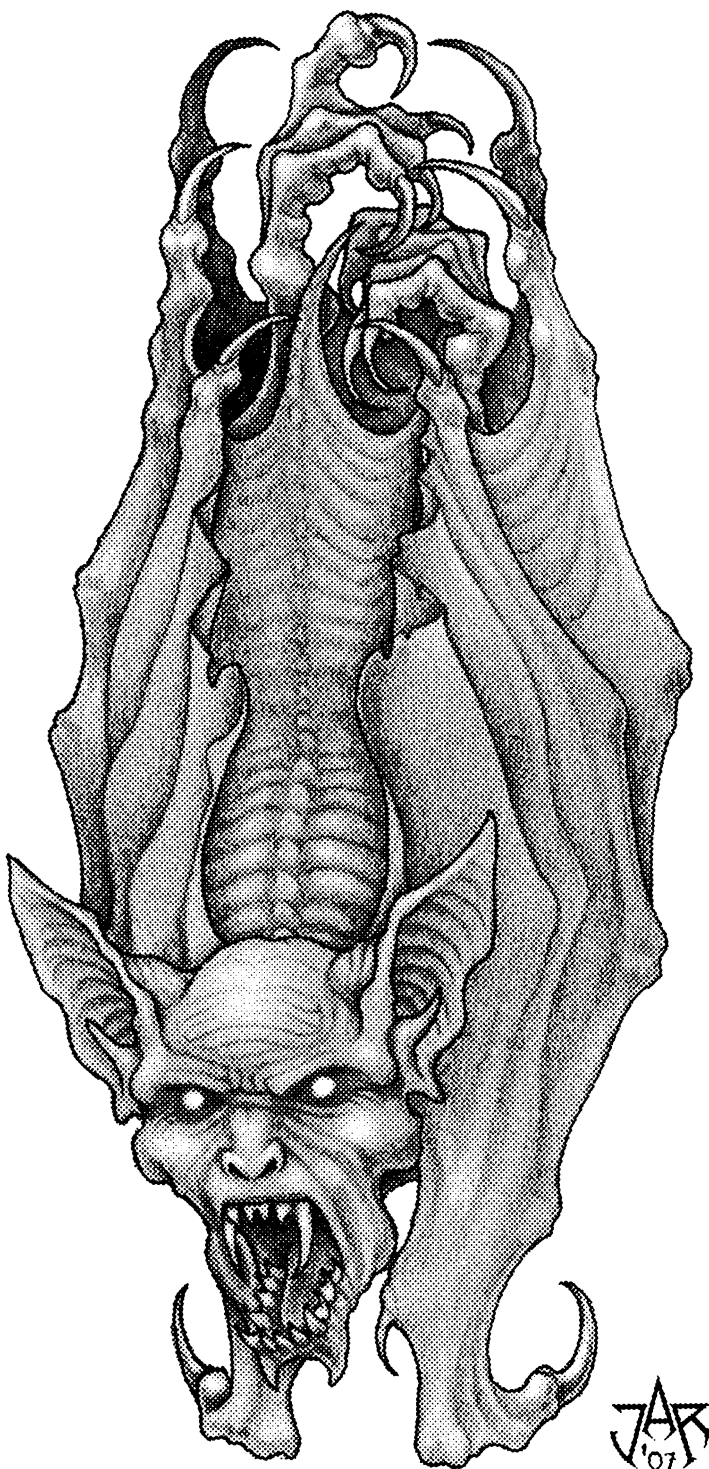
By Kevin Siembieda & Carl Gleba

Lesser Demons are supernatural beings who serve the Greater Demons and Lords of Hades. A typical Lesser Demon has Supernatural Strength and Endurance, possesses several superhuman abilities, but they are not as big, strong, smart or magically empowered as their greater cousins. Still, compared to mere mortals, they are monsters to be feared and reckoned with, especially if encountered in mass or under the leadership of a Greater Demon. The following are the Lesser Demons who call Hades home, *starting with* the least known species who seldom leave that dimension of Hell, and are not well known throughout the rest of the Megaverse: the *Demon Bat*, *Demon Fly*, and *Tauris*.

Demon Bats

By Carl Gleba

Possibly one of the only species of demons to rise from Fallen to Minion are the *Demon Bats*. These undesirables left the Fire Flats of Hades long ago to search for a more suitable location to live. The bulk of the group moved through the southern portion of Tartarus until they came across the Sulfur Pits. The underground network of caves were perfect for them; unfor-



unately, they came face to face with Belphegor. This Demon Lord had occupied the cave region of Hades for several millennia, and the arrival of Demon Bats, while a surprise, proved to be a boon to the Lord of the Sulfur Pits. In exchange for safe refuge, the Demon Bats agreed to serve as Belphegor's eyes and ears in Hell. They would also pay homage to their lord by bringing him daily sacrifices to feast upon. As the millennia passed, the Demon Bats paid their tribute and served their master well. This so greatly pleased Belphegor, that in an uncharacteristic gesture of gratitude, he elevated them to his minions and status as Lesser Demons. From that point on, Demon Bats have received more recognition throughout Hades and are becoming a

more common sight in the south, with even a few appearances in the Abyss. More than that, with the onset of the Minion War, they have been allowed to function beyond the borders of Hades and into the mortal realm.

Demon Bats function as spies, wilderness scouts, and explorers above and below the ground. They have a knack for prowling, hiding and quietly listening to and observing others. Their excellent memories and eye for details (the tone of voice and the emotion it carried, body language, tattoos, insignias and other markings) make Demon Bats excellent intelligence gatherers and scouts to identify and tail specific targets.

As their name suggests, the demon has the body of a giant, grey, hairless bat, with leathery, greyish-green wings that fold up tight. Each spine of the wing ends with a finger-like claw, so when the wings are outspread, the Demon Bat can secure itself, hang and climb on walls and ceilings with the greatest of ease and absolute security. In fact, many a slave and minion knows the tell-tale clicking and clattering of claws made by one or more Demon Bats skittering across the surface of caves, cliffs and walls. The head is that of a human with large bat-ears, glowing eyes, large maw, and large, pointed fangs. The hands are large, with long, hooked, black claws ideal for climbing, hanging from trees, ceilings, stalagmites, and concrete walls as well as in combat. The monster is sometimes mistaken for a vampire in bat form.

Alignment: Aberrant (60%), Miscreant (20%), Diabolic (10%) and Anarchist (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+4, M.E. 3D6+6, M.A. 1D6+1, P.S. 2D6+8 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 2D6+10 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D6 on the ground and can hop up, down or sideways up to 8 feet (2.4 m), or 2D4x10+60 when flying (56-98 mph/90 to 157 km).

M.D.C.: 2D4x10+18. (On S.D.C. worlds the Demon Bat has 2D6+6 Hit Points, 3D6 S.D.C., and an A.R. 11.)

Horror Factor: 12

Size: 8-10 foot (2.4 to 3 m) wingspan, 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) tall/long, and about 3 feet (0.9 m) wide with wings folded tight.

Weight: 75 to 100 pounds (34 to 45 kg).

Average Life Span: Unknown, presumed to be immortal.

P.P.E.: 3D6.

Natural Abilities: Silent flying (see Prowl), Nightvision 3000 feet (914 m), echolocation (a sound based radar; range 3000 feet/914 m, detects all physical objects, people, animals and insects within the area covered by the echolocation sound waves), keen sense of hearing equivalent to the bionic *Ultra-Ear*, sonic screech (see Damage), draining bite (see Damage), a superb memory and ear and eye for details, Supernatural P.S. and P.E., and psionics.

R.C.C. Equivalent Skills: Climb/Scale Walls/Rappel 96%/94%, Detect Ambush 40% (+20% in subterranean environments), Detect Concealment 35% (+20% in subterranean settings), Land Navigation 96%, Intelligence 75%, Lore: Hades 65%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 70%, Prowl 60% while flying and 50% on the ground (+20% when prowling in caves and dark confined areas), Spelunking 90%, Tailing 80%, Track (people) 60%, and Wilderness Survival 50%.

Level of Experience: 1D4+2 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Damage: Claw Strike: 3D4 M.D. Bite: 1D6 S.D.C. on a restrained bite or nip, 1D6+2 M.D. on a full strength bite, or *Draining Attack* (below).

Draining Attack (special): When a Demon Bat bites an adversary he can also choose to drain the character of 1D4 points of Physical Strength or Physical Endurance rather than inflict obvious damage from his bite. The draining can be made against one attribute *or* divided between both. The Demon Bat must strike flesh to inflict draining damage, and cannot drain P.S. or P.E. through body armor. Adjust the victim's bonuses and penalties accordingly to his diminishing attributes. When P.S. is reduced below 7, the victim's combat bonuses are reduced by half. When P.E. is reduced below 7, the victim's number of attacks per melee and Spd are reduced by half!

If both attributes are reduced to only one or two points, the victim is weak, feverish and his limbs feel like lead weights: no combat or physical bonuses, has only one attack per melee round and Spd is only 10% of normal.

Reducing P.S. and P.E. to zero or below, the character drops to his knees, too weak to fight and can barely talk or think. Reacts as if barely aware of his surroundings: -60% on all skills, no bonuses of any kind, cannot stand or even crawl, and is barely aware of what's happening around him. Can perform one action every three melee rounds.

Note: Victims of a Drain Attack can try to save vs magic but need a 15 or higher to save. Affects mortals, supernatural beings and creatures of magic. Lost P.S. and/or P.E. points return at a rate of one point every 30 minutes; double with bed rest or meditation. Cannot be restored with magical healing.

Sonic Screech (special): A long range sonic attack used to stun or disorient prey. Damaging Screech: 2D6 M.D. per screech. It is a loud, focused attack that fires a narrow sonic beam similar to a laser. Range: 2000 feet (610 m). Bonus: +3 to strike. Saving Throw: None.

Stun Attack: A broad ranged attack that affects the inner ear and causes impaired hearing (20% of normal range), ringing in the ear, headache and loss of balance. Damage: None. Penalties: Victims are disoriented and hard of hearing (can hear only the loudest sounds), and are -20% on skill performance, -6 on Perception Rolls, -4 to strike, disarm and entangle, -2 to parry and dodge, lose initiative, -2 attacks per melee, and they have no sense of balance (sway and stumble as if drunk, can't walk a straight line, can't move faster than 50% their usual Spd, and if they try, they fall down; lose 2 melee attacks in the fall and take 1D4 S.D.C. damage). Range: 1000 feet (305 m), but affects everyone within a 10 foot radius from the center of the sonic blast. Duration: 1D4+1 minutes. Saving Throw: 15 or higher for mortals, 12 or higher for supernatural beings or creatures of magic (cyborgs with sound filtration are immune). When directed at a radio, the screech wipes out the transmission, replacing it with squealing interference and static for 1D4 minutes. No accumulative effects from multiple screeches. Full environmental body armor adds a +1 to save.

Bonuses (in addition to any likely attribute bonuses): The echolocation provides a +3 on initiative, +2 to Perception

Rolls and +2 to strike, parry, and dodge when it is used, otherwise those bonuses are only +1. (**Note:** Any kind of rain or debris like falling ash, rain, dust or sand storm severely disrupts their use of echolocation and negates ALL bonuses.) +2 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to disease, poison, stench, smoke and toxic gasses, fire resistant (half damage from normal fire, but takes full damage from M.D. and magic fire – a rare anomaly in Hades).

Vulnerabilities: 1. No resistance to magic or psionics (no additional saving throw bonuses, just physical attribute bonuses, if any).

2. Blind in even moderate light.

3. Sunlight kills, doing 2D6 M.D. (S.D.C.) per melee round.

4. Holy water does 1D4 M.D. (or 1D6 S.D.C. in those environments) per eight ounce (0.24 liter) vial/splash; it burns like acid.

5. Cannot swim and avoids water.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number +12. Also gets 1D6+1 I.S.P. per level of experience. Presence Sense (4), Impervious to Cold (2), Impervious to Fire (4), Empathy (4) (picks up on fear and similar intense emotions), Sense Time (2), Summon Inner Strength (4) and Total Recall (2). Considered a Major Psionic.

Allies and Alliances: Gets along well with most other demons, but relates best to fellow Demon Bats, Demon Flies, Gargoyles, and other flyers. Of course, they serve Demon Lords, dark gods, and powerful practitioners of magic who may summon and control them. They respect and fear power, so the demon may serve a mortal who proves to be a powerful sorcerer or warrior. Most Demon Bats are content to be servants, spies, scouts and henchmen to greater powers.

Enemies: No natural enemies, but some do end up as the occasional meal for Belphegor or one of his minions. The hate the minions of Dyval because they are told to.

Habitat in Hades: May be found anywhere, but mainly inhabit the caves of the *Sulfur Pit*, and the mountains and caves throughout Hades.

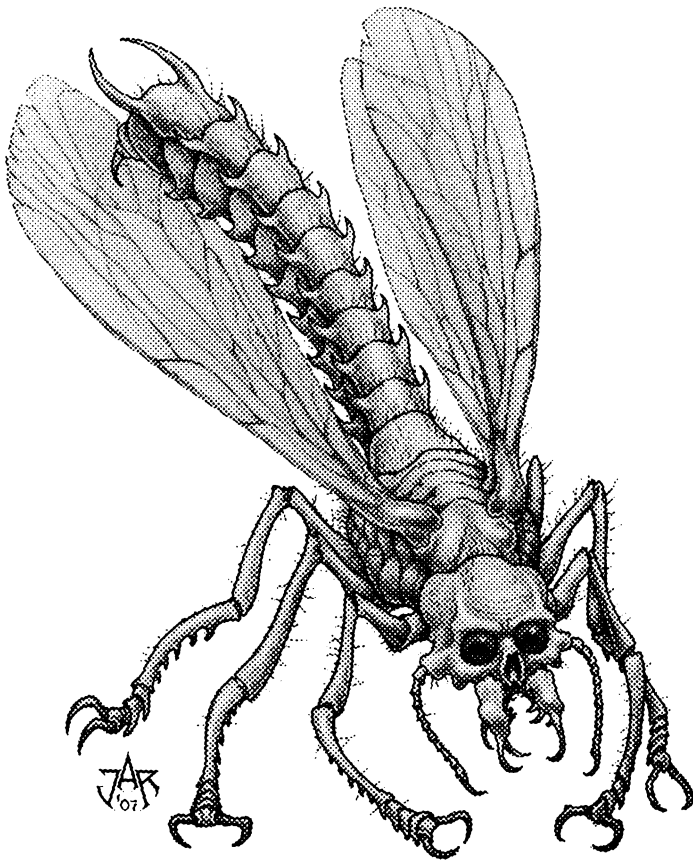
Demon Fly

By Carl Gleba

Demon Flies are distant cousins to the Lasae. They have the appearance of a demonic dragonfly with a human-like, skeletal head, an insect-pincer mouth and large, round, black eyes. A pair of antennae protrude from the cheek bones. The hands are small, pincer-like appendages at the ends of its front four legs. The rear legs have two, clawed toes.

Demon Flies are found throughout all of Hades, but the largest concentrations are found in the south. They are extremely active and can be seen constantly buzzing around the *Death Mire* and *Zaglore Bog* (rumored to be their breeding ground).

As far as demons go, the Demon Fly is counted among the Fallen and is a mean and cantankerous creature with a seemingly endless supply of energy. They make superb demon scouts, spies, messengers, cargo haulers, and light air to ground



assault. They may also be used by the smaller demons as riding mounts, provided the Demon Fly allows it or his master commands it. They enjoy spying, tattling on others, and fighting. Cranky and aggressive, they are hot tempered, short on patience and easily provoked into quarrels and brawls. Demon Flies tend to care only about their own and are quick to swarm, as one is likely to zoom around telling others of its kind about any fight or threat leveled at another Demon Fly or their master.

A swarm tends to function with a mob mentality and may join the fight en masse if teased, threatened or otherwise provoked. Swarming Demon Flies have no sense of fair play and will pile on top of a single opponent or zoom in, one or two at a time, take a few punches or bites, and zoom off so the next 30 Demon Flies coming in behind them can do the same.

When not active they prefer to warm themselves in the glow of a fire pit or lava stream, or feast on *rotting carcasses*, road kill, and garbage. Demon Flies, along with Ghouls, are the carrion of Hades and they serve a useful, if disgusting purpose, eating the dead and decaying.

Alignment: Diabolic (50%), Miscreant (40%), Aberrant (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5, M.E. 2D6+2, M.A. 1D6+3, P.S. 2D6+15 (Supernatural), P.P. 3D6+7, P.E. 2D6+11 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6+3, Spd 4D6 on the ground or 3D4x10+20 when Flying (35 to 95 mph/56 to 152 km).

M.D.C. by Location: Main Body: 1D6x10+47 (on S.D.C. worlds the Demon Fly has 2D6+8 Hit Points, 3D6+5 S.D.C. and an A.R.: 12). Legs (6): 2D6+23 each. Wings (2): 3D6+29 each. Antennae (2): 1D6+3 each. Mandibles: 2D6+9.

Horror Factor: 11 for an individual, 15 when facing a swarm of 10 or more.

Size: 6-7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) long, 2-3 feet (0.6 to 0.9 m) high, 2 foot (0.6 m) wide body with legs and wings tucked in, but has a 14 foot (4.3 m) wingspan when flying. However, can magically reduce their size to 6 inches (15 cm) long (perfect for spying).

Weight: 300 pounds (135 kg), but that drops to mere ounces when tiny.

Average Life Span: Effectively immortal.

P.P.E.: 3D6+P.E.

Natural Abilities: Walk on walls, ceilings and the surface of water and lava like an insect. Fly with VTOL capabilities like a helicopter (hover in mid-air, fly up, down and sideways), wings are extended straight out when flying, but can fold back behind the body when landed or needs to go through a narrow opening. Keen, hawk-like vision, nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), polarized sight (not affected by glare), can see the infrared spectrum of light, see the invisible, turn invisible at will, Dimensional Teleport 23% +2% per level of experience, knows all languages, impervious to fire (no damage; magic fire does half damage), and bio-regenerate 2D6 M.D.C. per melee (2D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee in S.D.C. worlds).

Shrink to Six Inches (special): A Demon Fly can reduce his size to that of a normal, large dragonfly (but still looks monstrous). P.S. and Spd are reduced to half and are not Supernatural when in miniature form; full M.D.C. is, however, maintained. +20% to Prowl at small size when not flying (flying makes a buzzing sound).

R.C.C. Skills: Detect Ambush 70%, Find Contraband 60%, Intelligence 78%, Land Navigation 80%, Prowl at 55% (the buzzing of the wings tends to give them away), Tailing 70%, Wilderness Survival 60%, Lore: Hades 60%, and Lore: Demons and Monsters 60%.

Level of Experience: 1D6+1 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks Per Melee: Four to start, +1 at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Mega-Damage: Bite 1D4 M.D., claw swipe 2D6 M.D., Electrical Discharge 4D6 M.D. with a range of 500 feet (152 m). The electrical discharge is fired from the two antennae that are on the head. Demon Flies can fire one shot per attack. All damage is reduced to one S.D.C. point when they are shrunk and their electrical discharge becomes a static shock that does 1D4 S.D.C. Convert all damage to S.D.C. for S.D.C. worlds.

Bonuses (in addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +6 on initiative (they're a bit hyper) and to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to strike and parry, +6 to dodge, and +3 on all other saving throws. When they are shrunk down they effectively gain automatic dodge due to their size and speed, impervious to fire (no damage; magic fire does half damage).

Vulnerabilities: 1. Mirrors: For some reason, Demon Flies cannot look at their own image. When confronted with a mirror they instantly turn into a pillar of salt and remain that way unless the grains are collected and made whole via a Restoration spell! The surface must be a true mirror or similar, highly polished and reflective surface in order for the Demon Fly to see itself. Unclear, distorted or wavy images like that over water only frighten the Demon Fly (Horror Factor of 18)

and will send it away (1D4x1000 feet/305 to 1219 m away). Fortunately for them, there are not many mirrored surfaces in Hades. **Note:** Being turned to salt in any dimension other than Hades, instantly banishes the Demon Fly from that realm and sends him back to Hades, where the thing must remain for 4D4 years.

2. Cold and Ice: Demon Flies become sluggish in winter conditions and temperatures at freezing or below (reduce Spd, attacks per melee and all bonuses by half; round down).

Suffers double damage from cold and ice based magic, weapons and attacks. Even an ordinary snowball does 1D4 M.D.

Magic: None.

Psionic: None.

Enemies: All mortal beings, heroes, angels and warriors of light.

Allies and Alliances: Typically, just other Demon Flies, Lasae and Couril. They, of course, obey and follow Greater Demons and Demon Lords, though they may not be happy about it. Any evil Summoner, Shifter, Witch or Demon High Priest who may have this demon assigned to them, should try to win their admiration (they respect power and cruelty) to maintain control, or use magic and threats to control them, or the demon insect will work against them.

Habitat: Anywhere in Hades, but especially the South. Since the Minion War, they have been found in other parts of the Megaverse.

Taursis

One of the Fallen

By Carl Gleba and Kevin Siembieda

The Taursis (pronounced “tor sis”) are terrible, Centaur-like monstrosities. Unlike most demons, their shape and appearance can vary from one Taursis demon to another. No two Taursis are exactly the same. The only constant is they are *quadrupeds*, meaning they have a lower body with four legs, and they have a humanoid upper torso with a pair of arms and a single head, similar to a Centaur. However, they are more like a chimera with mismatched body parts that can combine mammal or bird with lizard or insect. No matter how strange they may look, all Taursis are cunning, cruel and evil monsters who despise beauty and bipeds.

Shunned even by mainstream demon society, Taursis reside on the third continent of Hades, where they take out their anger and hatred on slaves, Lesser Demons and anybody who comes their way. They are one of the Fallen, and being ostracized by their fellow demons and treated like dumb monsters only a step above slave, fuels their anger and hate. As a result, most Taursis are short-tempered, intolerant of others, and wicked to the extreme. They are physically and psychologically abusive to everyone they work with, and are especially cruel to captives, slaves and others put under their command. Like Sub-Demons, they are viewed as monstrous foot soldiers and cannon fodder by the Greater Demons and their Demon Lords, and feared by most Lesser Demons. Taursis, like most Fallen, view demon society with contempt and other beings, demons, Gargoyles, humans and most others with envy and murderous loathing.

Modeus and other Demon Lords look for Taursis who can be (more or less) trusted to serve them as hand-picked Special Forces operatives in small squad operations, and use the rest as shock troops and infantry in the rapidly heating up Minion War. This is the first time anyone can remember Taursis being unleashed from the pits of Hell into the mortal realm, and the Taursis like it. Of course, 17% break ranks and go AWOL within the first month, to live free of their demonic brethren and wreak havoc and suffering upon mortals in the outside world. Others see the Minion War as a chance to prove their worthiness and be elevated from Fallen to Lesser Demon. Such dreams are a fantasy, because Taursis are too undisciplined to work well in large groups, and tend to let their anger and emotion override common sense and the orders of their superiors, making them unpredictable and unreliable on the field of battle. At best, they are demonic, barbarian hordes happy to charge into combat against an enemy and fight to the death.

Alignment: Diabolic (70%), Miscreant (25%), and Aberrant (5%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+4, M.E. 1D6+4, M.A. 1D4+4, P.S. 2D6+8 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 2D6+8 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D4, Spd 2D6+8. **Note:** Attributes may be improved by the demon’s physical appearance and random powers. Random tables follow this stat block.

Size: 1D4+8 feet (9-12 feet/2.7 to 3.6 m) tall from head to toe.

Weight: 100 pounds (45 kg) for every foot (0.3 m) in size.

M.D.C.: P.E. attribute number x6. (On S.D.C. worlds the Taursis have P.E. attribute number +1D6 Hit Points, 3D6+6 S.D.C., and a Natural A.R. of 1D4+8.)

Horror Factor: 11 plus any possible bonuses from Random Tables.

P.P.E.: 4D6 plus any extra from special abilities involving magic.

Disposition: Undisciplined, hot tempered, mean, cruel, and vindictive. Taursis hate beauty and resent most life forms, including humans, Elves, attractive D-Bees, and even most other demons and supernatural creatures. They try to resolve all their problems with threats and violence, and enjoy fighting, killing and torturing.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, See the Invisible, magically understands and speaks all languages at 85%, but is illiterate. Unless stated otherwise, recovers lost M.D.C. at rate of 2D4 points per hour, plus any additional abilities from mutations.

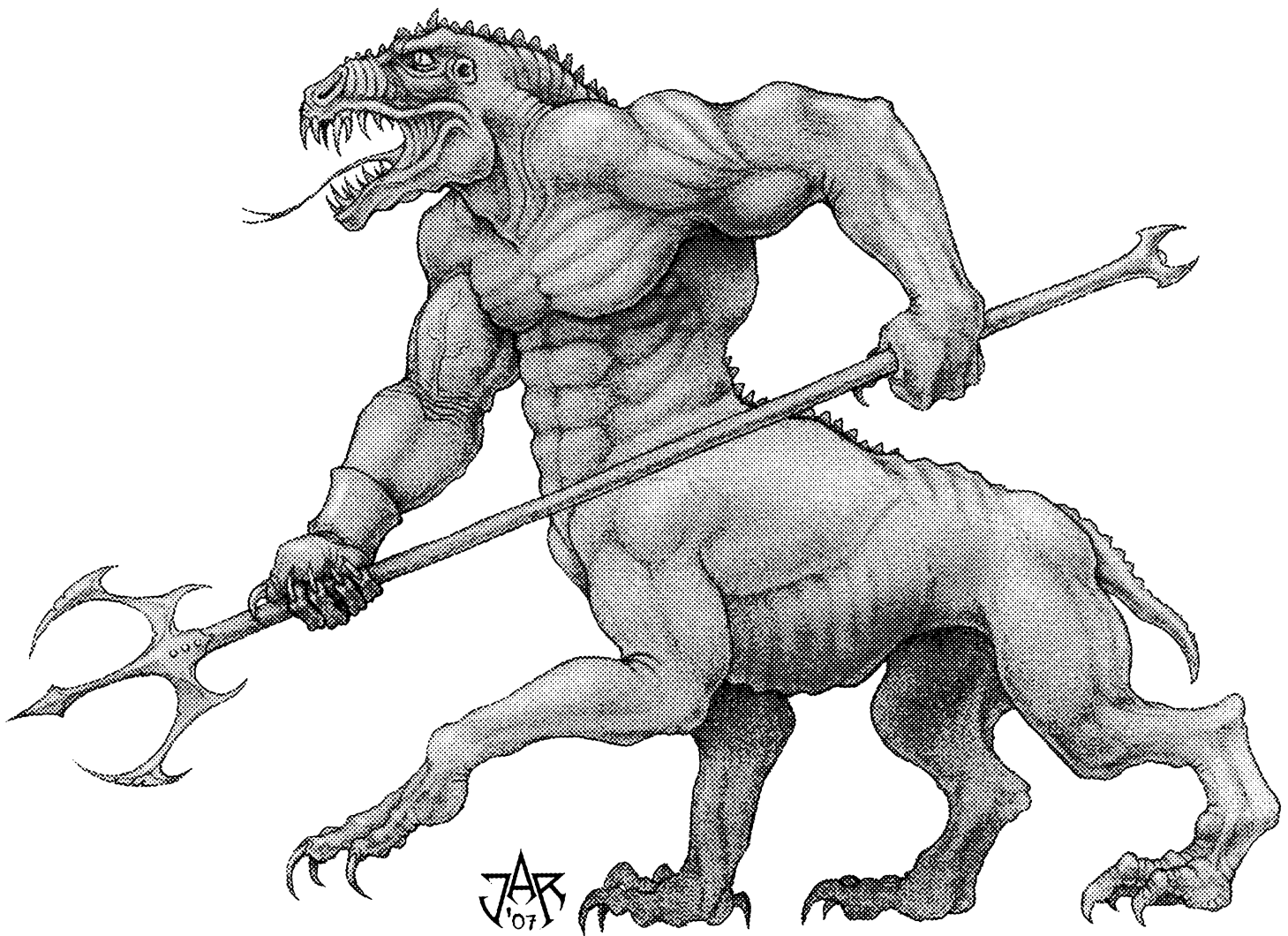
R.C.C. Skills: Climb 45%, Land Navigation 65%, Lore: Hades and Lore: Demons and Monsters at 60%, Wilderness Survival 80%, W.P. Forked, W.P. Pole Arm and three W.P.s of choice (any, Ancient or Modern).

Level of Experience: 1D4+1 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Four to start, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12, and 16, plus additional attacks provided by the Random Tables.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. and/or claws, teeth, magic or weapon.

Bonuses (in addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, and +1 on all saving throws, resis-



tant to heat and fire (half damage) unless a better power is rolled, and resistant to toxic gases (half damage and takes twice as long to suffocate).

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: 1. Their intense aggression, anger and recklessness is causing their own numbers to decline.

2. Music. Pleasant, soothing instrumental music (a successful Play Instrument roll is needed; singing doesn't work) can put the Tauris to *sleep*! It takes 1D4+1 melee rounds of playing to put the monster to sleep, and it gets a saving throw (15 or higher saves; roll once for every five minutes of music). Once asleep, the Tauris will doze for 2D4 melee rounds. However, if the music continues to play, the demon will sleep heavily and must be physically jostled, kicked or a booming noise is needed to awaken it. **Note:** Not applicable to a Tauris already locked in combat or enraged; automatic save. Also note that Tauris do not believe they have this weakness, they are in complete denial.

Magic: None, unless rolled as a Special Ability.

Psionics: None, unless rolled as a Special Ability.

Habitat: Anywhere in Hades, but especially the third continent.

Since the Minion War, they have been unleashed in other parts of the Megaverse, but are found in greatest numbers wherever the forces of Dyval and demons are locked in combat in the Three Galaxies.

Allies and Alliances: Few and far between, most alliances are limited to their own race and other ugly, violent and monstrous beings.

Enemies: Dislike all other races, even their own Hades kin, but despise beauty, humans and most attractive beings. Hate the minions of Dyval and enjoy being set loose to conquer them and their mortal followers. Loathe all creatures of light. Tauris serve the Demon Lords of Hades, but are not as loyal to, or fearful of, them as most other demonic minions.

Random Tables to Determine the Appearance & Abilities of Tauris

Due to their monstrous nature the Tauris are all different. As a result, roll on the tables that follow to determine their look and powers.

Body Type & Legs

Roll percentile dice (or pick one).

01-17% War Horse: +1 attack per melee round, +3D4x10 to Spd, +1D6 to P.S. and P.E., +1D4x10 to M.D.C. (or S.D.C. as the case may be), has a dark colored mane or Mohawk type of coarse hair on head and neck.

18-33% Insect: Has six insect-like legs and matching carapace; no hair. Add 1D4x10 to Spd, +1D6 to P.S., +1D4 to P.P.,

and +1D6x10+30 to M.D.C. of exoskeleton (or S.D.C. and +3 to A.R.).

34-50% Goat: Shaggy fur and body of a goat with cloven (split hoofed) feet. Add 1D4x10 to Spd, can leap an extra 10 feet (3 m) high and lengthwise, +2 to P.S. and P.E., and +1D6 to M.E.

51-60% Feline: Powerful feline build like that of a lion. +1 attack per melee, +15 feet (4.6 m) to leap high and across, +4D6 to Spd, +2D6 to P.S., +1D6 to P.P., and +2D4x10 to M.D.C. (or S.D.C. and +1 to A.R. in S.D.C. settings).

61-70% Tapir/Pig: Barrel chested, front legs are taller than hind legs (reminiscent of a hyena's body too), short tail, and no hair, except maybe along the spine, neck and very top of the head. +1 on initiative, +4D6 to Spd, +2D4 to P.S., +1D4 to P.E., and +5D6+6 to M.D.C. (or S.D.C. as the case may be, +1 to A.R.).

71-80% Canine: Body and legs of a short-haired hound or a shaggy-haired wolf. +1 on initiative, +2 on Perception Rolls, +2D4x10 to Spd, +1D6 to P.S., +1D4 to P.E., and +5D6 to M.D.C. (or S.D.C. as the case may be).

81-90% Elephant: Thick, heavy body and legs, short tail, thick, wide feet, no hair. +3D6 to Spd, +2D6+4 to P.S., +1D6 to P.E., +3D6x10 to M.D.C. (or S.D.C., +2 to A.R.), and increase height and weight by 50%.

91-00% Lizard: Low profile, scaly body, low to the ground similar to a Komodo dragon. +1 to dodge, +5D6 to Spd, +1D6 to P.S. and P.P., and +2D4x10 M.D.C. (or S.D.C., +3 to A.R.); reduce height and weight by 30%. Has a tail the length of his body that can be used to strike opponents on the side and rear; does same damage as punch as per Supernatural P.S. Has spines or fins that run down the from the top of the head and along the spine and tail; 01-33% small, 34-66% medium, 67-00% large.

Type of Feet (4)

Roll percentile dice (or pick one).

01-10% Clawed like a bear's, 2D6 M.D. from claw strike and +10% to Climb.

11-20% Cloven hooves like a goat or deer; +4 M.D. to stomp and kick attacks.

21-30% Retractable claws like a lion/cat; 3D6 M.D. from claw strike, +20% to Climb.

31-40% Thick and wide, three-toed feet like a tapir, pig or rhino; +6 M.D. to stomp and kick attacks.

41-50% Talons, like those of an eagle; 2D6+2 M.D. from claw strike.

51-60% Horse Hooves: +10 M.D. to stomp and kick attacks.

61-70% Insect Feet: +30% to Climb, +15% to balance and walk tightrope and narrow ledges.

71-80% Lizard: +10% to Climb, 2D6 M.D. from claw strike.

81-90% Human Hands: +2 to his Horror Factor, can use tools and fire weapons using his feet, but reduce Spd by 30%.

91-00% Monster Claws: Oversized, wicked claws the size of daggers or short swords; 4D6 M.D. from claw strike.

Type of Arms & Hands (2)

In addition to the four legs, the Taursis has a pair of human/humanoid arms and hands with long fingernails or short claws does punch damage as per Supernatural P.S. or Claw strike that does 3D4 M.D.).

Type of Head

Roll percentile dice (or pick one).

01-10% Skeletal and Ghoulish: No or little hair, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, no or thin lips, sharp or large teeth (may be visible even when the mouth is closed), holes for ears or tiny ears, no nose (just slits or opening like in a skull), glowing eyes (red, yellow, green or orange). Bite does 1D6 M.D., nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), and +2 to Horror Factor.

11-20% Horse: Has a long face and muzzle like that of a horse. May be very horse-like or a monstrous version of a horse head. Bite 1D6 M.D.C. (or S.D.C.), +1 on Perception Rolls, excellent hearing, +10% to Land Navigation.

21-30% Insect: The head has a pair of compound eyes, and antennae. Instead of a mouth, the demon has a pair of mandibles. Bite 2D4 M.D., compound eyes increase peripheral vision to 270 degrees. This makes sneaking up from behind very difficult, +4 to initiative, +2 to Perception Rolls, and +4 to its Horror Factor.

31-40% Goat: The demon has the head of a goat with a pair of horns. Bite 1D6 M.D.C. (S.D.C.), horns add 1D6 to head butt damage, +2 to initiative.

41-50% Feline: Cat-like facial features; bite does 3D6 M.D. (or S.D.C. depending on the setting), Nightvision 2000 feet (610 m), keen sense of hearing equal to the bionic Ultra-Ear, Prowl 70%, +1 to save vs mind control and possession, and +1 to Horror Factor.

51-60% Canine: Any type of dog or wolf features. +1 to I.Q., +1D4 to M.A., bite does 2D6 M.D., keen sense of smell and hearing, track by scent alone at 60% (+15% to follow blood scent or rotting meat/flesh), can smell blood up to two miles (3.2 km) away, Begging 80%, Tailing 70% and Streetwise 55%.

61-70% Human: A completely normal, human looking head but may have pointed ears, sharp teeth, fangs and glowing eyes (red, orange, yellow, or green). Facial features typically resemble a human, Elf, Dwarf, or Goblin. Add +1D6 to I.Q. and M.A., Math: Basic 80%, Public Speaking 80%, and +10% to any *other* skills or natural abilities such as Dimensional Teleport, Climbing, etc.

71-75% Elephant: Tusks blunt attack/head butt does +1D6 M.D. added to the usual punch damage as per Supernatural P.S., gore attack does 4D6+6 M.D. (do not include P.S. damage), superb hearing and keen sense of smell add +2 to initiative, +1 to Perception Rolls, Dowsing 90%, Swim 75%, and has a prehensile trunk that can use weapons (-1 to strike and parry) and tools (-15% on skill performance).

76-80% Bird: With a beak that may have teeth (sharp or blunt), large round eyes, has sharp, clear vision and can see a football up to 2 miles (3.2 km) away, can turn head 180 degrees, see ultraviolet light, its bite does 2D4 M.D., Detect Ambush 55%, Detect Concealment 65%, Intelligence skill 75% and Imitate Voices and Sounds 85%.

81-85% Pig: Large head, thick neck, small eyes, wide nostrils or flat snout; +1D4 to I.Q. and M.E., good sense of smell, Identify Plants and Fruit 85%, and recognize poison by scent at 75%.

86-90% Fish: Any type of fish head, from catfish to shark. Bite does 1D6 M.D. (+4 M.D. if shark), breathe underwater indefinitely as well as breathe air, see infrared and ultraviolet light, Swim 85%, and Dowsing 60%.

91-00% Lizard: The head has the long snout, small eyes and small holes for ears just like a large lizard. Bite does 2D4 M.D., see in the infrared spectrum, nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), +15% to Climb, Prowl 60%, track by smell at 45%, and +2 to Horror Factor.

Random Powers

Roll or pick *two times* to determine the supernatural abilities of the Tauris.

01-05% Breathe Fire: 3D6 M.D.C. (S.D.C. in non-M.D. settings). Range: 30 feet (9.1 m); counts as one of the demon's melee attacks.

06-10% Extra Attacks: +2 attacks per melee.

11-15% Singer Tail: Shaped like a scorpion's and takes the place of any existing tail. Stab attack does 2D4 M.D. and also injects a poison that does 2D6 S.D.C. damage to mortal beings and paralyzes them for 2D4 melee rounds (half damage and duration against other demons and creatures of magic).

16-20% Horns: Large pair of horns. Head Butt does damage as per Supernatural P.S. A Power Head Butt or Ram attack does an additional 2D6+6 M.D., but counts as two attacks.

21-25% Turn Invisible at Will: The Tauris is able to turn invisible at will for an indefinite duration.

26-30% Eye beams: Can fire an eye beam once per melee round but it counts as one of the Tauris' melee attacks. Victims must roll a 13 or higher to save vs magic on all beam powers except Energy Blast (that one hits or misses as per usual strike roll).

01-25% Energy Blast: Does 3D6 M.D.

26-50% Agony, as per the spell. Duration: 1D4 melees.

51-75% Turn to stone. Duration: 2D4 melees.

76-00% Paralyze (entire body). Duration: 1D6 melees.

31-35% Spell Caster: P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x3 +1D6 P.P.E. per level of experience. Select two spells of choice from Spell Invocations levels 1, 2 and 3. +2 additional spells from that same range at experience levels 2, 4, 6, 8 and 12.

36-40% Dimensional Teleport: 2D6+20% +2% per level of experience.

41-45% Bio-Regeneration: 2D6 M.D. (or 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C.) per melee round, and can regrow a lost appendage, eye or tongue in 2D6+2 days.

46-50% Increased Supernatural Strength: Add 1D6+4 to P.S.

51-55% Can walk and run (at half Spd) Across Lava: +2D6 to Spd attribute and the Tauris can walk on top of molten lava without sinking in it or ill effect.

56-60% Tougher hide: Add 1D6x10+16 to M.D.C. (Or 1D6x10 S.D.C. and +1 to A.R.)

61-65% Fly: Run through air at usual Spd up to an altitude of 10,000 feet (3048 m).

66-70% Remarkable Supernatural Strength: +2D6+16 to P.S.

71-75% Remarkable Speed: +1D6x10+48 to Spd and can leap an additional 20 feet (6.1 m) high and across.

76-80% Increase Size at Will: Can increase his size to 50% larger at will. Does 1D6 M.D. extra with physical attacks, gets 1D6x10 extra M.D.C., and one extra attack per melee round.

81-85% Elemental Powers of Earth: Knows all Earth spells level 1-4 and has 1D4x10+20 P.P.E., +10 per level or experience.

86-90% Elemental Powers of Fire: Knows all Fire spells level 1-4 and has 1D4x10+20 P.P.E., +10 per level or experience.

91-95% Impervious to: The Tauris takes no damage from any one of the following, not even from magical and M.D. versions.

01-10% Cold.

11-20% Fire, heat and lava; no damage.

21-30% Lightning/Electricity.

31-40% Energy (lasers, ion blasts, plasma, etc.).

41-50% Magic; automatically saves and magic weapons do half their normal damage.

51-60% Mind Control, including the Vampire's Bite.

61-70% Petrification.

71-80% All man-made weapons, S.D.C. and M.D., including rail guns, M.D. energy and explosives. However, magic and magic weapons do full damage and weapons made from ordinary wood or silver do their full, normal damage as M.D.

81-90% Psionics; automatically saves.

91-00% Horror Factor; fearless.

96-00% Master Psionic: Knows four Super Psionics, and eight powers from Physical or Sensitive. I.S.P.: 4D4x10 +M.E. attribute number, and 2D4 per level of experience.

Alu Demon Hound

The Alu is a demon with the head, tail and fur of a wolf-like canine and the emaciated body of a giant humanoid. Its is muscular, but its bones show and the skin of they are belly sags. At a quick glance, they resemble a large Dog Boy, Werewolf or other humanoid canine, but they are much worse.

Alu or "Demon Hounds" tend to be quiet loners or operate in small packs. They prefer to hunt and stalk their prey in darkness, moving through the night in silence and attacking using the element of surprise before their enemy knows it is even present. Alu dwell in the desert of Taut, a rocky, desolate region in the dimension of Hades. They are excellent trackers and hunters, and are often used as such by Greater Demons and Lords as well as wilderness scouts, bodyguards and enforcers. Alu Demon Hounds are cunning warriors, often laying in ambush, setting traps and manipulating others to lead them to their prey or help trap an enemy. In combat, Alu are vicious, ruthless fighters. Although they do not actively seek confrontation, even with mortals (unless commanded to do so from a Greater Demon or Lord,



or out for revenge), they seldom back away from a fight or any threat or challenge. Alu are the scouts, trackers, hunters and strongmen of Hades.

Alignment: Diabolic (20%), Miscreant (20%), Aberrant (40%), or Anarchist (20%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+4, M.A. 2D6, M.E. 2D6+6, P.S. 3D6+18 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd 3D6+20 running (+10 on Rifts Earth and other M.D.C. environments).

Size: 12 feet (3.6 m) tall and 1000 pounds (450 kg).

M.D.C.: 4D4x10 M.D.C. but may also wear partial or full M.D.C. body armor for additional protection or greater intimidation factor. (Hit Points are P.E. number 6D6x10, S.D.C. is 5D6x2, and an A.R. 12 in an S.D.C. setting.)

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 3D4x10

Disposition: An alert, clever, and aggressive predator who enjoys hunting, fighting, killing and tracking.

Life Span: Immortal unless slain in the plains of Hades.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), see the invisible, keen hawk-like vision, exceptional hearing, track by scent alone 60% (+15% to follow a blood scent; roll for every 100 feet/30.5 m of tracking), recognize scent 20% +2% per level of experience, but is only applicable when sniffing out fellow demons and people the creature knows well, Horsemanship Exotic 70/50%, turn invisible at will, Dimensional Teleport 20% +1% per level of experience, bio-regeneration 2D6 M.D. once per melee round, fire resistant (half damage), magically knows all languages at 89%, and can leap 40 feet (12.2 m) high or lengthwise. Also see skills from an *Equivalent O.C.C.*

Equivalent O.C.C.: *Wilderness Scout, Assassin or Commando*, but only select the O.C.C. skills and two Rogue or Wilderness skills and three Espionage skills. Ignore Hand to Hand and Secondary Skills.

Level of Experience: 1D4+3 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Four attacks to start, +1 at levels 3, 7, 9 and 13.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S.; a claw strike does 2D6 M.D. plus Supernatural P.S. damage, but a bite only does 2D4 M.D. total, or by weapon.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge, +6 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 on all saving throws, and impervious to heat, fire and lava, although magic version do full damage.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: In addition to serving Greater Demons and Demon Lords, Alu may also serve other supernatural beings, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and practitioners of magic who wield considerable power, including mortals. These Lesser Demons sometimes go off adventuring on their own (an individual or small band of 1D6+1) in search of wealth, power and cruel pleasures. They tend to stick to their fellow Alu and other Lesser Demons, particularly warrior types, and appreciate the Gargoyle race, although they consider them to be their inferiors, of course. Of the Greater Demons, Alu prefer to follow Gallu Bulls and Baal-Rogs, and though Alu can be gathered into vast armies, they prefer to work in small squads to platoon sized groups (10-60 demons).

Rivals & Enemies: As denizens of Hades, they consider all minions of Dyval their sworn enemies, but especially hate *Fenry*, *Fiends*, and *Gorgons*, who are regarded as their arch-rivals, and *Imps* because Imps are annoying tricksters and deserve to be hated.

Note: Alu may use magic and high-tech weapons and body armor, but usually stick to simple, basic items. They adore magic weapons of all kinds, including Techno-Wizard devices and Rune Weapons.

Aquatic

The Aquatic is a hideous sea demon with the head of a horrible fish, a body that is part fish and part eel, and four octopus-like tentacles. Its two large, round eyes are either black as coal or a sickening, filmy grey. Its great maw is filled with small, sharp, conical teeth like a crocodile. They are creatures of water, and although they can breathe and crawl along on dry land for an indefinite period of time, they do so at half strength and feel out of their element.

The Aquatic's favorite ploy is capsizing or sinking small vessels, dragging people underwater, and holding them beneath the

waves until they drown. They are indigenous to the few lakes and seas found in the Hades dimension of Hell.

Aquatics are simple-minded Lesser Demons set loose to hunt and kill the enemies of Greater Demons, Demon Lords, dark gods, and mages such as Shifters and Summoners. Aquatics may also be deployed to engage in underwater reconnaissance, spying and salvage, retrieving items from the bottom of the sea as well as sinking, boarding and killing the crew on water vessels. Aquatics have little understanding of technology, weapons and things used by humans or any mortal and have no concept of money or the value of items. Never use weapons other than a handy club, rock or bit of debris to use as a club or spear.

Alignment: Anarchist (15%), Diabolic (60%), Miscreant (20%), Aberrant (5%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4, M.A. 1D6, M.E. 3D6, P.S. 2D6+14 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 1D6+14 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd crawling on land 1D6, but swimming in the water 6D6 (+32 on Rifts Earth and other M.D.C. environments).

M.D.C.: 1D6x10+40 underwater, but half on dry land. Each tentacle has 30 M.D.C. (In S.D.C. settings it has P.E. number +6D6 for Hit Points, 5D6 S.D.C., and A.R. 10; each tentacle has 1D6+10 S.D.C.)

Size: 12 feet (3.6 m) long, each tentacle has a 9 foot (2.7 m) reach; weighs 400 pounds (180 kg).



Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 1D4x10

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: P.S. and P.E. are Supernatural, nightvision 200 feet (61 m; can see in total darkness), can see in murky water without difficulty, see the invisible, good normal vision, exceptional hearing underwater, track by blood scent 80% (like a shark) and can detect blood scent up to one mile (1.6 km) when underwater, breathe without air, Dimensional Teleport 18%, bio-regeneration 2D6 M.D. per melee round and regenerates severed tentacles and lost teeth within 1D4 hours! A lost eye takes 48 hours to regenerate. Can survive any depth and is impervious to cold underwater. Magically knows all languages at 81%.

R.C.C. Skills: Track Underwater 60%, Wilderness Survival 60%, Underwater Navigation 80%, Land Navigation 40%, Swim 98%, and Climb 70%/60%. O.C.C. not applicable to this creature of instinct.

Experience Level: 1D4 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Eight attacks per melee underwater or four on dry land.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. for tentacle strikes and blunt attacks, bite does 4D6 M.D.

Strangulation with tentacles or suffocation by holding victim underwater: Victim must escape tentacles (needs a combined Supernatural P.S. of 30); loses consciousness in 8 melees (two minutes) and dies in four minutes (unless the character has the ability to hold his breath longer, breathe without air, or is using a breathing apparatus that hasn't been torn away by the tentacles).

01-50% chance the Aquatic can entangle/pin its victim with one or more tentacles, preventing the entangled person from attacking or taking any other physical actions.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +8 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +2 on all saving throws and +10 to save vs Horror Factor. All bonuses are half on dry land. Impervious to cold, even magic cold.

Vulnerabilities: Mega-Damage and magic fire and heat do double damage.

Magic: None.

Psionics (Rifts®): All Sensitive psionic powers equal to 4th level strength regardless of actual experience level. I.S.P. is M.E. number x2 +1D6 per level of experience.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Dim-witted, but loyal, Aquatics happily work and associate with any of the other demons of Hades. However, even they treat Fallen and the Gargoyle race as inferiors. In addition to serving Greater Demons and Demon Lords, Aquatics may also serve other supernatural beings, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and practitioners of magic who wield considerable power, including mortals. Aquatic seldom go off on their own, they usually serve a "master," and if he should perish, the creature will seek a new master to serve or return to Hades.

Rivals & Enemies: As denizens of Hades, they consider all minions of Dyval their sworn enemies.

Note: Aquatics never use magic and high-tech weapons except as a club or to lure others into their clutches. Never wear body armor.



Banshees

The Harbinger of Death

What can one say about a specter that serves as a harbinger of death and wails so that all may anticipate its coming?

The Banshee is a P.P.E. vampire that relies on predatory instinct and a sixth sense to find her prey. Although legends sometime attribute her mournful wail with the power to paralyze or kill, the Banshee is not that hands-on or murderous. In truth, this Lesser Demon is a psychic scavenger whose clairvoyant abilities enable her to sense the *likelihood of death*, and like a vulture, is drawn by the psychic scent of death and waits for it to come.

At the instant of death, the Potential Psychic Energy (P.P.E.) of all living creatures surges, doubling in magnitude, and then drifts away, ultimately drawn into ley lines. This is what the Banshee is waiting for – the moment of death. At that instant, when the P.P.E. *doubles* and vacates the body of the deceased, the Banshee is there to drink it in like sweet nectar, devouring the life energy in a matter of seconds. The creature does not use the energy for magic or any other purpose but to feed. To this demon, Potential Psychic Energy is food, plain and simple, and the Banshee's famous wail is really a cry of hunger, excitement and anticipation as she waits for her coming meal.

The Banshee is an impatient and eternally hungry creature, so when the ailing or injured individual hangs onto life, refusing to give up the ghost, the Banshee's wailing is cries of frustration and the agony of waiting. A way to announce her disfavor, and in so doing, inadvertently serve as a harbinger of death. If a death doesn't occur within 10 hours, the miserable creature begins to moan and radiate an empathic field that creates a sensation of despair and sorrow. This powerful, undirected Empathic Transmission affects everybody within a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius of the creature. The sorrow of a Banshee is not born from sympathy, but self-pity, for the foul being is sad only because she can't wait to feast on the life energy of the living. The wail is a long, deep, mournful howl that can make a person's blood turn cold, and makes everybody who hears it nervous and on edge, especially if they know the source is a Banshee.

A Banshee will leave when the person(s) dies, or if she senses that the ailing person(s) she expected to die has taken a turn for the *better* and death is *not* going to come any time soon. However, a Banshee may wait as long as six weeks, especially if she senses a great deal of Potential Psychic Energy. Should the ailing individual recover, the Banshee lets loose one last groan and departs to search for death elsewhere. Thus, the presence of a Banshee does *not* automatically mean death or tragedy is inevitable, but it does mean that there is a very real possibility, usually occurring within 72 hours of the Banshee's arrival. **Note:** A Banshee *never kills*, and must wait until the moment of death without intervention on her part. *A Banshee can be driven away by exorcism*, or intensely strong emotions of love, or by psionic combat.

Banshees are spirit-like beings whose natural state is invisible. Those with the power to see the invisible can see them, but to most others they are nothing more than a disembodied sound and puff of wind. They are vulnerable to psionics and can be contacted or attacked via Telepathy, Empathy, Empathic Transmission, Bio-Manipulation (they are invisible but exist in the physical plane), attacks from Astral Travelers, Astral Golem, Exorcism and Ectoplasm. Banshees are also vulnerable to spells of Exorcism, Banishment, Constrain Being, Commune with Spirits, Summon Lesser Being, Mental Blast, Desiccate the Supernatural, and magic weapons, and they cannot enter magic sanctums or circles of protection.

A Banshee appears as a monstrous howling face made of crimson flames and surrounded by wisps of energy or as a ghostly hag, clad in a shroud, her lower body trailing off into a mist.

Game Master Note: A Banshee can be an excellent means of creating a sense of impending danger and suspense for the player characters, as a Banshee may follow them around as they prepare for a mission or battle, or a visit to Hades!

Alignment: Miscreant (100%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6, P.P. 3D6, P.E. 1D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd 4D6.

M.D.C.: 1D6x10+40. (On S.D.C. worlds the Banshee has 4D6+32 Hit Points, 1D6x10 S.D.C., and is impervious to ordinary weapons, energy blasts and most super abilities.)

Size: 6-10 feet tall (1.8 to 3 m) and has no measurable weight in its spirit form.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D6+2

Disposition: Selfish and hungry.

Life Span: Immortal until slain.

Natural Abilities: *Ethereal*, which means the demon can walk through solid matter, like walls, and physical attacks, like bullets, fire and energy blasts, do no damage; they pass right through. Vulnerable only to psionic attacks and magic, including magic weapons and Techno-Wizard weapons that fire TK rounds or magical bolts of energy.

Hovers and floats above the ground up to 100 feet (30.5 m) high. *Teleport self* only, up to 2000 miles (3200 km), but only when going to a new feeding site. Natural state is *invisible* and cannot make itself visible. *Natural Empathy:* Automatically senses emotions as well as sickness and death (costs no I.S.P.). *Natural Empathic Transmission of Sorrow:* Radiates in a 60 foot (18.3 m) area around the Banshee, costs no I.S.P. (automatic); mortals save as normal vs psionic attack from sorrow/despair. Also see *psionics*.

O.C.C. & Skills: None, animal-like predator.

Level of Experience: 1D4 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Three attacks per melee against Astral Travelers only. Otherwise, it can only attack on the physical plane with *Empathic Transmission* once per melee round.

Note: Attacks *only* if it feels threatened.

Mega-Damage: Little on the physical plane, where the Banshee's only means of attack is Empathic Transmission (used in self-defense only) and its own *Aura of Sorrow*. On the Astral Plane or against Astral attackers, the Banshee can inflict 1D6 Hit Point damage per punch, kick or bite.

Bonuses: Impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases, though magic versions do full damage.

Vulnerabilities: Psionics, exorcism, magic spells, and magic weaponry.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P.: 100. Abilities include: Clairvoyance (4), Psychic Diagnosis (4), Sense Magic (3), Empathy (4), and Empathic Transmission (6). The latter is the only way it can attack a creature of flesh and blood. Equal to 5th level strength. Considered a Major Psionic.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Banshees are commonplace on Rifts Earth, especially at war zones and places where the innocent are persecuted, enslaved, tortured, imprisoned and slain. It is interesting to note that when one Banshee has staked out squatter's rights on one specific individual, other Banshees respect that claim and

will not challenge it. However, if numerous people are hurt, sick or could die from some impending catastrophe or attack, then swarms of Banshees *may* appear, each claiming an individual for themselves and following them wherever they go. A "gathering" of Banshees is uncommon except in Hades and at places where death is frequent or occurs en masse. However, Banshees typically travel, hunt and feed as lone individuals or small groups (2D4).

Allies and Alliances: None, per se.

Rivals & Enemies: None, per se.

Note: It is fairly difficult and pointless to kill a Banshee, for they simply wait for death, they do not cause it. Consequently, it is far easier to chase the creature away than kill it.

Couril

Couril are not your typical demon. For one, they are tiny, about the size of child's doll or action figure. For another, they are adorned with a pair of red and purple butterfly wings. At a quick glance, a person might mistake them for a Faerie, but closer inspection reveals them to be a demon. The Couril's body looks rather like one would expect a demon or devil to look like, hairless humanoid with deep red skin, pointed ears, and tiny, clawed fingers and toes.

The strange little demons enjoy fluttering around in fields of flowers, woodlands and windowsills where they like to peek in and spy on others. Couril are voyeurs who enjoy watching the goings-on between other people, especially behind closed doors, where the little fiends can collect secrets and gossip simply by being quiet and staying unseen. Couril then use that information as leverage, ratting out their fellow demons, blackmailing people for favors or money (lest they tattle to the master) and trading information and secrets. This makes the Couril excellent spies, lookouts, extortionists, supervisors and stool pigeons. They also make excellent scouts and trackers who enjoy tailing people, spying, setting up ambushes, and killing. Vicious and cruel, they especially enjoy watching torture and acts of cruelty and depravity.

Also known as the Demon Faerie.

Alignment: Aberrant (20%), Miscreant (30%), or Diabolic (50%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+7, M.E. 2D6+7, M.A. 1D6+7, P.S. 2D6+7 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+7, P.E. 2D6+7 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6+7, Spd running is 1D6+3, flying is 4D6x3+7 (19-54 mph/30 to 86.4 km).

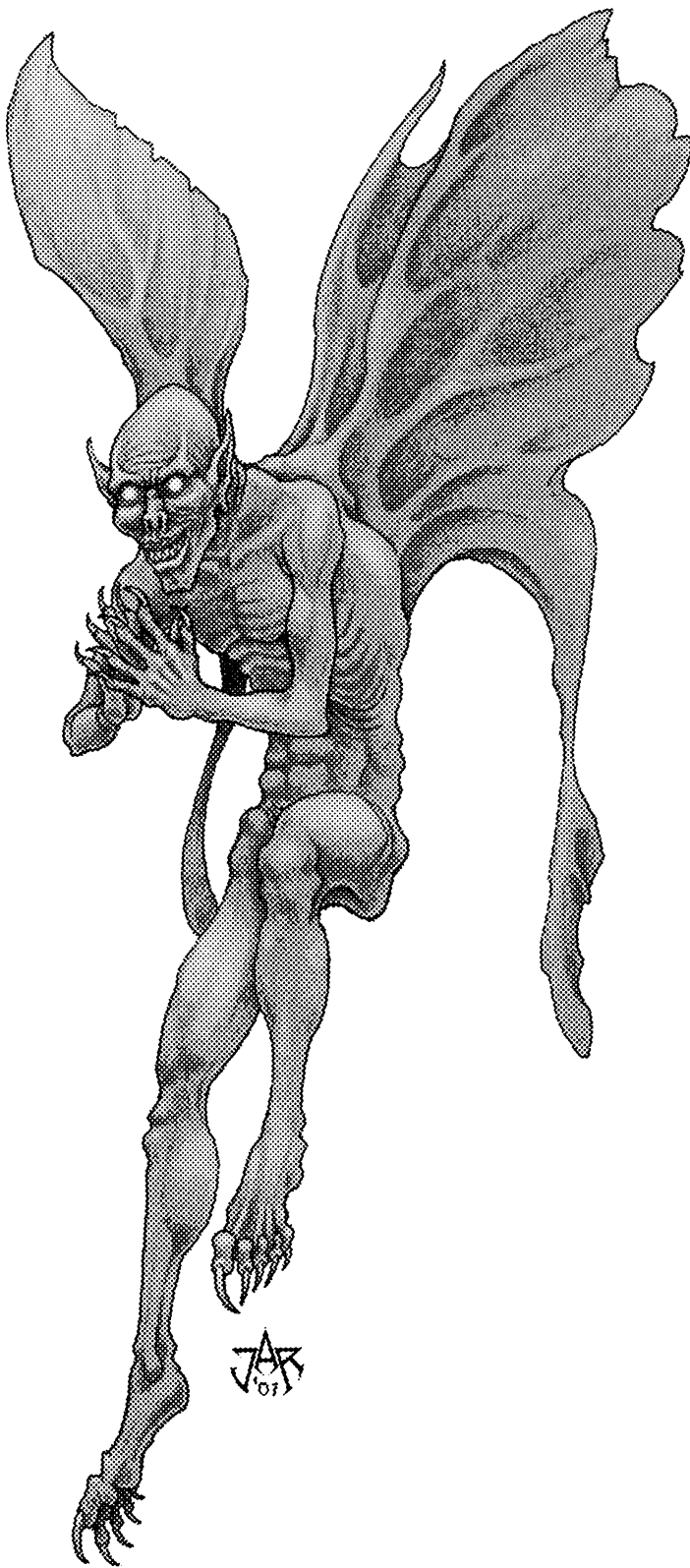
Size: 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) tall; 100 pounds (45 kg).

M.D.C.: 6D6+37. (In an S.D.C. setting, Couril have their P.E. attribute number +3D6 for Hit Points, 5D6 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 7.)

Horror Factor: 8

P.P.E.: 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number and 1D6 per level of experience.

Disposition: Alert, sneaky, and annoyingly cheerful and playful. Annoying, because the demon is happy and playful when he engages in torture, treachery or watches YOU (and others) suffer, make mistakes, or die! Likewise, the demon is a tattle-tale who will sell out his best friend if there is some ad-



vantage in it for him, even if it is as little as the momentary favor of his master. Couril are sadistic voyeurs who love to watch others, the more painful or embarrassing the circumstances the better. The little fiends relish the pain and suffering of others as if it were sweet nectar.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. & P.E., keen hawk-like vision (can see a Lasae from two miles/3.2 km away), poor nightvision 30 feet (9.1 m), see the invisible, fire and cold re-

sistant (half damage), Dimensional Teleport 10% +1% per level of experience, bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per melee round, and magically knows all languages at 95%. Also see skills from *Equivalent O.C.C.* (below).

Vulnerabilities: Ordinary S.D.C. weapons made of wood do their equivalent damage as M.D., so a wood staff that normally does 2D6 S.D.C. does 2D6 M.D. to the demon. (In S.D.C. settings, double the weapon's usual damage.)

R.C.C. Skills: Dance 77%, Find Contraband 67%, Identify Plants & Fruit 77%, Impersonate Voices and Sounds 67%, Land Navigation 77%, Prowl 77%, Sing 87%, Tailing 77%, and Tracking (people) 67%, in addition to any O.C.C. skills. All increase at a rate of +2% per level of experience.

Equivalent O.C.C.: Pick any type of *Spy* or *Assassin* O.C.C., but the demon only gets the O.C.C. Skills, and ignore the Hand to Hand Combat skill and all others.

Level of Experience: 1D4+3 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Five to start, +1 at levels 4, 7, 11 and 13.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +4 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +3 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, and +1 on all saving throws.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., or by weapon or magic.

Psionics: None.

Magic: Blinding Flash (1), Calling (8), Chameleon (6), Cloud of Slumber (4), Distant Voice (10), Fingers of the Wind (5), and Speed of the Snail (50). P.P.E.: 2D4x10 + P.E. attribute number and 1D6 per level of experience.

The Song of the Couril (special): Forces creatures within twenty feet (6.1 m) of the singing demon to join him in dance, similar to the Faerie's dance. The enchanted person is forced to dance against his will around and around in a circle until he drops from exhaustion. More likely, the Couril will bombard the person with sticks, stones, or daggers while the person is helpless in enchanted dance. Victims cannot fight back, though they can try casting magic or use psionics against the demon; no physical attacks are possible, -4 to dodge and parry, and will dance until the sweet, bouncy singing stops. Saving Throw: 14 or higher. Those who save are not affected.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. Oddly enough, Couril enjoy flowers, songbirds, and instrumental music, and when they can, they congregate at places where such things are found.

Allies and Alliances: Couril only really trust their own kind and travel in small bands of 1D6+ and live in small flocks of 12-72. They get along with most other demons and are happy to work with anyone, including Gargoyles, Fallen, Faerie Folk and even mortals. However, most people dislike working with Couril, because these tattle-tales will try to sell them out for the slightest infraction unless they give the little spies a favor, silver (Couril love silver) or valuables to keep them quiet. Note that Couril stick up for other Couril and rarely tattle or turn in a fellow Demon Faerie. They are deeply enamored by the sexy Succubus and Incubus (depending on the

gender) and will often do favors for them, share secrets with them, and look the other way, especially if the Succubus/Incubus lets the Couril watch acts of seduction, torture and cruelty, or if the shape changing tempters flirt and compliment the little monster.

Rivals and Enemies: Couril dislike the Gargoyle race and the Fallen, and take great pleasure in tormenting and causing them grief. They despise all minions of Dyval, but hold a special disdain for *Deevils*, *Devilkins*, *Imps*, and *Fiends*. Couril see humans and D-Bees as their playthings and inferiors, but will serve any mortal who caters to their cruel, voyeuristic nature and/or gives them missions they enjoy, especially if rewarded with good pay for their services.

Ghouls & Nasu

Ghouls (male) and Nasu (female Ghouls) are the carrion feeders of the demonic realm. They feast on the remains of the dead, eating corpses, lapping up spilled blood and crunching up and eating bones. Fresh "food" is always preferred, but the demons will feast on ancient bones and mummified flesh too. In fact, they'll eat rotting meat of all kinds (humanoid or animal) and may also eat other types of spoiled food/garbage if ordered to do so by their masters, maggots and all. The disgusting creatures are, in effect, living garbage disposals who live to eat.

Despite the fact that Ghouls and Nasu are gluttons who love to eat and gorge themselves whenever they can, they are small, gnarled, skeletal demons who resemble emaciated, animated human corpses covered in saggy skin. They are nocturnal scavengers commonly found in the mortal plane of existence robbing graves, feeding on dead bodies, and infesting battlefields to feast on those who have died in war.

Ghouls and Nasu are cowards who seldom attack the living unless the Ghouls outnumber them by at least three to one, or are ordered to do so by a Greater Demon or other master. When confronted or threatened, these demons flee, fighting only if cor-

nered, and then only long enough to escape. And escape is easy for a Ghoul, who can dig into the ground like a mole and vanish underground within one melee round (15 seconds).

Even among the other Lesser Demons, Ghouls are one of the lowliest of them all. They dress in tattered rags, and rarely use weapons or tools even when they are available. They often gather in small packs of 1D6+2, working together like jackals to find and dig up food.

Also known as Grave Ghouls.

Alignment: Miscreant (60%), Diabolic (35%), or Aberrant (5%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+2, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D4, P.S. 2D6+8 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+4, P.E. 2D6+6 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd running is 2D6; digging/underground Spd is 4D6.

Size: 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) tall; 100 pounds (45 kg).

M.D.C.: 6D6+20 on Rifts Earth. (In an S.D.C. setting, Ghouls have P.E. number +6D6 for Hit Points, 4D6 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12.)

Horror Factor: 8

P.P.E.: 2D4x10 plus P.E. attribute.

Disposition: Ghouls and Nasu only fight when cornered or forced to do so by a greater being. Otherwise, they are shy, reclusive creatures who run from conflict. Submissive and obedient to their demon masters.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. & P.E., nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), fair to poor day vision, see the invisible, fire and cold resistant (half damage), Prowl 55%, Dimensional Teleport 21% +1% per level of experience, bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. once per melee round, and magically knows all languages at 92%. Also see skills from *Equivalent O.C.C.* (below).

Smell Death (special): Ghouls/Nasu can smell the scent of dead and decaying bodies up to three miles (4.8 km) away on the surface, and up to one mile (1.6 km) underground. They can also smell old bones and ancient remains, but at half that range. This ability is used to sniff out carrion. **Base Skill:** 60% +5% per level of experience (+15% if there are many dead).

Underground Tunneling (special): Ghouls/Nasu can *burrow* through dirt like a mole, digging faster than they can run on the surface (see Spd attribute). A typical Spd of 12 enables the demon to burrow an impressive 240 yards/meters (720 feet or 219 m) per melee round! One third that speed when searching for buried food. **Base Skill:** 80% +5% per level of experience.

They can also build solid, strong tunnels (no fear of a cave-in) with amazing speed and dexterity, but seldom do so unless told to by their master. They can also excavate grave sites, ruins and cave-ins with the same prowess. In addition, the demon can usually tell if an existing tunnel or chamber is a natural formation or whether it is a man-made construction, as well as if it is new, old, or ancient. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Underground Architecture: Ghouls and Nasu can also build small and large underground rooms, ornate archways, staircases, and great chambers with cathedral ceilings, as well as a labyrinth of tunnels, passageways, mazes and underground



traps, but are lazy and hate doing so. The demons can recognize underground traps and dangerous conditions and avoid or deactivate them, provided they travel at 20% their normal digging/underground Spd and are looking for them. **Base Skill:** 10% +5% per level of experience.

Underground Sense of Direction (special): The Ghoul has an innate ability to tell depth and direction when underground, even in total darkness (not applicable on the surface). Thus, the demon can tell whether he is traveling up, down, straight, diagonal, the approximate angle of decline or ascent, approximately how far below the surface he is, and the approximate direction (north, south, east, west). Also has a good idea where surface structures are located (such as the graveyard's gate, a mausoleum, etc. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

Vulnerabilities: Ordinary S.D.C. weapons made of silver or bone do their equivalent damage as M.D., so a silver sword that normally does 2D6 S.D.C. does 2D6 M.D. to the demon. (In S.D.C. settings, double the weapon's usual damage.)

Equivalent O.C.C.: Only half the O.C.C. Skills of the *Vagabond O.C.C.*, no other skills are allowed. Ignore the Hand to Hand skill (see combat and bonuses).

Level of Experience: 1D4 on average or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Three (four only when cornered and in a panic).

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +1 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, and +1 on all saving throws.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S.; typically around 1D6 M.D. from punch, and 6D6 S.D.C. from a bite (H.P./S.D.C. damage in S.D.C. settings).

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: None per se, though the submissive fiends are often called upon to serve Necromancers (great for "digging up" bones and components), Witches, Shifters and Summoners. They seldom challenge their authority and do what their superiors tell them. Otherwise, Ghouls spend their days sleeping and their nights foraging for food and eating. They sometimes follow the wail of the Banshee, especially when the cries of many Banshees suggest many deaths are at hand.

Enemies: None per se, though humans and most mortal races find Ghouls and Nasu to be repulsive and disgusting.

Note: Never wears armor.

Labassu Lost Souls

The Labassu are evil spirits who appear as ghostly apparitions that moan, laugh, mock, speak, argue, knock things over, slam doors, rattle chains, and create other types of racket. They search the mortal planes of existence for *soulless people* – individuals who have lost their will to live and those who have temporarily abandoned their bodies (to travel on the Astral Plane,



etc.). They possess these people (demonic possession) in order to live in the physical world and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh.

Though some legends suggest the Labassu were once human and alive, it is not true. They are vile, ghostly beings who appear as a hideous looking head with empty black sockets for eyes, serpent like fangs, long tongue, and the vague shape of a human upper torso (may or may not have arms and hands). The rest of the body is a long trail of swirling mist. The Labassu are typically loners who act as independent agents of chaos and pain. They are only occasionally called upon by Demon Lords to serve them or by mortals who foolishly think they can control them.

Labassu make good patrol guards and messengers, as they can pass through the smallest of openings and are virtually immune to most types of attacks while a mist. Labassu are, however, too aggressive and arrogant to make good spies or scouts, because they like to make their presence known to cause terror and breed chaos.

Also known as the Living Mist.

Alignment: Diabolic (70%), Miscreant (20%) and Anarchist (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. n/a, P.P. n/a, P.E. n/a, P.B. 1D4, Spd 6D6+10 flying (10-30 mph/16 to 48 km). Physical attributes are not applicable while in its natural ghostly form.

Size: 6-10 feet tall (1.8 to 3 m); weightless spirit being.

M.D.C.: 6D6x2 + M.E. attribute number. (In S.D.C. settings, Hit Points are 4D6+10, S.D.C. is 3D6+20. Impervious to physical attacks while a complete mist, but vulnerable to psionics and magic.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 4D6 plus P.E. number.

Disposition: Mean, spiteful, lusty and cruel. Envious of humans, the Labassu seeks the body of mortals devoid of their soul/life essence (but not actually dead) so that demon may possess it and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh – including the five senses, food, drink, physical sensation (even if it is pain), etc. However, they do not value the body they've stolen and will run it into the ground and laugh about the damage they've inflicted to it and those around them while in their possession.

Natural Abilities: Hovers and floats above the ground, maximum altitude is 1000 feet (305 m) high, flies at a speed of 6D6+10, magically understands and speaks all languages at 92%, teleport self 88% (2400 feet/732 m; four times daily, requires line of sight), Dimensional Teleport 33% +1% per level of experience, see Elementals and Astral Beings, and bio-regenerate 3D6 M.D.C. every melee round. Natural state is semi-transparent mist and monstrous head even in mist form.

The Living Mist (special): Labassu are, by nature, creatures of mist. This means they can pass through anything a mist could pass through, screen windows, small cracks, keyhole, under a door, etc. As a misty apparition, it is impervious to physical weapons such as arrows, bullets, energy blasts, punches, etc. – they pass through the demon without harm. Even magic weapons and spells do half damage to the Living Mist. To attack someone in the physical world, the Labassu must turn partially solid and, in turn, becomes vulnerable to attack itself.

Intangible to Tangible (special): Labassu, though ghost-like, are not ghosts, and can hurt people in the physical realm as well as be hurt right back by magic, psionics and even physical blows. For a Labassu to bite or touch a mortal, the demon must turn from mist into half solid. When solid, that portion of its body (always the head and upper body) can be struck and hurt with any type of manmade weapon or energy blast. When a mist-like apparition, all energy blasts and physical attacks harmlessly pass through the creature. However, magic attacks do half damage to the Living Mist and psionic attacks that affect the mind and emotions do full damage.

Also see damage.

Demonic Possession: Can instantly inhabit any body devoid of a soul and use it as its own body.

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Land Navigation 80%, Lore: D-Bee 70%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 80%, and Prowl 60%.

Equivalent O.C.C.: Not applicable; demonic predator.

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D6+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Must become partially tangible to attack even with psionics, leaving the Labassu, itself, vulnerable to all forms of attack. 2. Also vulnerable to magic, including magic weapons, circles and spells, exorcism, and psionics.

Attacks per Melee: Three physical or psionic attacks per melee, +1 at levels 5, 10 and 15. Attacks only if it feels threatened, frustrated or angry.

Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +1 on Perception Rolls, +1 to strike, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +12 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 on all other saving throws and is impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases, though magic versions do full damage.

Mega-Damage: Bite attack when half solid does 2D6 M.D. or via psionic attack. (Can travel and fight in the Astral Plane as well as battle other ethereal, Astral or energy beings while in mist form with punches doing 2D6 damage, bites doing 3D6 damage, or via psionic; +1 attack per melee when fighting other spirits/Astral Beings.)

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P.: M.E. x5 and +1D8+2 I.S.P. per level of experience. Astral Projection (8; entire mist body), Commune with Spirits (6), Empathy (4), Mind Block (4), See the Invisible (4), Telekinesis (varies), Telekinetic Punch (6), Telekinetic Push (4), Telepathy (4), Bio-Manipulation (20), Electrokinesis (varies), Mind Bolt (varies) and Radiate Horror Factor (8). Equal to 4th level strength.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

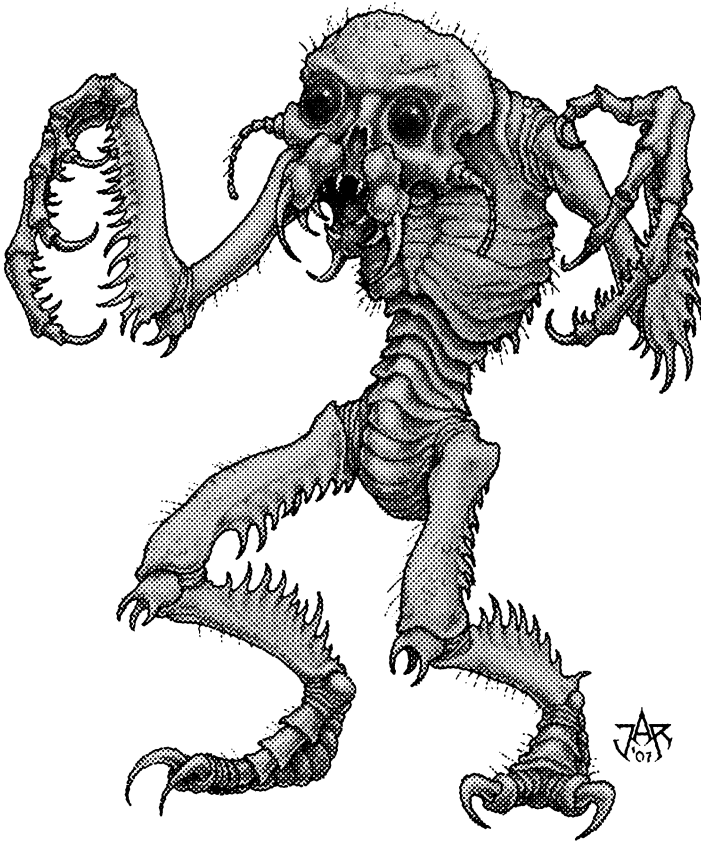
Allies and Alliances: None per se. Answers to Greater Demons and Demon Lords, and may also serve dark gods, powerful practitioners of magic and evil mortals such as Witches, Necromancers and Shifters or Summoners. However, the Labassu is just as happy inflicting trouble and sorrow as a lone stalker wandering the Megaverse.

Rivals and Enemies: Among her fellow demons of Hades, the Labassu sees the Mare as a rival and is envious of the Soul Catcher, but is loyal and obedient to Greater Demons and Lords of Hades. All minions of Dyval are sworn enemies, as are angels and all forces of good. Humans and other mortals are regarded as delightful playthings to be used and abused as one pleases.

Lasae

The Lasae are tiny demons resembling insects covered in razor-sharp barbs that line the length of their forearms, the sides of the hands, elbows, shoulders, back, knees, and the heels of their feet. They are wicked and aggressive monsters who love to maim and torture. Lasae fighting tactics always involve attempts to gouge out eyes, tear out genitals or tongues, and otherwise slice and dice their opponents in battle. A *Natural 20* indicates that the horrid creature has hit a chosen target, inflicting double damage to his opponent. Worse, Lasae travel and work in teams or packs of 1D6+1 Lasae or other Lesser Demons. It is rare for a Lasae to travel or hunt alone.

Their small size alone would make Lasae excellent spies, scouts, and thieves, and they are, sometimes, used for such missions. However, their extremely aggressive and predatory nature makes them too murderous for such timid work. Instead, they are used as torturers, interrogators, assassins, enforcers, killer guards, and retribution squads. In the Minion War, they are sometimes released in swarms of thousands as part of the infantry force – a terrifying sight, especially for mortal ground troops without full, environmental body armor.



Alignment: Diabolic (60%), Miscreant (35%), or Aberrant (5%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+6 and very cunning, M.A. 2D6, M.E. 3D6, P.S. 2D6+6 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 2D6+6 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 2D6+10; cannot fly.

Size: 2D6+10 inches (0.3 to 0.59 m) tall and weighs 4-8 pounds (1.8 to 3.6 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x10+6. (On S.D.C. worlds, Hit Points are the P.E. attribute number +3D6, S.D.C. is 6D6, and the demon has an A.R. of 10.)

Horror Factor: 11 for an individual, but if an individual is outnumbered by 3-9 the H.F. is 13, and if outnumbered by 10 or more the H.F. is 16.

P.P.E.: 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m), see the invisible, keen hawk-like vision, turn invisible at will, good hearing, natural climbing ability 90/85%, Prowl 71%, Dimensional Teleport 21% +1% per level of experience, bio-regeneration 1D6 M.D. per minute, impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases and is small and light enough to walk/run across the surface of molten lava, though magic fire does half damage, magically knows all languages at 95%, and can leap 20 feet (6 m) high and lengthwise.

R.C.C. Skills: Pick any type of *Thief*, *Bounty Hunter* or *Assassin* O.C.C., but the demon only gets the O.C.C. Skills plus Interrogation (+25%) and Track (people; +20%); ignore the Hand to Hand Combat skill and all others.

Level of Experience: 1D4+1 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Four physical attacks per round to start, +1 at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 13.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S.; a claw attack does an additional 1D6 M.D., but a bite only does 2D6 S.D.C. damage. Cannot be grabbed or held without inflicting 4D6 S.D.C. damage to the character trying to hold it.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 on Perception Rolls, +3 to strike, +1 to parry, +3 to disarm, +4 to dodge, +5 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +2 on all saving throws, +10 to save vs Horror Factor and impervious to fire.

Vulnerabilities: Ordinary S.D.C. weapons made of silver do their equivalent damage as M.D., so a silver sword that normally does 2D6 S.D.C. does 2D6 M.D. to the Lasae. (In S.D.C. settings, double the weapon's usual damage.) Otherwise vulnerable to most energy attacks, magic and psionics.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Generally speaking, Lasae tend to stay with their own kind and serve Greater Demons and the Lords of Hades. However, they may serve other supernatural beings, dark gods, and powerful Shifters, Summoners and practitioners of magic who wield considerable power, including mortals. Lasae may ally themselves to wicked and cruel beings who give them the opportunity to torture and kill. This means they work well with their fellow demons of Hades. Lasae do not usually adventure out into the mortal realm on their own, thus when encountered outside of Hades, they usually serve some greater mortal or supernatural power.

Rivals and Enemies: They see *Couril* as their rivals among the Lesser Demons of Hades, and dislike them, *Gargoylites* too. They detest the minions of Dyval, especially *Deevils* and *Imps*, and see humans and most mortals as their playthings and inferiors.

Note: Never wear armor or use technology.

Mares or Nightmares

Mares are insidious demons who appear as monstrous hags. They are very intelligent and delight in misguiding, tormenting and torturing all intelligent life forms. Mares are often responsible for mysterious deaths, missing children, and insanity. They typically wait until their prey is asleep before attacking with psionics, striking with their "*Evil Eye*" (psionic Bio-Manipulation, Empathy or Empathic Transmission) to create a nightmare or to inflict discomfort. Although they tend to avoid direct confrontations, preferring to work behind the scenes, the Mares are capable fighters who can put up a tremendous battle when pressed or cornered.

In the Minion War, they serve as propagandists who invade the dreams and thoughts of the enemy and fill their heads with fear, doubt and treacherous thoughts. In this way, the Mares can undermine enemy morale, create dissension among the ranks, create an atmosphere of fear, dread and uncertainty, and otherwise torment and sabotage enemy operations.

Alignment: Diabolic (70%), Miscreant (20%) or Aberrant (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+6, M.A. 2D6, M.E. 2D6+6, P.S. 2D6+20 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+18, P.E. 1D6+18 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 3D6 running; cannot fly.

Size: 10-12 feet (3 to 3.6 m), hunchbacked and stooped, making them look shorter than they really are. Weighs 1200 lbs (540 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D6x10+19 on Rifts Earth. (In S.D.C. settings they have 1D6x10 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 5D6x2 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 4D4x10

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Disposition: Secretive, treacherous, cruel manipulators and tormentors who delight in inflicting misery and terror upon others.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 90 feet (27.2 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, teleport self 89%, Dimensional Teleport 63%, Prowl 40% +3% per level of experience, bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D. per melee round, and magically knows all languages at 98%.

Commune with Other in Dreams and Induce Nightmares (special): Using her psionic powers, a Mare can invade a per-

son's dreams without waking him. The Mare can then influence his dreams by making suggestions and make his fears come to life as a nightmare. She can even talk directly to him as a disembodied voice or as a character in a dream. Such dream personas are typically a loved one, an attractive person, child or animal that after delivering its message or seducing him, turns into a demonic hag that either laughs and mocks him or threatens to kill him (the dreamer wakes up at the moment of death).

R.C.C. Skills: Barter 66%, Land Navigation 60%, Interrogation 70%, Math: Basic 80%, Track (people) 50%, Seduction (with dreams) 52%; these skills all improve at a modest rate of +2% per level of experience. Does not select an O.C.C.

Level of Experience: 1D4+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Four physical or psionic attacks at level one, +1 at levels 4, 8 and 12.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., +1D6 M.D. with claws.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry, or dodge, +1 to pull punch, +2 on magic and all other saving throws, +12 to save vs Horror Factor and impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases, though magic versions do full damage.

Vulnerabilities: Mares are vulnerable to all M.D.C. weapons, magic and psionics same as humans; rune and holy weapons do double damage. (In S.D.C. settings they are vulnerable to all normal weapons, but rune weapons, holy weapons and weapons coated in silver do double damage.)

Magic: None.

Psionics: All Sensitive and Physical powers plus Bio-Manipulation (10), Empathic Transmission (6), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mind Bolt (10), Mind Wipe (special), Group Mind Block (22), and Mind Block Auto-Defense (special). I.S.P. 130 + M.E. attribute number and 1D6+4 I.S.P. per level of experience. Equal to a Mind Melter.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Her fellow demons of Hades and Demon Lords. May also serve dark gods, powerful practitioners of magic and evil mortals who share her penchant for cruel manipulation and inducing suffering. However, the Mare is just as happy inflicting nightmares and misery on her own.

Rivals and Enemies: The Mare is jealous of her fellow Hades demons, the *Night Owl* and *Raksasha*, but remains loyal and obedient to them and all Greater Demons and Lords of Hades. Among the forces of Dyval, *Deevils*, *Devilkins*, and *Fiends* are her most hated rivals, but all minions of Dyval are sworn enemies, as are angels and all forces of good. Humans and other mortals are regarded as delightful playthings to be tortured and manipulated.





Shedim

The Shedim are wingless demons with the head of a hawk, the upper torso of a man, hands that are huge, bird-like talons, and the lower body and legs of a bird of prey, complete with two oversized, clawed feet. They are the *foot soldiers*, pawns and minions of the Greater Demons of Hades and sometimes, Alien Intelligences and dark gods, such as Set and Anubis.

Shedim are a fighting force to be feared, because they fight savagely, without fear or hesitation. They are, by nature, supernatural predators who love to hunt, fight and kill. They are ruthless in battle and often fight to the bitter end regardless of the consequences, stopping only when slain or commanded to stop by the being who commands them. In the Minion War, Shedim are the gung-ho infantry forces chomping at the bit to charge into battle. They make up armies that number into the millions.

Alignment: Aberrant (40%), Miscreant (30%), Diabolic (20%) or Anarchist (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5, M.A. 2D6, M.E. 2D6+6, P.S. 2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+16, P.E. 3D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd 6D6+10; cannot fly.

Size: 12 feet tall (3.6 m) and weighs 800 lbs (360 kg).

M.D.C.: 4D6x10. (In S.D.C. settings, Hit Points are P.E. number +6D6, S.D.C. is 2D4x10, and they have an A.R. of 12.)

Horror Factor: 14 for a single Shedim or squad, 16 for an entire army.

P.P.E.: 1D4x10

Disposition: Aggressive and ruthless, born warriors who give no quarter and ask for none in return.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), keen hawk-like vision (can see a lazy Imp from two miles/3.2 km away), see the invisible, good hearing, track by scent 40% +3% per level of experience, Gymnastics 90%, can leap 40 feet (12.2 m) high and across from a dead stop (double with a running start), teleport self 10% +2% per level of experience, Horsemanship Exotic Animals 80/60%, Dimensional Teleport 14% +1% per level, resistant to cold (half damage), bio-regeneration 2D6 M.D. per minute, and magically knows all languages at 92%.

R.C.C. Skills: Same as the O.C.C. Skills of the *Soldier*, but no other skills from that O.C.C. and ignore the Hand to Hand Combat skill.

Level of Experience: 1D4+3 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Six (five in most S.D.C. settings) +1 at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., but claw attacks (hands or feet) do an additional +2D6 M.D. Bite does 1D6 M.D. Leap Kick: 4D8+16 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +10 to save vs Horror Factor and +1 on *all* other saving throws. Impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases, though magic versions do half damage.

Vulnerabilities: Ordinary S.D.C. weapons made of silver do their equivalent damage as M.D., so a silver sword that normally does 2D6 S.D.C. does 2D6 M.D. to the Shedim. (In S.D.C. settings, double the weapon's usual damage.) Furthermore, their reluctance to give up, even against impossible odds, often sends them to their doom (which means rebirth in Hades when they die in other realms).

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: All fellow demons of Hades, but get along best with Alu, Gargoyles, Gurgoyles and other warrior types. In addition to obeying Greater Demons and Lords of Hades, Shedim may serve dark gods, Alien Intelligences and practitioners of magic who know how to summon and control demons. They may also serve other powerful, evil beings who have fighting, revenge or enforcement to be done.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally, dislike beings who use words and magic rather than claws and fighting. Hate all minions of Dyval and are gleeful to have the opportunity to battle and conquer them once and for all.

Notes: Rarely use any weapons or armor, much preferring the gratification of hand to hand combat (their claws are like weapons). Abrasax the Insatiable is the Lord of the Shedim.



Succubus & Incubus

The Succubus (female) and Incubus (male) are said to be the most beautiful, alluring and deadly of all the Lesser Demons. Indeed, even in their natural, demonic form, they radiate seductive charm, sexuality and sinister beauty. Furthermore, the monsters have the power to shape-change into a voluptuous sex kitten or virile young male (P.B. 20 minimum) that most mortals find incredibly desirable. The Succubus and Incubus can change into any race and have all the features and sexuality that are beautiful, alluring and attractive to that people. They use their looks to distract, confuse, lure, and seduce unsuspecting victims. This may be a ploy to learn secrets, manipulate a lust-struck fool, plant incriminating evidence to frame the individual (or steal it to blackmail him), or to lure the person to his doom.

Ironically, the Succubus and Incubus are the exact opposite of the beautiful creatures they appear to be. Under that attractive exterior is a vile being who despises beauty, mocks love, hates sentimentality, and delights in humiliating, hurting, tormenting, torturing and killing others. They are harbingers of death who tantalize, charm and then kill without mercy. Both the Succubus and Incubus are psychotic killers, slaying most victims after sexual intimacies and feigned love. Some fools are so bedazzled by the charms, promises, and favors of these demons that they become willing servants or pawns manipulated to provide aid, protection, information or services for the malignant creatures, even willingly hurting, using, and destroying allies, friends and loved ones as the demon commands. Such is the power of the bitter and poisoned “love” of the Succubus/Incubus. Of course,

the demon’s mortal lover is nothing more than a pawn and plaything to use until the creature’s mission is accomplished or it has grown bored with the fool. Even the most favored of human “pets” are usually slain when their usefulness has come to an end.

Alignment: Aberrant (30%), Miscreant (40%), Diabolic (25%) or Anarchist (5%).

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 3D6+4, P.S. 14+2D6 (Supernatural), P.P. 14+1D6, P.E. 14+1D6 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6+16 (20 minimum), Spd running 4D6; 4D6+10 flying (8-23 mph/12.8 to 36.8 km).

Size: 4-16 feet (1.2 to 4.9 m); the Succubus/Incubus’ shape-changing ability includes a range of height that covers most humanoid races.

M.D.C.: 1D6x10+30 +P.E. attribute number and 2D6 per level of experience. (In S.D.C. settings, Hit Points are 5D6 + P.E. attribute number and S.D.C. is 1D6x10; A.R. is 10.)

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x8.

Disposition: May pretend to be sweet and innocent, vulnerable and helpless, sexy and provocative or whatever the situation calls for, but is always alluring and sexy. Underneath that facade is a selfish, evil and cruel monster who enjoys using, manipulating and hurting others. If the demon were human, she/he might be diagnosed as a cold, calculating sociopath.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., hover, limited flying capability (slow; maximum altitude is 10,000 feet/3048 m), gliding leap up to 100 feet (30.5 m) high and 200 feet (61 m) lengthwise, and can drop from any height and glide to a safe landing (or take flight), nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), good day vision, good hearing, fire resistant (half damage), dimensional teleport 14%, magically understands all languages at 96%, bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round and will grow wings and lost limbs within 2D6+3 days. Shape-changing, see Magic.

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Barter 88%, Begging 90%, Dance 80%, Horsemanship Exotic Animals 60/50%, I.D. Undercover Agent 80%, Impersonation 66%, Intelligence 88%, Interrogation (usually through seduction) 80%, Math: Basic 86%, Performance 86%, Prowl 60%, Public Speaking 82%, Seduction 80%, and Undercover Ops 88%. All are instinctive and improve at a rate of +1% per level of experience. Otherwise relies on magic abilities.

Level of Experience: 1D4+1 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Four to start, +1 at levels 2, 5, 9, 12 and 15.

Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +1 on Perception Rolls, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 on all saving throws, and resistant to heat, fire and toxic gases (half damage).

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S.; bite does 1D4 M.D. (nip does 1D6 S.D.C.), claw strike does an additional 1D6 M.D.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Cocky. Tends to underestimate an opponent, especially humans. 2. Cannot impersonate a specific person. 3. Weapons made of silver inflict their equivalent S.D.C. damage as M.D. (In an S.D.C. setting they inflict double damage.) Magic, magic weapons and psionics do full damage.

Magic: P.P.E. is P.E. attribute number x8 but does not increase with experience. Succubus and Incubus can cast the following spells: Calling (8), Charm (12), Charismatic Aura (10), Escape (8), Repel Animals (7), Trance (10), and Turn Dead (6).

Metamorphosis (special): The Succubus can turn into a female of any race, and the Incubus a male. The duration of the metamorphosis into any humanoid being is unlimited, lasts as long as desired and the false appearance remains in place even when sleeping or rendered unconscious. Each transformation costs 20 P.P.E.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Gets along best with other tricksters and manipulators, but admires the Raksasha above all others. In addition to obeying Greater Demons and Lords of Hades, Succubus and Incubus may serve dark gods, Alien Intelligences and practitioners of magic who know how to summon and control demons. They may also serve other powerful, evil beings who have need of their talents.

Rivals and Enemies: Among their fellow minions of Hades, they regard Gargoyles, the Fallen and other warrior-types as brutes who are beneath them. Generally, dislike beings who are rude, crude and aggressive; i.e., use brawn over brains. Hate all minions of Dyval and are gleeful to have the opportunity to battle and conquer them once and for all. Especially dislikes Dyvalian shape-changers and tricksters.

Note: These demons may wear armor, but usually don't, preferring elegant clothing. The normal appearance of these creatures is an attractive human with strange green eyes, unusually sharp incisors and a pair of small, black wings protruding from the back.

Greater Demons

By Kevin Siembieda and Carl Gleba

Greater Demons are several steps above Lesser Demons in raw power. Most have a large amount of M.D.C. (Hit Points and S.D.C. in S.D.C. environments), one or more special natural powers, and a combination of magic and psionics. Greater Demons also have great prestige in Hades, but most remain upper echelon thugs and enforcers for even more powerful beings.

Greater Demons are truly fearsome foes and have rightly earned the title of "Greater" Demon. All they lack are what the Demon Lords have, and that's obsessive drive, a completely ruthless heart, a contingent of worshipers and an army of other demons who call them master.

Brek-Shall

By Carl Gleba

The Brek-Shall easily date back to ancient times when Chaos reigned. Little is written about them, but some of the most ancient tapestries across the Megaverse depict armies of Brek-Shall locked in battle. Until the Minion War, however, this demon had been all but forgotten and believed to have been destroyed long ago. Rumor has it there are fewer than one hundred thousand left in existence and they reside in Hades. What fate befell these monsters of destruction that reduced their number may be known only to the Lords of Hades.

Brek-Shall are anti-social creatures who rarely congregate in large numbers. When they are seen, it is among other demons, often leading a battalion or elite squad of warriors. They are notorious for their berserker rage, and even the mighty Baal-Rog is said to stand back when a Brek-Shall goes berserk. During a berserker fury the Brek-Shall seems to be engulfed in a fiery aura, his eyes turn into jets of yellow flame, his strength is amplified and the demon lets loose his fury.

Modeus has recently taken notice of the Brek-Shall and is actively recruiting them to his side. He currently has ten in his personal guard in the capital city of *Zaglore Bog*, and several thousand in his army. He knows they are not great in the think-



ing department, but they are loyal and he likes to have the sheer brute force of the Brek-Shall nearby if anything hits the fan.

The Brek-Shall are powerfully built, with crimson red skin, stringy, black hair or skinny dreadlocks, and yellow, pointed teeth that bulge out of the mouth in a huge overbite. Sprouting out of the corners of the mouth are a pair of large tusks that are used to gouge and tear out the throats of their enemies. They have black, slanted eyes, a small nose, large, pointed ears, rippling muscles and fingers and toes that end in wicked claws the size of sickles or short swords.

Also known as Demon Berserkers.

Alignment: Aberrant (40%), Miscreant (30%), or Diabolic (30%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+9, M.E. 2D6+3, M.A. 2D6+2, P.S. 3D6+25 (Supernatural), P.P. 3D6+6, P.E. 4D6+6 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D4, Spd 6D6.

Size: 12-15 feet tall (3.6 to 4.5 m) and weighs 750-1,000 pounds (337 to 450 kg); all muscle.

M.D.C.: 1D4x100+55. (On S.D.C. worlds the Brek-Shall has 2D4x10 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 2D4x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 13, but 16 when berserk!

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

P.P.E.: 4D6x10+80

Disposition: The Brek-Shall is a natural born warrior and skilled killing machine. The demon lives to fight, welcomes war and thrives in combat. They love to lead infantry troops of *Shedim*, *Alu*, *Gurgoyles* and other fighting forces and have good instincts for combat and fundamental strategies. Brek-Shall are ruthless and practical, disabling their enemies, taking down the leaders, dividing enemy forces and then ripping them to shreds without mercy. They give no quarter and ask for none in return. In fact, it is said that no Brek-Shall has ever, since the beginning of time, begged for his life, even under the most brutal torture.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), turn invisible at will, see the invisible, bio-regeneration 4D6 M.D.C. per melee round (4D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. on S.D.C. worlds), and regrows lost claws, teeth and limbs in 72 hours, impervious to heat and fire (*no damage* even from magic fire and plasma), magically understands and speaks all languages at 92%, Dimensional Teleport 55%, and can leap up to 100 feet (30.5 m) high or across!

Berserker Rage (special): When seriously wounded (i.e. loses half of his Hit Points, or M.D.C.) or feel intense pain, anger, or one purpose, he can let rage overtake him and turn him into a monster of destruction! A fiery aura appears around the demon and his eyes turn into flame. This enables the Brek-Shall to shoot fire from his eyes (2D6 M.D. +2 points per level of experience, 30 foot/9.1 m maximum range), and punch with energy fists that inflicts 2D6 M.D. in addition to Supernatural P.S. punch or claw damage. The Horror Factor increases to 16 (make a new H.F. roll), and the demon gains an additional 160 M.D.C.! (+1D6x10 S.D.C. and 60 Hit Points in S.D.C. settings.) **Combat Modifiers:** +3 attacks per melee round and +4 to strike (all in addition to the usual attacks and bonuses), but -4 to parry and dodge, cannot pull punch, and Perception is shot (focused on fighting and killing)!

During the berserker rage, the Brek-Shall rarely parries or dodges, preferring to stand and take damage while *simultaneously attacking*. This means the demon's strike will hit his attacker (can't be dodged or parried) even as the attacker hits him. Any roll of six or higher hits. While berserk, the demon is able to fight to three times his P.E. attribute (i.e., 30 to 90 M.D.C.) below zero before he collapses from his injuries. The duration of the berserker rage is equal to the M.E. attribute in melee rounds, and can be done no more than twice per day.

R.C.C. Skills: Detect Ambush 75%, Detect Concealment 70%, Intelligence 72%, Tracking 60%, Horsemanship: Exotic Animals 80/70%, Lore: Hades 80%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 80%, Interrogation Techniques 50%, Land Navigation 70%, Wilderness Survival 60%, W.P. Paired Weapons (includes claws), W.P. Blunt, W.P. Battle Axe, and W.P. Sword. Skills improve at a rate of 2% per level.

Experience Level: 1D6+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Five attacks per melee +1 at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 – +3 additional during a berserker rage (8+).

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. Typical damage is 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 3D6 M.D. on a full strength punch or head butt, 6D6 M.D. on a Power Punch (counts as two attacks), 4D6 M.D. on a kick, 6D6 M.D. on a claw strike (with hands or feet!), 3D6 M.D. from a goring attack with tusks, and 5D6 M.D. from a bite attack; can parry weapons with clawed hands and feet.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +3 on initiative, +1 on Perception Rolls, +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +1 to dodge, +3 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact, +4 to pull punch, +5 to save vs possession, +7 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to all saving throws and impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases (no damage even from magic or M.D. fire).

Vulnerabilities Penalties: 1. Berserkers hate cold! All cold based attacks do double damage and all bonuses are at half at temperatures below 70 degree (21 C), except the berserker rage. The only effect the cold has on the berserker rage is the duration is cut in half.

2. Salt and Garlic are like poison. If consumed, each serving does 1D4x10 M.D. (or Hit Point damage in S.D.C. worlds). Archers have also found that if they coat an arrow with salt (oil or honey helps to adhere a little of it), their shot will always pierce the A.R. (automatically penetrates on a successful strike). And garlic rubbed on an ordinary arrow does 2D6 M.D. (double damage on S.D.C. worlds). This is done by having it crushed and coating the arrow or bolt head.

3. Magic weapons, spells and energy weapons do full damage, and psionics usually affect the Brek-Shall normally.

Magic: Knows Fire Elemental magic levels 1-5. P.P.E.: 4D6x10+80.

Psionic: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. In Hades they wander the Desert of Taut, the Eastern Fire Planes, and the Scorched Lands of the Abyss.

Allies and Alliances: Appreciates cunning and power, gets along well with Baal-Rogs, Gallu Bulls and other warrior types, but sometimes finds intellectuals too slow to action. Still, the demon appreciates a good battle plan and skullduggery. Brek-Shall are happy to lead Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons and the Fallen, and are surprisingly loyal and obedient to the Dukes, Princes and Lords of Hades. The demons welcome the Minion War and the chance to get back into the fight. Otherwise, tend to keep to themselves and only respect the most powerful of demons and supernatural beings, and may serve other dark gods. **Note:** Several thousand Brek-Shall are known to be trapped in the *Eternity Labyrinth*, a dimensional prison. This group followed the Persian god, *Ahriman*, and became imprisoned with him. Their most notable of the Brek-Shall is *Aeshma-Fury*, who was somehow granted god-like powers and had been serving Ahriman for hundreds of millennia. For details on Aeshma-Fury see **Rifts® Conversion Book Two: Pantheons of the Megaverse®**, page 197.

Rivals and Enemies: Dislikes tricksters and shape changes, and never trusts them. Hates all creatures of light, their mortal champions, and all minions of Dyval. Brek-Shall have always believed minions of Dyval to be inferior and arrogant upstarts who need to be taken down a few notches. Has no use for mortals, but does respect courage and ferocity in battle.

Death Demon

One of the Fallen

By Carl Gleba & Kevin Siembieda

If there is any demon that all other demons despise, it's the Death Demon. These creatures are one of the Fallen, and a scourge even among their own demonic kind. They carry a deadly disease that turns living creatures into a nightmarish version of the *undead*. It even affects demons, and as a result, Death Demons have been cast into the *Fire Flats* of Hades with the other undesirables. These creatures are shells of their former selves and while they may vaguely resemble the demons or people they once were, they are something completely different. For those infected, the time varies greatly, but within 2D4+1 months after being infected, they become Death Demons.

First, the flesh sags, dies and falls off the bones in pieces, giving the demon the appearance of old, worn leather. Over time, the flesh becomes so tattered it resembles rags. The eyes sink into the head and become black orbs, while the flesh peels from the face, revealing a demonic skull. If the victim had wings in life and could fly, they become shredded and torn with only the bone showing. In the end, the only thing to remain is the creature's guts and muscle, which, over time, take on a gangrenous appearance and become infested with white maggot-like worms crawling over the guts and body. For those beings who may have had a hard carapace in life, their chitinous armor also peels, cracks and falls away to reveal only the muscles and internal organs.

The gruesome metamorphosis is not unlike a human turning into a vampire. The individual loses his humanity and many of his former abilities, but gains new supernatural ones through the

transformation. For Sub-Demons and Lesser Demons, the transition to Death Demons makes them more powerful, however most demons won't pay the price of becoming a Death Demon, as the cost is simply too high. Death Demons suffer intense pain for the rest of their immortal lives and actually feel their flesh peeling away and the maggots eating at their bodies. The only way to relieve this pain, at least temporarily, is to consume the flesh of the living, be it the flesh of humans and other mortals, creatures of magic, or even other demons. Ultimately, the constant agony eventually results in insanity.

Alignment: Miscreant (35%) or Diabolic (65%).

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 4D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 4D6+20, P.P. 3D6+6, P.E. 4D6+10, P.B. 1D4, Spd 4D6. **Note:** Regardless of the victim's previous attributes and abilities, once they become a Death Demon they all change. Roll attributes as indicated above and change all preexisting skills and abilities to those listed below. That includes all previous spells, psionics, bonuses, etc.

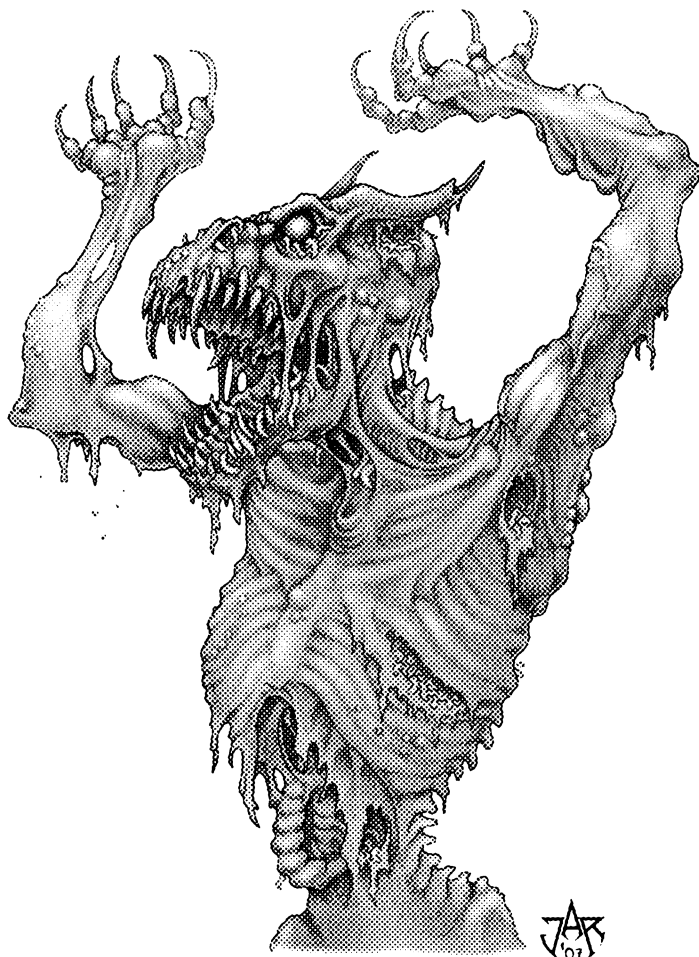
Size: Varies; depends on what the person/demon was in life, increased by 10%. Weight varies according to size, but 30% less than in life.

M.D.C.: 4D6x10+60. (In S.D.C. worlds the Death Demon has 2D6 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 3D6+40 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 3D4x10 + P.E. attribute number.

Disposition: Due to their constant suffering, each Death Demon is irritable, short tempered, cruel, vindictive, and resentful of



those who are attractive and happy/not suffering. This makes all Death Demons sadists who like to torture, maim, inflict pain and make others suffer in every way imaginable. Kills and infects others without remorse.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Resistant to fire and cold (half damage). Magically understands and speaks all languages at 90%, nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), bio-regenerate 2D6 M.D.C. (3D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points in S.D.C. worlds) per melee, summon 1D6 Ghouls or Nasu once per day, Dimensional Teleport 42% +2% per level, and Shadow Meld (same as the spell) at will.

R.C.C. Equivalent Skills: Escape Artist 60%, Land Navigation 66%, Philosophy 80%, Physiology 60%, Pick Locks 60%, Prowl 58%, Skin and Prepare Animal/Humanoid Hides 66%, and Tailing 60%. Each improves at a rate of 2% per level of experience.

Experience Level: 1D6 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs; +1 to those directly serving Lord Ba'Zal. Not available as a player character.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: 1. Silver coated S.D.C. weapons do the M.D. equivalent (double damage in S.D.C. settings).

2. Holy weapons do double damage. Holy water does 2D6 M.D. per dose (goes direct to Hit Points in S.D.C. worlds).

3. Sunlight, while it does no physical damage, reduces the number of attacks per melee, combat bonuses and natural abilities by half.

4. Insanity: In addition to being cruel and vindictive, roll 1D4 phobias, one Psychosis, and two Random Insanities, plus one Obsession for every two levels of experience.

Attacks per Melee: Five to start, +1 at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Mega-Damage: Varies as per Supernatural Strength. Typical damage is 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, 5D6 M.D. for a kick, and power punch does 1D4x10 M.D., but counts as two attacks and claws add 1D6 M.D. Bite does 2D6 M.D. (restrained bite does 4D6 S.D.C.) or by weapon, magic, psionics or infection.

Undeath Infection (special): Any bite that draws blood (Hit Point damage) could be the end as the Death Demon can willfully infect his opponent with Undeath. Thus, even if he is destroyed, he still wins by infecting and turning his opponent into a Death Demon. (In game context, the G.M. must announce that the Death Demon is consciously and willfully sending his infection into his victim.) A *saving throw vs disease* – 14 or higher – is needed to stave off the infection! A successful save means the character will NOT turn into a demonic undead. **HOWEVER**, that character will not know if for sure for 1D4+1 days. Anyone exposed to the infection (i.e. bitten) gets sick with fever (-1 attack, -1 on all combat bonuses, and -15% on skill performance). Whether he will become a Death Demon won't become apparent for 2-5 days. (Note: To keep the suspense in the game, the G.M. can have the player roll to save, but the roll is covered by a sheet of paper, book, etc., so only the G.M. sees it! Remember to allow bonuses to save for high P.E. and possible save vs disease as part of the character's O.C.C. or R.C.C., as applicable.)

*Those who fail to save are probably doomed to become a Death Demon in 2D4+1 months. The transformation is slow and painful and at the end of the duration the victim loses his old identity, abilities, and any sense of identity to mortals, and becomes a *Death Demon*. After the first month, the character loses any initiative or Perception Roll bonuses, is -10% on skill performance, tends to be forgetful, and gets 1D6x10 M.D.C. The same occurs at the end of each month of infection.*

There are only a few known cures. The first is *Ambrosia*. This magical concoction can easily cure this affliction within 24 hours. However, acquiring some from the Norse gods is most likely to have a very high cost.

The second way is by godly intervention from a Priest of Light. The Priest must pray for a *miracle* (unlikely) from his god and the recipient should be somewhat worthy of receiving it.

The third possible cure would be from a powerful, holy item or magic relic that can cure magic and/or infernal diseases. However, these items are incredibly rare and most are either well guarded, safely hidden away, or worlds away.

A fourth cure is gruesome and potentially deadly. The victim (and friends) must defeat the Death Demon in combat without killing it, pluck three worms from its intestines, chew them up and swallow them, and *then* kill the Death Demon immediately thereafter. That may not sound too difficult at first glance, until you realize the only way to *truly kill* the monster is to slay it in the pits of Hades, where it cannot come back to life.

Rumors also tell of a *spring* that flows in the Forest of Pain. Supposedly the spring not only has super healing properties, but is a virtual fountain of youth. Rumors also speak about a magical *White Rose* said to exist on Rifts Earth, and how eating a single rose petal will instantly cure the infection. In fact, it is said that the *White Rose* can even turn a person who has been transformed into a Death Demon for less than one year, back into his mortal self (though permanently reduce his P.E. and P.B. by two points and retains 1D4 insanities; player's choice). See **Rifts® World Book 29: Madhaven** for the location of, and information about, the White Rose.

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses and skills):

+1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to entangle, +2 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to save vs magic and psionics, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, resistant to M.D. heat and fire (half damage; impervious to normal fire), and impervious to possession and toxic gases.

Magic: The Death Demon gains the following spells: Animate and Control Dead (20), Command Ghouls (10), Life Drain (25), Kill Plants (10), Maggots (insects; 20), Repel Animals (7), Turn Dead (6), Shadows of Death (45), Shadow of Doom (45), Aura of Doom (40), Sickness (50), Spoil (30), and Minor Curse (35). P.P.E. is 3D4x10 + P.E. attribute number, and +10 points per level of experience.

Psionic: Death Trance (1), Ectoplasm (6/12), Mind Block (4), See the Invisible (4), and See Aura (6). Considered a Minor Psychic. I.S.P.: 1D4x10 + M.E. attribute number and an additional 1D6 per level of experience.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Regard Prince Ba'Zal as the *patron* of Death Demons and obey his every command. Otherwise, they are loosely allied to their fellow demons of Hades (meaning they try not to attack and infest them with their unique brand of Undeath). Tend to keep to their own kind and Undead creatures other than vampires. **Note:** Most other demons of Hades fear and avoid Death Demons, and there is an ongoing debate as to whether or not Death Demons represent a threat to the residents of Hell, demons included. Some have suggested Death Demons should be purged from Hades and/or somehow destroyed. The question is how, without starting a war and jeopardizing everyone? For the moment, there is an uneasy alliance between the denizens of Hades and Death Demons, which involves strict controls on the number of Undead allowed to exist at any given time. So far, they have complied.

Rivals and Enemies: All creatures and warriors of light, Vampire Intelligences and human vampires are rivals to be hunted down and destroyed. Otherwise stay to themselves, but should pain overtake the Death Demon, he will consider attacking any "living" being, including fellow demons, to stop the agony. Hatred for the minions of Dyval is intense, and Death Demons would be happy to slay as many as possible, and better yet, turn them into Death Demons if the Lords of Hades would allow it. So far, Modeus has only authorized a small percentage of Death Demons to get involved in the Minion War.

Soul Catchers

By Carl Gleba & Kevin Siembieda

Soul Catchers are large, hulking brutes with a hunched over gait when they walk. They have a canine shaped head, large jaws and have a massive overbite in which their teeth are constantly showing.

They also have large, oversized arms like an ape, with large jagged, fin-like bones growing out of the forearms. Their skin has a reddish-orange, waxy complexion, and whenever they hold or consume a soul, the face of that person appears somewhere on their skin with a twisted, agonized look on his face. Likewise, when a Soul Catcher uses magic or rests, the faces of 1D6+1 souls can be seen moving across its muscular body. There are usually several faces somewhere on their bodies at any given time.

Soul Catchers are selfish, vile creatures who enjoy using, abusing, beating, tormenting and killing those weaker than they. The demon has a special hate for the minions of Dyval, but nobody seems to know why. They literally capture and devour souls as a power source and push the still living victim to the side. Few other demons dare to challenge them for fear of losing their very own souls, which makes the Soul Catcher a pariah in Hades. Modeus has decided Soul Catchers would make excellent assassins and special forces operatives in the Minion War. The demons accepted his call and he has rewarded them by reinstating their status as a "Greater Demon" rather than the Fallen.

With their elevated status in hand, Soul Catchers have started to make numerous appearances at various locations where the Minion War is being waged. For now, they serve Modeus and the other Demon Lords and enjoy the chance to battle the hated infernals of Dyval.

Alignment: Always Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+5, M.E. 3D6+8, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 3D6+20, P.P. 3D6+8, P.E. 3D6+8, P.B. 1D6, Spd 6D6.

Size: 13-17 feet (4 to 5.2 m) tall and weighs 1000-1600 pounds (450 to 720 kg).

M.D.C.: P.E. attribute number x10 +140. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Soul Catcher has P.E. number x3 for Hit Points, 3D6x10 S.D.C., and a Natural A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 4D6 points plus whatever might be acquired from consuming one or more souls.

Disposition: Soul Catchers are evil, despicable creatures who have no regard for the life or welfare of others. As far as this demon is concerned, might makes right and lesser beings are fodder to be used as one desires. In the Soul Catcher's case, it is to fuel his power and serve as his slaves or suffer and die. This attitude applies not just to mortals, but his fellow demons as well, at least when it comes to other Greater, Lesser and Sub-Demons, or other infernals. Soul Catchers also enjoy conflict, fighting, torturing, killing and inflicting fear and torment upon others. In fact, Soul Catchers relish the fact that



their fellow demons and other infernals fear them. They also enjoy using stolen souls a leverage in deal making and extortion.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%, nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), bio-regenerate 1D4 M.D.C. (1D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points in S.D.C. worlds) per minute, Dimensional Teleport 22% +2% per level, and impervious to possession, disease, poison and toxic gases; resistant to M.D. heat and fire (half damage, impervious to normal fire).

Soul Stealing (special): The Soul Catchers' most fearsome ability is to rip souls from the living! Just like rune weapons that are Soul Drinkers, so too can the Soul Catcher capture, consume or simply hold on to the life essence of individuals. A soul can be held captive for one decade per experience level of the demon, but most are consumed in a matter of hours, days, weeks or years.

A Soul Catcher can only capture one soul per melee round. The character whose soul has been taken is not killed nor does he take any additional damage. He just feels a kind of empty sensation.

The demon must draw blood in order to capture a soul, but the victim gets a saving throw vs magic, and needs a 14 or higher to save. A successful save means he keeps his soul and that specific demon cannot try to take it again for at least 24 hours.

A failed roll means the soul is successfully stolen and is in the possession of the demon, imprisoned inside its grotesque body.

A Soul Catcher can hold up to *10 souls* at a time, but not more. If filled up, the monster must release one of the souls in his possession or consume it, in order to add another to his existing collection.

Consuming a soul means the Soul Catcher feeds on the fear, despair and life energy contained in the soul as it lingers in his body. Consumption is quick and counts as 1D4+2 melee attacks/actions. Once consumed, the energy is used to fuel the demon's own magic, psionics or physical body as *one* of the following – the Soul Catcher determines which one:

- 1D4x100 P.P.E., and lasts for 1D6 hours or until used up, whichever comes first.
- 1D4x100 I.S.P., and lasts for 1D6 hours or until used up, whichever comes first.
- Bio-regeneration of 4D6x10 M.D.C. (S.D.C. for S.D.C. dimensions); soul energy is used up in an instant.
- Impervious to fire (no damage even from Mega-Damage plasma or fire magic!), and resistant to cold (half damage from M.D. cold, no damage from ordinary cold) for 24 hours.

Note: Double the duration or M.D.C. for the souls of Lesser Demons and creatures of magic, triple it for Greater supernatural beings. Ancient Dragons, Demon Lords, Godlings, true gods and Alien Intelligences *cannot* lose their souls to this demon.

When a soul is consumed, the victim turns pale (and remains that way) and looks sickly, but feels otherwise okay. A

consumed soul is lost, but *not* destroyed, and there is a small chance it can be recovered! A Soul Catcher *consumed soul* has 6+1D4 years to live in a limbo state, and the soulless body dies one year after it does.

To get the soul back, the Soul Catcher who took it must be found, trapped by a circle of salt, then powerful magic must be used to retrieve the lost soul. Spells such as *Restoration*, *Ley Line Restoration*, *Resurrection* and *Transformation* (or in the alternative, a miracle or gift from a god) retrieve the soul and place it back inside the character where it belongs. An *exorcism* can be performed on the Soul Catcher to get the soul back, but such an attempt must be done within 12 hours after the soul was stolen and has only a 01-50% chance of success.

HOWEVER, the most direct approach is to make a deal with the demon to get the soul back. A Soul Catcher can *release* a soul at any time, provided it chooses to do so. So the trick is offering the Soul Catcher something it wants in trade. That could be a mountain of gold and gems, a magic item, information, or more likely, some evil act like destroying a church, razing a town, framing somebody, robbing someone or killing somebody, or worse! **Note:** The real danger for a character without a soul is that his body can be possessed by another force. He gets NO saving throw because he has NO soul! The body is an empty husk waiting to be inhabited. If possessed, that character becomes the person, demon or force that has seized control of his body, with the original mind stuffed in the background, watching his new life unfold as if it were a vague dream. In this case, the body must be purged of the inhabiting spirit (Exorcism, Banishment, and similar magic works) before the rightful soul can be returned as described above.

R.C.C. Skills: Appraise Goods 70%, Barter 88%, Detect Ambush 70%, Detect Concealment 65%, Horsemanship: Exotic Animals 60/50%, Intelligence 60%, Interrogation Techniques 75%, Tracking 60%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 65%, Lore: Hades 55%, Lore: Magic 65%, Land Navigation 54%, Prowl 45%, W.P. Paired Weapons (includes claws), and two Ancient Weapon Proficiencies of choice. Skills improve at a rate of 2% per level of experience.

Experience Level: 1D6+1 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Soul Catchers are vulnerable to all M.D. weapons in Mega-Damage settings and ordinary weapons in S.D.C. settings. Rune weapons inflict double damage and the demon is -3 to save from other types of Rune weapon attacks (psionics, magic, etc.). Holy weapons are particularly deadly and do triple damage, and the wood from a Millennium Tree also does double damage.

2. Salt, if ingested, does 2D6 M.D. and Soul Catchers cannot cross a line of salt, thus it is possible to trap one within a circle of salt. **Note:** If trapped in a circle of salt and a successful exorcism is performed (01-50%), it can force the Soul Catcher to release 1D4 souls. A circle of salt can hold the demon indefinitely and there are rumors that some of the demons are trapped in other dimensions buried in salt mines or trapped within containers that are surrounded by salt.

Attacks per Melee: Five to start, +1 at levels 3, 7, 11, and 15.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., but typically 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 5D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, 6D6 M.D. on a kick, and 1D6x10 M.D. on a Power Punch (but counts as two attacks), claw strike does a total of 6D6+4 M.D. (do not add Supernatural P.S. damage) and a bite or backhand strike with forearm spikes does 6D6 M.D.

Bonuses (In addition to likely attribute bonuses and skills): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, dodge, +3 to pul punch, +2 to roll with impact, +3 on all saving throws, impervious to possession, disease, gases and poison, and resistant to heat and fire (half damage).

Magic: Ironically, the Soul Catcher has a large repertoire of spells, but little P.P.E. to use them unless it *consumes a soul*.

The following spells are known; All level 1-3 Spell Invocations, plus Agony (20), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Call Lightning (15), Domination (10), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Electric Arc (8), Fire Bolt (7), Havoc (70), Magic Net (7), Metamorphosis: Human (40), Weight of Duty (10), and 2D6 additional spells of choice from levels 4-11. Soul Catchers prefer spells that help to catch or incapacitate their foes. They also prefer invocations over rituals.

Psionics: I.S.P. 2D6 + M.E. attribute number is all, unless the Soul Catcher consumes a soul. Psionic powers include: Commune with Spirits (6), Death Trance (1), Empathy (4), Empathic Transmission (6), Mentally Possess Others (30), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), Pyrokinesis (varies), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (3), Telekinesis (varies), and Telepathy (4).

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse. For the longest time, Soul Catchers were confined to the *Fire Flats* of Hades with the rest of the freaks. However, they are slowly making their way through *Tartarus* and are likely to be found in *Shek'Ra* or *Zaglore Bog*.

Allies and Alliances: Feared and shunned by most infernals, they tend to stick to their own kind or work alone. They are also considered *the Fallen*, but with the onset of the Minion War, Lord Modeus has recently decreed they are "Greater Demons." This has created resentment among many of the Lesser Demons and some of the Greater Demons. As a result, many demons prefer not to work with Soul Catchers, or even come to their aid, unless ordered to do so by a superior. Soul Catchers prefer to work alone and in small elite squads of other demons more open to teamwork, so the resentment and fear doesn't bother them. At least they are not as hated or feared as the Death Demons.

Rivals and Enemies: The minions of Dyval are despised above all others, but angels, warriors of light and all good beings are regarded as sworn enemies. Mortals are seen as a resource for fuel and as pawns and playthings. Soul Catchers don't care much for anybody, however, not even their fellow minions of Hades, and tend to treat fellow demons with contempt. Modeus would seem to be their patron for the time being, but whether that will last after the Minion War is over is yet to be seen. Soul Catchers are most frequently encountered as a member of an elite demon squad.

Baal-Rog

The Baal-Rog is a legendary figure among the denizens of Hades. They are known for their brawn, brains, magic, and fire, making them one of the most famous, feared and powerful of all the Greater Demons.

The Baal-Rog is a natural leader, excellent strategist and tactician, and a brilliant warrior. Baal-Rogs serve as the Captains, Majors, Colonels, and Generals of the demon hordes, and are often seen commanding legions of Lesser Demons, Gargoyles and even armies or groups of Gallu Bulls, Brek-Shall, Soul Catchers or Magots. The power and intelligence of a Baal-Rog also makes them ideal for leading special forces teams, reconnaissance missions, and conducting solo missions (all of which they prefer over leading demon troops). The resourceful Baal-Rog is happy to work on his own, independent of support forces, and does not panic if separated from other demonic forces. In fact, renegade loners have even been known to establish lairs, criminal operations and entire kingdoms on other worlds where they reign as the ultimate leader.

The awesome visage of the Baal-Rog evokes a sense of raw power and unbridled evil. The demon's massive, bronze-skinned body bulges with muscles, and its black, bat wings and flaming red eyes (and whip) punctuate its demonic nature.

Also known as the Demon Warlord.

Alignment: Aberrant (55%), Miscreant (25%), Diabolic (10%) or Anarchist (10%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+8, M.A. 2D6+8, M.E. 2D6+8, P.S. 2D6+28 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+10, P.E. 3D6+12 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd 1D6x10 running or 1D6x10+60 flying (48-82 mph/77 to 131 km).

Size: 12-14 feet (3.6 to 4.2 m) tall, and weighs 1000-2000 pounds (450 to 900 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+200. (In S.D.C. environments it has 3D4x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 2D4x10+80 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 1D4x100 +1D6+6 per level of experience.

Disposition: Smart, resourceful, cunning, and disciplined. A natural born leader of men and monsters.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, track by smell 45% (+20% to follow the scent of blood or fire/smoke), Dimensional Teleport 58% +2% per level of experience, bio-regeneration 4D6 M.D. per minute (1D6 per melee round), impervious to heat and fire (including M.D. magic fire and plasma energy), impervious to toxic gases, magically understands and speaks all languages at 98%, and can leap 50 feet (15.2 m) without assistance from wings. Can also hover and fly, but glides in silence (equal to a Prowl of 60%).

R.C.C. Skills: Climb 80%/70%, Dance 80%, Forgery 45%, Gambling 80%, Gambling Dirty Tricks 70%, Horsemanship Exotic Animals 86/66%, Intelligence 80%, Land Navigation 80%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and two other languages of choice, Lore: Demons & Monsters 80%, Lore: Faeries 60%, Math: Basic and Advanced 92%, Radio: Basic 80%, Swim 60%, Streetwise 80%, Track (people) 50%, Wil-



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derness Survival 70%, W.P. Chain, W.P. Paired Weapons (including clawed hands and feet), W.P. Whip and one W.P. of choice (any, Ancient or Modern); Commanders and Generals will have two additional W.P.s (any). All skills increase at a rate of 3% per level of experience.

Level of Experience: 1D6+4 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Six attacks at level one, +1 at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 15.

Mega-Damage: A per Supernatural Strength. A claw attack does an extra 2D6 M.D., while a bite does only 2D4 M.D., and a wing strike inflicts 3D6 M.D.; or by magic or weapon. Favorite weapon is the magic Fire Whip (same as the Fire Warlock spell, but with twice the duration time).

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +3 on initiative, +3 on Perception Rolls, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to disarm and entangle, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +3 on magic saving throws, +12 to save vs Horror Factor, and impervious to fire, even M.D. fire and disease.

Vulnerabilities: Baal-Rogs are vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, except plasma and heat based weapons (impervious to M.D. fire), as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics.

Magic: P.P.E. 1D4x100 +1D6+6 per level of experience. All levels 1-4 Fire Elemental Magic, plus Fire Whip (30 P.P.E.; 5D6 M.D., and the whip is twice the normal length for a Baal-Rog), Animate & Control Dead (20), Turn Dead (6), Exorcism (30), Remove Curse (140), and Heal Wounds (10).

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: All demons of Hades, even Gargoyles and the Fallen, respect and fear the mighty Baal-Rog. This Greater Demon loyally serves Demon Lords, dark gods, and occasionally other powerful, evil beings. The Baal-Rog is also a popular demon to be Rifted into other worlds by Shifters, Summoners, and other forces. The demon will work to twist a mortal master's wishes and/or escape or destroy his master, unless that character earns the Baal-Rog's respect (uncommon).

Rivals & Enemies: Sees the Brek-Shall as a friendly and worthy rival, dislikes and never trusts Death Demons or Soul Catchers, and doesn't generally like tricksters. Hates the minions of Dyval, especially Dire Harpies, Arch-Fiends, Horrors and Beasts, as well as the forces of good. Finds humans fascinating, though inferior, and enjoys commanding flocks of Gargoyles.

Notes: Occasionally wears dragon armor and may use modern weapons like particle beam and plasma rifles and rail guns, but tends to prefer to rely on its own magic and abilities. They covet magic weapons, scrolls and other magic items, but rarely use armor or wear more than a loincloth. They are the symbol of cunning and power, and seek their acquisition above all else.

Demon Locusts

Demon Locusts are giant, insect-like abominations with a hideous, bald, human head, the body and wings of a locust, six spiny legs, and the tail of a scorpion. They are second in raw power and pure evil to the greatest of the Demon Lords. Thus, all other demons are subject to their orders and demands. This makes the Demon Locusts a combination of errant military generals and powerful independent operators who can often come and go as they please and do whatever they want. However, Demon Locusts *always* rally to the aid of their fellow demons whenever Hades, or a Lord of Hades to whom they are allied, is threatened.

Demon Locusts symbolize *destruction* and *genocide*, and have, consequently, embraced the *Minion War* with glee. Demon Locusts are active in all aspects of the war, from formulating strategies and tactics, to leading armies into battles, to operations behind the scenes, and secret, independent schemes to undermine Dyval and further the cause of Hades.

Though their numbers are said to range into the hundreds of thousands, most hibernate, patiently waiting for Armageddon. Thus, under normal circumstances, people seldom see more than one or two among the other demons, and the Locusts seldom establish their own kingdoms or force their will on mortals or fellow demons. This is not benevolence or apathy, for the Demon Locusts are merciless, devastating fighters who loathe humankind and the Gods of Light. They merely wait and plot for absolute chaos and cosmic annihilation. The Minion War is such an opportunity, thus, more Demon Locusts than anyone can remember (at least 90,000 out of an estimated 366,000) have taken wing to join the siege on Dyval and the battles spilling across the Megaverse. For seers who understand such things, it is a sign of impending Armageddon and destruction sown across multiple dimensions that has not been seen in countless eons. In fact, Demon Locusts have begun to appear in the *Three Galaxies* and across the face of *Rifts Earth* – at the Calgary Kingdom of Monsters, the haunted ruins of old Chicago, the demon infested wreckage of Detroit-Windsor, the Magic Zone, the St. Louis Rift, the Devil's Triangle, Africa, England, Germany, Poland, India, Russia, China and countless other places and worlds – to set the stage for the war and destruction yet to come.

Alignment: Miscreant (30%) or Diabolic (70%).

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6+10, M.A. 2D6+10, M.E. 3D6+10, P.S. 3D6+30 (Supernatural), P.P. 3D6+10, P.E. 3D6+10 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D6x10+10 running or 3D6x10+50 flying (55-157 mph/88 to 251 km).

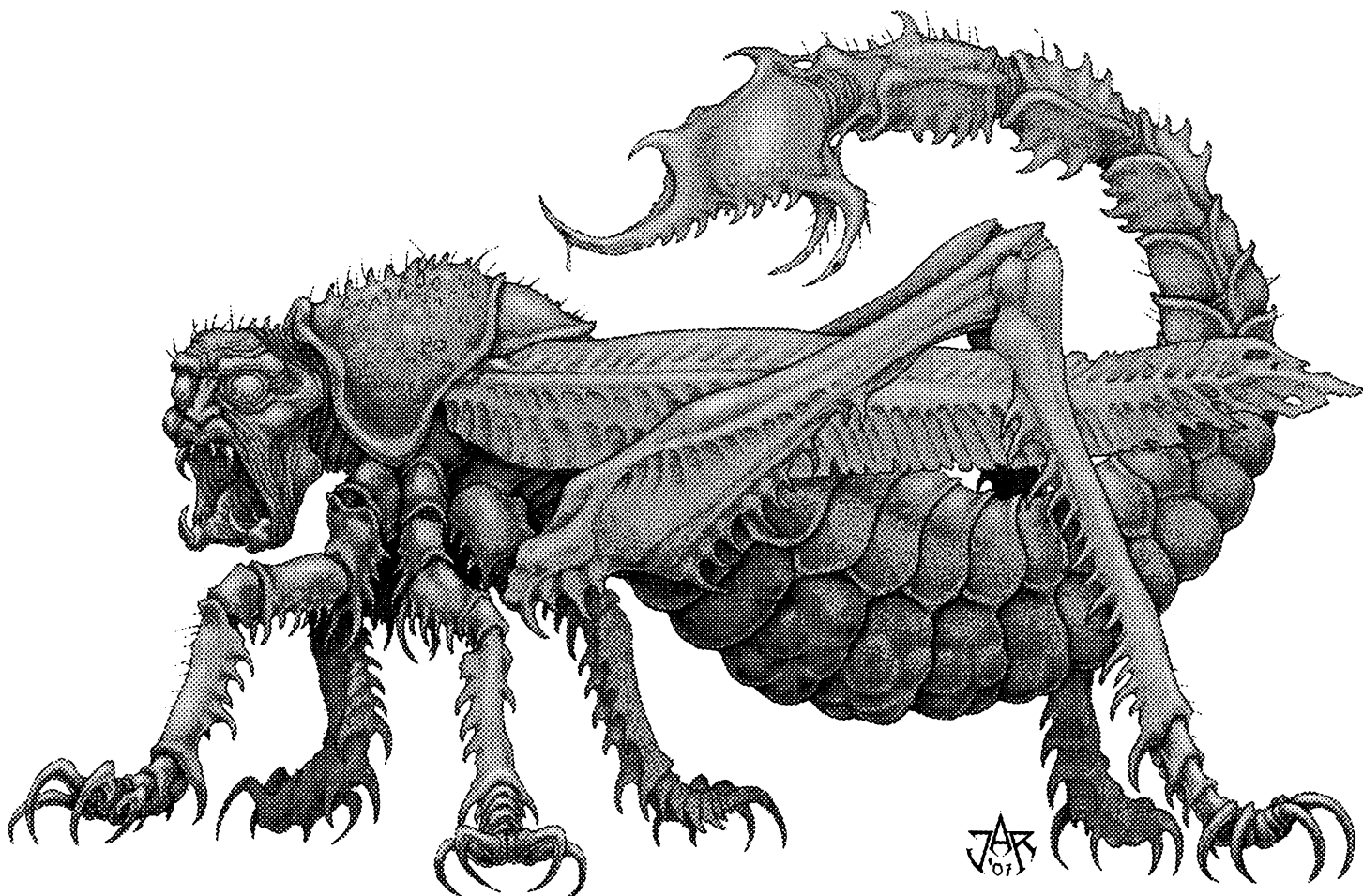
Size: 12 feet long (3.6 m) and weighs 700-900 lbs (315 to 405 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D4x100+400. (In S.D.C. environments it has 2D4x10+20 for Hit Points, 2D6x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 17.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 2D4x100+100

Disposition: Besides being evil nihilists, they are cold, calculating schemers and masterful tacticians and manipulators. They use people, mortals and demons, like chess pieces on a game board. Their ultimate dream, war and destruction of worlds on a cosmic scale.



Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., fly, nightvision 200 feet (61 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, track by smell 45% (+20% to follow the scent of death/decay, blood or magic), Dimensional Teleport 54% +1% per level of experience, bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D. per melee round, impervious to heat and fire (including M.D., magic fire and plasma energy), impervious to toxic gases, magically knows all languages at 98%, and can leap 80 feet (24.4 m) high and 160 feet (48.7 m) across without assistance from wings, or glide up to 1200 feet (366 m).

R.C.C. Skills: Art 80%, Barter 90%, Calligraphy 90%, Climb 80%/70%, Computer Operation 90%, Computer Programing 80%, Forgery 85%, Intelligence 90%, Land Navigation 98%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and four other languages of choice, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Lore: Faeries 90%, Lore: Magic 90%, Math: Basic and Advanced 98%, Philosophy 85%, Public Speaking 75%, Seduction (with words) 70%, Swim 70%, and Streetwise 90%.

Level of Experience: 1D4+4 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Seven to start, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 16.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S., but the bite does 1D6 M.D., or by scorpion tail, magic or psionics.

Scorpion Tail Stinger (special): Stab or slash does 6D6 M.D. to Mega-Damage beings and 1D6x10 S.D.C./Hit Point damage to mortals. And even Mega-Damage creatures must also roll to save vs poison (14 or higher). A failed roll means the

character is paralyzed for 2D6 melees, and suffers an additional 6D6 points of damage (M.D. or S.D.C./H.P. as the case may be).

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +4 on initiative and Perception Rolls, +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +1 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +5 on all saving throws, and is impervious to Horror Factor, disease, fire, gases and poison.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Demon Locusts' own arrogance can sometimes work against them as they generally underestimate their opponents, particularly humans.

2. Silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. to Demon Locusts, so if a sword does 3D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 3D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.)

3. Demon Locusts are also vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, except plasma and heat based weapons (impervious to M.D. fire), as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics (normal damage).

Magic: P.P.E. 2D4x100+100 +10 per level of experience. Knows all level one Spell Invocations plus Call Lightning (15), Fire Ball (10), Fire Bolt (7), Negate Magic (30), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Fly as the Eagle (25), Animate/Control Dead (20), Turn Dead (6), Exorcism (30), Remove Curse (140), Curse: Phobia (40), Luck Curse (40), Spoil (30), Sickness (50), Earthquake (50), Id Barrier (600), and Sanctum (390). Furthermore, half of the Demon Locusts also know *all*

“Spoiling Magic” spells (see the *Rifts® Book of Magic* or *Rifts® Mystic Russia*) in addition to these invocations.

Psionics: All Sensitive powers. I.S.P.: 57 +1D6+6 per level of experience.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Fellow demons of Hades, evil Demigods, Godlings, Lords of Hades, dark gods, and evil Alien Intelligences. Possibly Adult and Ancient Dragons and powerful practitioners of magic, among others. Demon Locust will make strange bedfellows to achieve what they desire, but they are never anyone’s pawns, not even the gods’.

Rivals and Enemies: Loathe the minions of Dyval and have wanted them subjugated to Hades for eons. Generally have little regard for humans and humanoids, Faerie Folk, and the forces of good.

Gallu, The Demon Bull

Imagine a 14 foot (4.3 m) wall of muscle with cloven hooves, and the fire-breathing head of a bull, and you have a good picture of the Hades demon known as the Gallu Bull. It is a giant with reddish-grey to ebony skin, clawed hands, bull-like legs, and the head of a bull with glowing red eyes, menacing horns, and smoke and fire flaring from its mouth and nostrils (not a weapon, just a visual effect to show disdain, anger or frustration). They function as the Staff Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains and squad leaders of the demon hordes. They enjoy leading, bossing around and beating Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons and the Fallen into submission or an obedient army. Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, Alu, and Shedim are their favorite troops, but the Gallu Bull will lead any demon or mortal slaves his master may ask him to manage. Gallu also serve as the members and squad leaders of elite squads and shock troops.

Skilled and aggressive warriors, the Gallu welcome war with the minions of Dyval and dream of conquering other worlds and realms besides Dyval. They are the enforcers and elite soldiers of Hades.

Also known as the Demon Bull and Fire Bull.

Alignment: Aberrant (40%), Miscreant (30%), Diabolic (22%), Anarchist (6%) or Unprincipled (2%; rare for a demon).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+8, M.A. 1D6+8, M.E. 1D6+10, P.S. 1D6+30, P.P. 1D6+12, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 2D6, Spd 2D6x10+40 running. Cannot fly.

Size: 12-14 feet tall (3.6 to 4.2 m) and weighs around 1000 pounds (450 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+50 on Rifts Earth. (In S.D.C. environments it has 5D6x2 for Hit Points, 1D4x10+40 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 15.)

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E.: 3D6x10

Disposition: Stubborn, aggressive and dutiful warriors who see the solution for everything as violence and intimidation. Steadfast, proud and brave, Demon Bulls are ruthless in battle and like to think they can win every battle. Sometimes

their pride and stubbornness works against them. Without battles to fight, Gallu can be slothful, self-indulgent and lazy.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, Dimensional Teleport 60% +1% per level of experience, bio-regeneration 2D6 M.D. per melee round, impervious to heat, fire and toxic gases although magic fire does half damage, magically understands and speaks all languages at 96%, and can leap 40 feet (12.2 m) high and 80 feet (24.4 m) lengthwise with a short running start.

R.C.C. Skills: Climb 70%/60%, Computer Operation 60%, Dance 80%, Horsemanship: Exotic Animals 90%/70%, Land Navigation 85%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and two other languages of choice, Lore: Demons & Monsters 80%, Lore: Faeries 60%, Intelligence 88%, Math: Basic 82%, Radio: Basic 80%, Swim 80%, Track (people) 50%, Wilderness Survival 70%, W.P. Chain, W.P. Energy Rifle and two of choice (any; Ancient or Modern). Skills improve at a rate of 2% per level of experience.

Level of Experience: 1D4+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Six to start, +1 at levels 3, 7, 10, and 14.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural Strength, but kick attacks do an extra 1D6 M.D., a head butt does punch damage, a butt or gore attack with horns does an extra 2D6 M.D., and a running ram with horns 1D6x10 M.D. and has a 01-60% chance of knocking opponents smaller than 20 feet (6.1 m) tall off their feet, causing the victim to lose initiative and one melee action/attack (counts as two attacks). A Gallu’s bite does only 1D6 M.D.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative and Perception Rolls, +3 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact, +2 on all magic saving throws +5 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to fire and gases.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Gallu Bulls sometimes let their aggression and stubbornness get the best of them, causing them to take on forces that outnumber them or are more than they can handle, or fight to the death when retreat is a reasonable option. Unlike other demons, they do not usually underestimate humans and other opponents, but their pride and stubbornness may prevent them from accepting defeat.

2. Silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. to the demon, so if a sword does 3D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 3D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.)

3. Also vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, except plasma and heat based weapons (resistant to M.D. fire), as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics (normal damage).

Magic: P.P.E.: 3D6x10 +1D8 per level of experience. Limited magic powers: Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Globe of Daylight (2), Thunderclap (4), Fear (5), Repel Animals (6), Animate & Control Dead (20), Turn Dead (6), Exorcism (30), Remove Curse (140), Luck Curse (40), Phobia Curse (40), and Heal Wounds (10).

Psionics: None.



Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Fellow demons of Hades and other powerful, evil beings.

Rivals and Enemies: The minions of Dyval, vampires, and the forces of good. Considers humans and most mortals as slaves and pawns. Envious of the Brek-Shall, hates Death Demons, and dislikes Soul Catchers.

Notes: Gallu sometimes wear body armor and may use a variety of man-made M.D. weapons. On Rifts Earth, they are particularly fond of magic items, Vibro-Blades, TW weapons and pulse rifles.

Jinn

The Elemental Demon

The Jinn are powerful and menacing free spirits within the Hades hierarchy. They are generally allowed to come and go and do as they please, as long as their doings do not disrupt the demon community and they, when called upon, serve the greater good of Hades.

Jinn are mischievous creatures of magic linked to Elemental forces, but are not so much playful as destructive, cruel and vindictive. They are known to cause disease, drought, floods, and all manner of trouble for all mortal creatures, whom these demons consider their playthings. Like True Elementals, the Jinn's natural state is that of *invisibility*, only Warlocks, Elemental Fusionists and those with the power to see the invisible can see them. They are impervious to most weapons, including Mega-Damage devices, however, the Jinn are vulnerable to magic and silver.

The Curse. Long ago, the Jinn were placed under a curse by a powerful Alien Intelligence, or so legend tells. This curse forces the Jinn to call anybody who can capture them, save their life, or provides them with vital aid, their "master." The curse also binds the Jinn to grant their "master" *three wishes* as a reward for the mortal's help or in order to end their obligation and regain their freedom. Until the three wishes are requested and granted, that particular Jinn is bound to that plane of existence and to the person to whom the Jinn is obligated.

Being bound to an individual means that a Jinn must stay at his side, cannot raise his hand against him, and must call him "Master." Although bound to that individual, the Jinn is *not* obligated to aid or assist him in any other way. To ask the Elemental Demon for information, or for him to dispatch an adversary, is considered a *wish* and the Jinn is likely to ask, before taking action, "Is that your wish, Master?" An affirmative response uses up one wish. Otherwise, the Jinn is free to stand idly by, offer good (or bad or mocking) advice ("Don't let that warrior hit you like that, Master."), or laugh or jeer its master during a battle unless it is requested (wished) to intervene. Of course, a Jinn may *volunteer* any amount of aid or information it may desire to offer, but such assistance is likely to lead to treachery or death. The Jinn loathes having to call any creature its "master," even for a short while, thus, the longer it takes to ask for the three wishes, the more angry and vindictive the Jinn becomes. Even

the friendliest Jinn is incredibly selfish, and most are evil forces who hate virtue, compassion and goodness above all else. These malignant souls always try to trick or cause the death of the mortal who controls them, for if a mortal "master" dies, the Jinn is *free* of its obligation and is able to leave. **Note:** A Jinn cannot be obligated to an entire group, only *one* individual within the group.

The Wish. The word *wish* must be used to force the Jinn to comply with demands. It is important to understand that a Jinn cannot actually produce something out of thin air as most people believe. Rather, they use their powers, cunning and evil ways to find and get what is requested of them. If a king's ransom is requested, the Jinn disappears and returns within 48 hours with the requested wealth. What the wisher does not know is how the wealth was obtained, from whom, or how many suffered or died in its acquisition. Without a doubt, it was stolen, and there may be consequences for it later. Likewise, a wish to bring someone back to life will send the Jinn searching for a Resurrection scroll or someone who can be *forced* or *tricked* into resurrecting the dead character. In short, the Jinn, and those he might enlist to help him, are restricted to the normal time and magical limitations regarding resurrection and all wishes. Some wishes, such as resurrection, may be beyond the powers of even this mighty demon.

The Twist. Being treacherous schemers and pranksters, a Jinn will often try to twist the wish into something foul and ugly, not intended by the wisher, especially if the demon is treated poorly. Wishers are wise to remember the Jinn are *evil demons* whose real strength of power lays in thievery, assassination, treachery, and deceit. Consequently, they are always looking to cause grief and suffering. This means that if the wish is worded carelessly, the Jinn may twist the wisher's intent and, using his words, cause trouble, death or destruction.

There are four types of Jinn: Black (earth), White (water), Green (air), and Yellow (fire). All Jinn have the following characteristics and abilities.

Alignment: Aberrant (5%), Diabolic (50%), Miscreant (25%), or Anarchist (20%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+8, M.A. 2D6+10, M.E. 2D6+10, P.S. 2D6+30, P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 2D6, Spd 2D6x10 running, or 2D6x10+100 flying (68-150 mph/109 to 240 km).

Size: 8-24 feet (2.4 to 7.3 m) tall; can change size at will, and weighs 1000 pounds (450 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D6x100+200 on Rifts Earth. (In S.D.C. environments it has 2D4x10 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 1D6x10+30 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 1D6x100

Disposition: Conceited, haughty, arrogant, impatient, and condescending, the Jinn like to think they are smarter and more powerful than anyone. Indeed, they are conniving and cunning tricksters, but they are the greatest of demons. However, playing on their conceit can, for a while, win a character a Jinn's favor and (questionable) cooperation. Jinn are the symbols of lust and decadence.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., breathe without air for an unlimited period of time, turn into mist at will,

metamorphosis into an insect at will, can change its size from 8-24 feet (2.4 to 7.3 m) at will, fire and cold resistant (even M.D. attacks do half damage), impervious to toxic gases, nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, Dimensional Teleport 53%, bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D. once per melee round, and magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%. The Jinn's natural state is *invisible*, but can turn visible and back to invisible at will.

Important Note: All Jinn are creatures of the twilight and are strongest at night. During the daytime, whether sunny or overcast, all of their powers, abilities, number of attacks, bonuses, physical M.D.C., etc., are at *half*. Jinn are also vulnerable to weapons made of silver, day or night. See Vulnerabilities.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Electronics 90%, Computer Operation 90%, Concealment 70%, Intelligence 90%, Land Navigation 85%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and two other languages of choice, Locksmith 80%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Lore: Faeries 90%, Math: Basic 98%, Palming 70%, Pick Locks 90%, Pick Pockets 70%, Radio: Basic 90%, Streetwise 65%, Swim 80%, Track (people) 50%, Wilderness Survival 70%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Energy Rifle and three W.P.s of choice (any, but tends to prefer Ancient weapons).

Level of Experience: 1D6+3 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Six attacks per melee, +1 at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural Strength. A body block/ram does 5D6 M.D. and has a 01-65% chance of

knocking an opponent who is 30 feet (9.1 m) or smaller off his feet, causing that character to lose one melee attack and initiative (counts as two attacks). Or the Jinn may use a weapon or magic.

Bonuses at Night (in addition to attributes and skill): +2 on initiative and Perception Rolls, +4 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +4 to dodge in flight, +5 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +4 on all saving throws. Reduce bonuses and number of attacks by half during the daytime (round down).

Vulnerabilities: 1. Ultimately creatures of darkness, all bonuses and attacks per melee round are reduced by half during the daytime (round down). That's "daytime," not daylight. It doesn't matter if the Jinn is in a dark basement or cave, if it is *daytime* his abilities are reduced and if it is nighttime his abilities are at full. In Hades, it is effectively nighttime around the clock.

2. Sometimes the Jinn can be manipulated, distracted, and tricked by appealing to their insufferable egos. Jinn also tend to underestimate their opponents, especially humans, and overestimate their own capabilities.

3. Jinn are affected by *spell magic*, *magic weapons*, and *creatures of magic* (like dragons, the Sphinx, and Faerie Folk), including their bites and punches. Weapons made of *silver* inflict M.D. equal to its usual S.D.C. damage, so a dagger that does 1D6 S.D.C. does 1D6 M.D. to a Jinn! (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.) Holy weapons do double damage, and the wood from a Millennium Tree does double damage. *Impervious to most nor-*



mal weapons, including S.D.C. and M.D. explosives, bullets, energy blasts and fisticuffs.

4. Airtight containers that can be sealed – bottles and cans with lids or stoppers to Tupperware and 50 gallon drums that can be sealed airtight – can hold and contain a Jinn. The trick (and it's a difficult one) is getting the Jinn to turn into mist and go inside long enough for a character to seal the item. Once sealed inside an airtight container, the Jinn is trapped.

Also see the obligations of the Curse and Wishes, previously described.

Magic: P.P.E.: 1D6x100 +10 points per level of experience. *Black Jinn:* All Earth Elemental magic levels 1-8. *White Jinn:* All Water Elemental magic levels 1-7. *Green Jinn:* All Air Elemental magic levels 1-7. *Yellow Jinn:* All Fire Elemental magic levels 1-8.

Psionics: I.S.P.: 1D4x10+30 +1D8 per level of experience. Jinn possess all Sensitive and Physical psionic powers.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: They will work with fellow demons of Hades, but consider themselves better than them all, and treat Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons and the Fallen like slaves and idiots. Envy the Raksasha.

Rivals and Enemies: Jinn find the minions of Dyval to be loathsome creatures to be taunted, enslaved, or destroyed. They especially hate Imps, Deevils, Devilkins, and Beasts. Also hate (and fear a little) dragons, in particular, as well as Faerie Folk and other creatures of magic. The forces of good are fools to be toyed with and crushed, and mortals are playthings for their amusement and decadent ways.

Notes: Occasionally wear armor, usually for visual effect, and may use a variety of man-made M.D. weapons. On Rifts Earth, Jinn are particularly fond of magic items, magic swords, Vibro-Blades and energy rifles.

Magot

The fearless Magot is a hideous abomination: a giant, four-legged beast, with a gaping maw filled with huge, wide teeth, and its head crowned with three eyes on long tentacle-like stalks. The legs are thick, like tree trunks, with three thick, prehensile toes. Magots roam the plains and forests of Hades in small herds, petrifying and devouring intruders. They love to terrorize and destroy, and welcome war with Dyval. They are dull-witted demons granted the status of Greater Demon due to their size, raw power, and fierce loyalty to the Demon Lords of Hades.

Under normal conditions, Magots rarely leave the confines of Hades. Those found in other realms of existence are usually summoned there by powerful magic, lured there, or accidentally whisked to an alien world by magical or dimension spanning energies. Consequently, it was rare to encounter more than one or two Magots outside of Hades. However, with the advent of the Minion War, the Demon Lord Mictla and Modeus have unleashed thousands into the Megaverse to wreak havoc, and tens of thousands regularly raid Dyval to slay and devour all they encounter. Magots are used like living infantry tanks to bowl over

ground troops, punch through enemy lines, lay siege and offer troop support. They are the official minions of Mictla the Devourer, but she has been happy to work with Modeus in the Minion War.

Also known as the Great Devourer.

Alignment: Diabolic (80%) or Miscreant (20%).

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+2, M.A. 1D6+2, M.E. 1D6+10, P.S. 1D6+40 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+12, P.E. 1D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D6x10+60 running (47-77 mph/75 to 123 km). Cannot fly.

M.D.C.: 1D4x1000 on Rifts Earth (half that in most other M.D.C. settings). (In S.D.C. environments Magots have 2D4x10+20 for Hit Points, 6D6x2 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 1D6x100

Size: 12-20 feet (3.6 to 6.1 m) tall, 8-10 feet (2.4 to 3 m) wide and 10-14 feet (3-4.3 m) long. Weighs 2D4 tons.

Disposition: All Magots wake up on the wrong side of the bed every morning and get crankier as the day goes on. They are bellowing, belligerent, short-tempered tyrants who expect lesser beings to get out of their way, do as they say and fall on bent knee whenever they are addressed. Cantankerous, cruel and vindictive bullies, Magots push their weight around to get what they want. When disobeyed, ignored or threatened, the monster beats the one(s) responsible, or turns him to stone, or kills and eats him (or them). Magots have a voracious appetite and never seem to get enough to eat. Gluttons, the demon will gorge itself whenever possible. When not eating, fighting, killing or terrorizing (they love it when people fear them), the lazy Magots are happy to lay around, doing nothing but sunning themselves, sleeping, chatting and complaining about life.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m), see the invisible, turn into mist at will, Dimensional Teleport 25%, bio-regenerates 2D6 per melee round, impervious to toxic gases, heat and fire (even magic and M.D. fire does *no* damage), magically understands and speaks all languages at 84%, and can leap 40 feet (12.2 m) high and 80 feet (24.4 m) across.

The Eyes of the Magot (special): Each is mounted on a prehensile eye stalk that can move and point in any direction, front, back, side, up and down. They can also operate independent of each other, provide 360 vision, and can dodge incoming attacks. This makes it virtually impossible to catch a Magot by surprise or get him from behind.

Each eye fires a beam of light that temporarily (1D6 minutes) turns its victims to stone. The eye beams do not strike automatically, and a roll to strike must be made for each attack. A saving throw vs magic of 13 or higher means the character is not turned to stone; roll to save against *each* eye beam that hits. The spell Stone to Flesh will instantly restore a victim of petrification. **Note:** If the Magot concentrates (using up three melee attacks) and expends 80 P.P.E., the demon can make the petrification last two hours per level of the monster's experience. **Range:** 1000 feet (305 m) +100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills: Climb 60%/20%, Detect Ambush 86%, Detect Concealment 70%, Land Navigation 80%, Lore: Demons &



Monsters 50%, Lore: Faeries, Swim 80%, Track Animals 35%, Track Humans 45% (+30% to follow the scent of death, decay and/or blood), and Wilderness Survival 90%.

Level of Experience: 2D4 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Eight +1 at levels 3, 5, 8, 12 and 15; may combine eye beam attacks with physical attacks.

Mega-Damage: As per its formidable Supernatural Strength. A swat from an eye-stalk is roughly equal to a full strength punch, inflicting 5D6 M.D. (a power punch is not possible with an eye stalk). A kick or stomp attack does 6D6+6 M.D., a power kick or stomp does 2D4x10 M.D. but counts as two attacks, and a running body block does 1D6x10+10 M.D. and has a 01-85% chance of knocking an opponent smaller than 30 feet (9.1 m) off his feet and 20 feet (6.1 m) away from the point of impact; victims lose *two melee attacks* and initiative (counts as two attacks). The Magot's bite inflicts 2D6x10 M.D. and is capable of biting light robots, cyborgs and Lesser Demons in half on a roll of a Natural 20 (does double damage)! Also see *temporary petrification*. **Note:** A Magot never uses weapons, gadgets or armor.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +3 on Perception Rolls, +4 to strike with physical attacks and eye beams, +1 to parry, +4 to dodge, eye stalks get a +6 to automatic dodge (the act of dodging does not use up a melee attack), +5 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +3 on all saving throws, and is impervious to Horror Factor, poison (but not magic potions), gas, disease and fire.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. to the demon, so if a sword does 3D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 3D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.)

2. Also vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, except plasma and heat based weapons (impervious to M.D. fire), as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics (normal damage).

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Extremely loyal to fellow demons of Hades and serves its leaders and Lords well. May also serve practitioners of magic with the power to summon them, tyrants who give them free rein, dark gods and other powerful evil beings. Among the denizens of Hades, the Magot hates Death Demons, and because they are impervious to even this demon's disease of Undeath, Magots would love to be sent out to devour them all.

Rivals and Enemies: Hates the minions of Dyval and would love to see them subjugated under the Lords of Hades, and especially hates Imps and Fiends. Regards all mortal beings as food, slaves and playthings to be tormented, abused, pushed around and eaten. Despises mortals and creatures of magic who dare summon them and try to enslave or command them.

Night Owl

The Night Owl has the body and wings of a giant owl, and an ugly, balding, human head with feathered hair around the temple and base of the skull, beard (no moustache), and glowing red-orange eyes. They are the wise men, thinkers, plotters and strategists of Hades.

Night Owls tend to be solitary predators who keep to themselves as they hatch schemes to acquire magic and power, or formulate strategies and tactics and other machinations. They also hunt alone, preying on mortal intruders, Sub-Demons and the Fallen, but may keep a small number of henchmen consisting of (2D4+2) Greater and/or Lesser Demons, and/or evil humanoids (seldom Gargoyles and never the Fallen). While Night Owls prefer to function as independent operators and leaders of small, elite groups/squads, most are well connected and have a vast *network* of "associates" they can contact to get information, trade with, call in a favor, or call upon when they are needed.

It is ironic then, that these loners take command as the leaders, Generals and strategic high command of entire legions of demons that can number into the tens or even hundreds of thousands. Night Owls are resourceful, fast thinking, natural leaders, strategists and tacticians who excel in times of conflict and crisis. They are so decisive and sure of themselves that few, even the Demon Lords, question their plans or commands. Thus, Night Owls have taken charge of military operations across the Megaverse and help to mastermind the invasion of Dyval. Meanwhile, other Night Owls have taken direct command of demon armies and still others head up espionage operations behind the scenes.

Night Owls on Rifts Earth and other worlds who claim to be independent operatives with their own agenda are, more likely than not, undercover and heading up an advance invasion force or Special Ops team to acquire information or magic artifact or allies, plot an invasion, or otherwise undermine the enemy (Dyval and its allies). Such "unaffiliated independents" are likely to have a team of 1D4+1 Lesser Demons, 1D4 Greater Demons, and employ, partner up with or press into service 1D6+2 "locals" (humans or D-Bees) as underlings, agents, strike force and native guides. The main job of any underling is to assist the Night Owl with its agenda and help it understand and deal with local people, society and military. Favorite hench-

men include spies, smugglers, stoolies, thieves, assassins, bounty hunters, City Rats, Witches and evil practitioners of magic, all part of the demon's elite team. Over time, it will also develop a local *network* of informers, criminals, henchmen and contacts.

It is interesting to note that the conniving and duplicitous Night Owl also enjoys the role of elite advisors and counselors to despot kings, tyrant lords, warlords and other evil people and beings in positions of power. Rumor has it that *Lord Dunscon* once had a Night Owl counselor until the beast cheated him. A Night Owl is said to counsel the lord of the Calgary Kingdom of Monsters.

Also known as the Demon General and Dark Council.

Alignment: Aberrant (50%), Miscreant (30%) or Diabolic (20%).

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+8, M.A. 2D6+8, M.E. 2D6+10, P.S. 1D6+28 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 2D6+10 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6+1, Spd 6D6 running or 1D6x10+100 flying (75-110 mph/120 to 176 km).

Size: 4-5 feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) tall, 14 foot (4.3 m) wingspan and weighs 300-400 pounds (135 to 180 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D6x10+80. (Has 1D6x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 1D6x10 for S.D.C., and an A.R. of 11 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 2D6x10

Disposition: Brilliant minds skilled at analysis, observation, strategies and tactics, managing and leading. Unfortunately, that brilliant mind is used to think up ways to wage war, destroy, conquer, enslave, undermine and hurt others, as well as other plots that involve deceit, subterfuge, espionage, revenge and treachery. Loves working behind the scenes, manipulating and scheming under the guise of helpful advice. Evil in the extreme.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Fly, nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m; can see in total darkness), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, Dimensional Teleport 56%, bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D. per melee round, impervious to toxic gases, heat, fire resistant, although magic fire does half damage, and magically understands and speaks all languages at 98%.

R.C.C. Skills: Anthropology 80%, Computer Operation 90%, Computer Programming 80%, Computer Hacking 60%, Land Navigation 80%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven and six other languages of choice at 98%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 90%, Lore: Hades 95%, Lore: Magic 90%, Intelligence 80%, Math: Advanced and Basic 98%, Navigation 90%, Psychology 90%, Prowl 62%, Public Speaking 70%, Research 90%, Swim 20%, Track Humanoids 80%, Wilderness Survival 70%. Skills increase at a rate of +1% per level of experience.

Level of Experience: 2D4+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Five physical or psionic attacks to start, +1 at levels 3, 6, 10 and 15.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural Strength. Commonly: Restrained claw/punch 5D6 S.D.C. damage plus P.S. bonus, full strength punch or head butt does 4D6 M.D., power punch/butt 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks), flying claw strike



6D6 M.D. and has a 40% chance of knocking an opponent off his feet (counts as two attacks), bite does 1D6 M.D.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +2 on initiative, +4 on Perception Rolls, +5 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +4 on all saving throws, and impervious to toxic gases, heat, fire.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Tendency to underestimate their opponents, especially humans, sometimes works against them. Likewise, sometimes a Night Owl's schemes are too complex and go awry (often because the henchmen can't execute every phase with the precision necessary).

2. Silver weapons do *double* their equivalent damage as M.D. to the demon, so if a sword does 2D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 4D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do triple damage.)

3. Also vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics (normal damage). Magic fire and M.D. fire and plasma do half damage.

Magic: P.P.E.: 3D6x10. Limited magic: Animate & Control Dead (20), Chameleon (6), Distant Voice (10), Escape (8), Exorcism (30), Fear (5), Globe of Daylight (2), Heal Wounds (10), Ignite Fire (6), Luck Curse (40), Manipulate Objects (2+), Phobia Curse (40), Remove Curse (140), Repel Animals (7), and Turn Dead (6).

Psionics: 5D6x10 I.S.P. +10 points per level of experience. Has all Sensitive and Physical psionics, plus Bio-Manipulation (super, 20), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mind Bolt (varies), Mind Block Auto-Defense (special), Psychic Omni-Sight (15), and P.P.E. Shield (10).

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Allies: Fellow demons of Hades and evil mortals the demon can manipulate and use for its own ends (often without the person ever realizing it). Although loyal to Hades and its rulers, Night Owls are elitists and treat Lesser Demons, the Fallen and Sub-Demons as inferiors. Sees no one as its equal, not even the Raksasha or Baal-Rog, but has little desire to be King or Lord and is happy to let others suffer with the responsibility of leadership. When a Night Owl leads troops, it sees its position as *temporary*, and even a few centuries is "temporary" to an immortal demon.

Rivals and Enemies: Has always hated the minions of Dyval and is glad to help crush and enslave them. Also dislikes all forces of good, but sees mortals as tools and resources with which to play and have fun.

Note: Night Owls *never* wear armor or use handheld weapons, other than the occasional scroll or magic item. Night Owls enjoy torture, using their claws, teeth, psionics, magic and mind games.

Raksasha

The Shape Shifter

One of the rarest and most powerful demons of Hades is the shape-changing Raksasha. The creature's natural form is that of a large, black skinned humanoid with claws for nails and the head of a feline, usually a tiger, sometimes a lion. The Raksasha are generally very intelligent, but also arrogant, cunning and conniving. They lust for power and see themselves as being smarter and more clever than others. They enjoy toying with all lesser, beings including their fellow demons and other supernatural monsters, but humans are particularly intriguing to them. Strangely enough, Raksasha see humans as lowly but kindred spirits due to their resourcefulness and imagination. Despite their appreciation of humans, most Raksasha still tend to underestimate humans (and most other races), whom the Raksasha dismiss as interesting but inferior beings.

The shape-shifters are attracted by power, and therefore the political arena has great appeal to them. They love to operate behind the scenes, where they influence the fate of kings, statesmen and thousands of lives. The demonic felines use their shape-changing, disguise abilities, and psionics to masterfully weave elaborate schemes and webs of deception to either get what they want or bring about tragedy for the sheer entertainment value of it.

Alignment: Any evil or selfish.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+9, M.A. 2D6+9, M.E. 2D6+9, P.S. 2D6+29, P.P. 2D6+9, P.E. 3D6+9, P.B. 3D6, Spd 1D6x10.

Size: 1-10 feet tall (0.3 to 3 m), the demon can magically alter its size within this range, as desired. However, its natural range is 6-10 feet (1.8 to 3 m). At this size range it weighs 700 pounds (315 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+500 on Rifts Earth. (Has 1D6x10 + P.E. number for Hit Points, 3D4x10 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 10 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D4x100

Disposition: Intelligent, cunning, patient, and deadly. Unlike other demons who exhibit rage and strong emotions, Raksasha usually come across as supremely confident, in control and cool under fire. It takes a great deal to make a Raksasha angry, frightened or confused. They are the quiet architects of many a scheme, and unlike Night Owls, they seek to get power, glory and fame out in the forefront of their brethren. These cat demons are masters of manipulation, duplicity and gamesmanship and enjoy commanding and leading lesser beings.

Life Span: Effectively immortal.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m), keen normal vision, see the invisible, turn into mist, track by smell 45% (+15% to track blood scent), Dimensional Teleport 51%, bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D. per melee round, resistant to cold (half damage), impervious to toxic gases, heat and fire (but magic fire does half damage), teleport self and up to 300 additional pounds (135 kg) up to five miles (8 km) away at will 73% +3% per level of experience, and magically understands and speaks all languages at 98%.

Metamorphosis at Will: The demon's most frightful power is the ability to shape change, at will, into virtually any living creature, intelligent or animal, as long as it is no smaller than one foot (0.3 m) and no larger than 10 feet (3 m).

Shape Changing Disguise/Impersonation Skill: The Raksasha can also use his shape shifting abilities to disguise himself to look exactly like a specific individual. **Base Skill:** 96% if the person being imitated is in his presence; 82% if the Raksasha is very familiar with the individual or working from photographs/video. 40% if working from memory and with little personal knowledge of the subject.

Voice imitation is another power that is used in conjunction with the disguise skill. 94% if the Raksasha is very familiar with the individual. 80% if working from a good sound recording. 30% if working from memory or with little personal knowledge of the subject.

Note: The Raksasha's magical disguise/shape changing abilities are enhanced by its psionic powers of Total Recall and Alter Aura. If the demon has met and studied the character he is imitating, including having seen/studied the subject's aura, he can alter his own to make the disguise *96% perfect in every way!* Also note that the Raksasha can use his shape changing abilities to alter or improve the disguise at any time.

R.C.C. Skills: Astronomy 75%, Anthropology 70%, Climb 80%/70%, Computer Operation 96%, Dance 90%, Forgery 75%, Horsemanship: General 95%/70%, Horsemanship: Exotic Animals (all Netherbeasts) 80%/60%, Intelligence 85%, Land Navigation 60%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98% and five other languages of choice, Lore: Demons & Monsters 92%, Lore: Faeries 92%, Math: Advanced and Basic 98%, Pilot Vehicle (three of choice at 70%), Prowl 60%, Radio: Basic 98%, Seduction 55%, Sing 75%, Swim 60%, Streetwise 80%, Wilderness Survival 60%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife, and two W.P.s of choice (any, Ancient or Modern). Skills improve at a rate of +1% per level of experience.

Level of Experience: 1D8+2 on average, or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Six to start, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 16. Favorite hand to hand weapon is the Psi-Sword and Psi-Shield, and other sword-type weapons, especially magic blades. Otherwise, loves to use deception and its psionic and metamorphosis powers.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural Strength. Typically 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 M.D. with a full strength punch, 6D6 M.D. from a claw strike, and the bite does 2D6 M.D.; or by magic, psionics or weapon.



Bonuses (in addition to attributes and skills): +4 on initiative, +5 on Perception Rolls, +4 to strike, parry, dodge, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, +10 to save vs Horror Factor and +4 on all other saving throws.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Tend to underestimate the abilities of their opponents, and their arrogant, superior demeanor can create resentment, rivals and enemies.

2. Silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. to the demon, so if a sword does 3D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 3D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.)

3. Also vulnerable to most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics (normal damage). Magic fire, plasma and M.D. fire does half damage.

Magic: P.P.E.: 2D4x100. Most Raksasha have a fascination with magic and are what they consider to be casual students of the mystic arts, usually spell casting.

Deception and subterfuge are a Raksasha's specialty so its magic includes, Illusionary spells, Apparition (20), Aura of Death (12), Aura of Doom (40), Aura of Power (4), Armor Bizarre (15), Charismatic Aura (10), Death Trance (1), Fool's Gold (10), Hallucination (30), Horrific Illusion (10), Illusion Booster (15), Illusion Manipulation (25+), Illusory Forest (45+), Illusory Wall (15+), Illusory Terrain (55+), Mask of Deceit (15), and Multiple Image (7).

All Metamorphosis spells.

All Protection magic.

Plus Cleanse (6), Fear (5), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Create Magic Scroll (100), Animate & Control Dead (20), Turn Dead (6), Exorcism (30), Remove Curse (140), Heal Wounds (10), and six other spells of choice selected from levels 1-4.

Note: The level of proficiency and power, however, is limited to 3rd level regardless of the Raksasha's actual level of experience. Only 10% study some other area of magic.

Psionics: 1D6x100+100 I.S.P., and possesses *all* Healing, Physical, Sensitive and Super-Psionic powers. Considered a Mind Melter of considerable power, and abilities increase with experience.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, the Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Regard all Lesser Demons, the Fallen and Sub-Demons as servants and henchmen, Greater Demons as supervisors and their right-hand man, but only really considers the Night Owl as a true equal (not that the Night Owl shares that sentiment). Although they tend to underestimate humans and other mortals, Raksasha tend to appreciate the resourcefulness, viciousness and tenacity of humans, making human beings one of their favorite henchman races.

Rivals and Enemies: Generally, humanoids, Deevils, and the forces of good. A Raksasha will consider allying himself to humans and just about anyone, good or evil, to further his goals or implement one of his schemes, as well as work with those in positions of power in order to usurp that power for himself. Trusting a Raksasha is like juggling rattlesnakes and hoping one doesn't bite you. On the other hand, a Raksasha who genuinely likes a character (but who can really tell?) can

be surprisingly kind, generous and sincere – at least until push comes to shove. On the dark side, Raksasha have a taste for drinking human blood and love to eat the raw flesh of humans and most humanoids.

Notes: Occasionally wear armor and may use high-tech weapons, computers and equipment depending on the circumstances and the individual Raksasha, but tend to rely on their own magic, psionics and intellect.

The Four Demon Beetles

Demon Lords of Anarchy & Strife

Phoe the Fire Beetle, *Kmm* the Stone Beetle, *Ti* the Fear Beetle, and *Dra* of the Green Death. Each of the Four Demon Beetles look identical, but each wields a different transformation attack. Each is evil and delights in creating trouble and despair, for the beetles see mayhem as a spectator sport that they can help initiate. If they were more intelligent and less chaotic they might be considered Demon Lords, but they command no legion of demons nor rule any kingdom. They simply delight in chaos and suffering. None are known to have visited Rifts Earth, though it seems like a place that would appeal to the foul demons. Then again, it is very possible one or more visited during the Dark Ages. For that matter, one or more could be operating in China at this very moment or could appear at any time.

There are only these four Demon Beetles. They visit other worlds to observe mortal life forms and watch how they handle the turmoil and strife the beetles create. Fortunately, the four seldom travel together and are encountered individually or in pairs. If an attacked inflicts significant damage (half or more M.D.C.), a Demon Beetle becomes *annoyed* and leaves that world, perhaps even that dimension, at least for a while.

All four Demon Beetles have identical stats, only their transformation attacks differ. Thankfully, there are only these four.

Also known as the Chaos Beetles.

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.A. 11, M.E. 16, P.S. 16, P.P. 16, P.E. 20, P.B. 5, Spd 18 running or 66 flying (45 mph/72 km).

Size: 12 inches long (0.3 m) and weighs two pounds (0.9 kg).

M.D.C.: 190. (Has 77 Hit Points, 66 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 15 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 12 for an individual, 17 if all four are together.

P.P.E.: 1000

Disposition: Wicked beings considered to be harbingers of chaos, the Demon Beetles long to instigate panic, terror and destruction or bring about sweeping and shattering change through violent upheaval. Then the voyeurs sit back and watch what they have sown.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural P.S. and P.E., fly, hover, and attain a maximum altitude of 40,000 feet (12,192 m), nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, impervious to fire (even M.D. fire), Dimensional Teleport 74%, magically understands and speaks all languages at 75%, and bio-regenerates 6D6 M.D. per melee round. Impervious to toxic gases, heat and fire, and can walk across and even sleep on or within boiling lava!

Super-Regeneration (special): A lost antenna or limb regrows in 24 hours, but even if blown to pieces or atomized, the Demon Beetles regenerate within 72 hours! Performing an exorcism over the remains or if the damage inflicted was twice the monster's M.D.C., will prevent the Demon Beetle from returning to that plane of existence for at least 100 years (usually doesn't return for 10 times that period unless summoned), but unlike other demons, it reforms in Hades within 24 hours. Killing one in Hades itself makes it a wandering spirit for 1D6x100 years before it can reform and return to life. If there is a way to permanently destroy any of the Four Demon Beetles, it is a secret that seems to be unknown even to the Splugorth. HOWEVER, if burnt and their remains ground into dust, or mangled to a pulp and magically sealed in a jar filled with holy water, the demon's essence remains trapped inside in a limbo-state until the jar is opened or shattered.

R.C.C. Skills: Anthropology 60%, Climb 90%/85%, Dowsing 90%, Land Navigation 90%, Literate in Dragonese/Elven 98%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Lore: Faeries 90%, Math: Basic 98%, Prowl 80%, Swim 90%, and Wilderness Survival 90%.

Level of Experience: 10th. Not available as a player character.

Attacks per Melee: Three physical attacks by bite.

Mega-Damage: Warning bite can be made to inflict 3D6 damage direct to Hit Points or 1D6 M.D. against Mega-Damage opponents. When so desired, the Demon Beetle can make its bite or an energy bolt a transforming magical attack that generates an aura of magic to mutate the victim unless a save vs magic of 15 or higher is made. See the accompanying descriptions about the bites as per each type of Demon Beetle.

Phoe, the Fire Beetle: Transforming Attack: Bite (even on armor) turns its victim into a strange fire demon setting fire to everything in its path. The original memory of that person is completely suppressed by the feeble-minded demon he has become (I.Q. 1D4+1). Although a creature of chaos, the character is not evil, but an insane pyromaniac who runs wild, setting everything ablaze. This demon will burn down an entire countryside unless stopped, but only attacks people when attacked first. However, he may set fire to buildings full of people without intending to kill anyone, he's just busy making pretty fire.

Fire Demon Stats: Duration of Transformation: 1D4 hours, but can be made to last 1D4 days if the beetle puts 500 P.P.E. into the magical attack. Special Abilities: The victim sees his Spd increased to 66. I.Q. is reduced to 1D4+1 and most skills and memories are forgotten, but all other attributes and combat skills are unchanged. M.D.C.: 4D6x10. Size & Description: Victim grows (or shrinks) to 10 feet (3 m) tall, has flaming red skin, pointed ears, fangs, and blazing yellow eyes. Fire Power: Shoots fire (like a flamethrower) from hands up to a range of 60 feet (18.3 m), inflicting 4D6 M.D.; each blast counts as one melee attack. Can also create a Wall of Flame, a Circle of Flame and Ignite Fire/Spontaneous Combustion at will every two melee rounds (30 seconds), with each fire attack counting as one attack for that round. Spell Strength is equal to a fourth level Warlock spell power. The character, himself, is impervious to fire and even M.D. fire does no damage.

Kmm, the Stone Beetle. Transforming Attack: Emits a flashing yellow beam from its eyes that turns anything it strikes into stone. The effect is *permanent*, although a Stone to Flesh spell will restore the petrified victim to normal. So will a Remove Curse performed by a Demon Lord (including Kmm), Ancient Dragon or a god.

Ti, Beetle of Fear. Transforming Attack: Emits an eerie looking sparkle that instills the victim it strikes with numbing fear. All the victim can do is fall to the ground trembling and sobbing in terror. He is afraid of everything and everyone, including his old friends. Completely unable to function in any way for 3D6 minutes, and the traumatic experience has a 01-50% chance of instilling a permanent phobia toward *beetles*.

Dra of the Green Death. Transforming Attack: The bite creates a green mold that covers its victim from head to toe in 1D6 melee rounds (15 to 45 seconds). The mold is a permanent growth and can be removed only by a Remove Curse spell. The mold covered person is -5 to strike, parry, and dodge and takes 1D6 points direct to Hit Points (or 4D6 M.D. if a Mega-Damage being) *daily* as the mold slowly feeds on the victim, and eventually, drains the character of his entire life force, eventually killing him. Healing magic, potions, bio-regeneration, psionics, etc., all restore the lost Hit Points or M.D.C., but at *half* the usual amount. When half or more of the victim's total Hit Points or M.D.C. have been drained, that character's speed is reduced by half and he is -2 on all saving throws. Plus he looks ugly (reduce P.B. by half) and frightening (has a Horror Factor of 9 and looks diseased), so normal people often shun him. To add to the diseased look and effect, anything the character touches gets a few specks of green, moldy residue. The residue has no magic properties nor any ill effect, but it scares the heck out of most people who fear the touch will turn them into a mold-covered monstrosity as well.

Bonuses for the Demon Beetles (in addition to attributes): +1 on initiative, +3 on Perception Rolls, +3 to strike, +5 automatic dodge (does not use up an attack/action to dodge), +12 to save vs Horror Factor, and +6 on all other saving throws.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Holy weapons, Demon Slayer Weapons, and wooden weapons and wands made from a Millennium Tree inflict double damage.

2. Silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. to the demon, so if a sword does 2D6 S.D.C. damage, it does 2D6 M.D. to this demon. (In S.D.C. environments, silver weapons do double damage.)

3. Most M.D. weapons, including rail gun rounds, explosives and energy weapons, as well as magic spells, magic weapons and psionics do their normal damage. Impervious to plasma, lava, M.D. fire, and even magic fire does no damage.

Magic: P.P.E. base is 1000 points, but has a very limited range of magic spells: Fear (5), Animate & Control Dead (20), Turn Dead (6), Exorcism (30), Heal Wounds (10), Death Trance (1), Mental Blast (15), Life Drain (25), Spoil (30), and Teleport Superior (600), but all spells are at 10th level proficiency.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: Hades, Rifts Earth, other Earth dimensions, the Three Galaxies, Palladium World, and other places scattered across the Megaverse.

Allies and Alliances: Fellow demons of Hades. Most regard them as Lords of Hades though the beetles seem to have little desire for title or political power. They are loyal to Hades and will fight to defend it.

Rivals and Enemies: Humans, other mortals, and the forces of good, but they also hate the rival minions of Dyval and for the first time in centuries, all four have united to work with their demonic brethren to conquer Dyval. However, opportunities to cause havoc throughout the Megaverse will, from time to time, draw the Chaos Beetles' attention away from the war effort.

The Demon Lords

See **Dragons & Gods™** for complete stats, a sourcebook done for the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** but easily converted to **Rifts®** and other M.D. settings. We regret that space limitations prevent us from including the complete stats and history, but the following provide an excellent overview.

Quick Conversions from S.D.C. to M.D.C.: Add the Hit Points and S.D.C. together and multiply by 10 to get their M.D.C. total, most other stats and abilities are unchanged, all have Supernatural P.S. & P.E.

Modeus, Lord of Hades

Modeus is the absolute power and ruler within Hades. During his reign he has only become more powerful. As the symbol of darkness, he commands the vast legions of **Demon Locusts**. Why they are so loyal to him is beyond any of the other Demon Lords' reckoning. It could be that Modeus has in his possession one of the most powerful magical artifacts in all the Megaverse. It is called the **Omega Book**, often referred to as the Demonomicon. Even among the gods, only a few know of its existence and whisper about the power it contains.

The few rumors that circulate about this magic tome claim that he who possesses the Omega Book is granted power beyond imagination and is doomed to eternal damnation. It is an ancient rune book that bonds with its owner when he spills his blood on the cover. The book is intelligent (I.Q. of 18 and communicates telepathically) and contains the secrets of Hades and its demon hordes, including the true names of every Greater Demon and Demon Lord (as well as leaders among the Lesser Demons and Gargoyles), plus information about key leaders and the dimension of Hades itself. With but a simple command and the utterance of a demon's true name, he is instantly brought before the Lord of Darkness from anywhere in the Megaverse. Modeus is even able to reference and call upon demons in other dimensions, dead demons who are going through discorporation, as well as Witches and Exalted Worshipers connected to demons. The Omega Book keeps an updated chronicle on the happenings in and around Hades, mostly, who's in charge, notable events, changes, and so on. It's not a comprehensive history, so much as notes and a ledger of names, dates, places and alliances.

This information is power, and Modeus has used it to solidify his position in Hades. However, with such power comes eternal

damnation. Any being of power who knows of the book covets it and will do anything to obtain it. This has garnered Modeus many enemies, at least within Hades, for all the Demon Lords know about the Omega Book, as well as a handful of Demon Princes, Dukes, trusted advisors and dark gods. It is said Modeus had to wrest the book from the prior Lord of Hades and someday, he will share a similar fate. Until then, Modeus plans to use its power and influence to make himself the greatest ruler Hades has ever known, and become one of the most powerful beings in existence.

Now that Hades is plunging headfirst into a war that is sure to inflame the whole Megaverse, Modeus is using the Omega Book constantly. Thanks to knowledge gained in the experiments performed by Succor-Bemoth, knowledge of *Soulmancy* and use of the *Omega Book* enables Modeus to create his own breed of demons. This is achieved through combining souls captured by Soul Catchers, and the knowledge contained within the Omega Book. Souls are twisted and corrupted and when combined with demon's blood, Modeus is able to birth his own demons (any of the existing races from Lesser to Greater Demon). And with the Omega Book, he is able to provide them with names of his choosing which, in turn, makes them his and his alone to command. Ever the clever tactician and a bit of a paranoid, Modeus has commanded some of these demons to take their rightful places in Hades and on the battlefield. This allows Modeus to place spies in every Demon Lord's camps in Hades. Information has only started to come in and most is rather amusing to the Lord of Hades, and yet there is disturbing information that if Modeus is not careful, a coup could usurp his position. Not wishing to reveal his hand at this time, Modeus has made subtle changes here and there so that should anything go against his own self interest, he will be well prepared.

Modeus' perspective on the war. Preparations have been made for ages, troops positioned, new weapons created and as far as Modeus is concerned, there is no better time than now. He has the cooperation of the Demon Lords and the troops they have promised him. He has finally grown impatient with hundreds of years of preparation and is setting all his plans into motion. Modeus has a timetable for everything and is supremely confident he will soon be touring the dimension of Dyval, walking upon the skulls of the vanquished. For Modeus, the Minion War is a dream come true.

As much as Modeus desires to be an active General on the battlefields of the Minion War, he is smart enough to know that would invite treachery and doom. Thus, he remains locked away in a castle in Hades, and lets his Generals conduct the war on his behalf.

Notes on Modeus: In addition to commanding the legions of Demon Locusts, with the aid of the Omega Book, he can summon and command any demon from anywhere in the Megaverse. This makes Modeus pretty much unstoppable. Even without the book he can personally summon 5D6 Demon Locusts and 1D6 of any other kind of demon. Moreover, he can summon 100 of any of his "chosen" (the thousand he has created with the Omega Book). He knows each true name of these ultimate henchmen, and they serve their master without question or hesitation, even to the death.

Andras, Marquis of Hades

Andras is Second-in-Command to Modeus and was his trusted advisor and ally when Modeus took charge of Hades. All along, Lord Modeus never suspected that Andras sees him as his means to rise to power. Ever since Modeus took charge of Hades, Andras has put in place plans for the day when he could ascend to the throne and take Modeus' place as the ruler of Hades.

Andras pretends to be a trusted ally, confidant, and advisor who shares his Lord's vision of things to come. In truth, Andras covets power and he is simply biding his time to make his move. Just about all of Andras' current plans have something to do with the coup he is putting into place. He doesn't want to have a mass action in Hades against Modeus' troops, because it might ultimately weaken his position should he take charge or should Modeus prove stronger than he reckons. He hopes the Minion War will give him the opportunity he's been waiting for, especially if the war goes badly and the demons begin to turn on Modeus. For now, he bides his time and pretends to be a trusted friend.

Andras' perspective on the Minion War. As far as Modeus knows, Andras is in full support of the war and has contributed some of his best troops, including the Brass Guard. He always attends meetings about the war and is a staunch and vocal supporter. Andras has helped formulate strategies and tactics and put logistical operations into place. As of late, however, Modeus has been doing most of the planning by himself, which concerns Andras that he may know something about the coup. He tells himself it isn't true, and that it is Modeus' ego that has made him take such strong command of the war.

Ultimately, Andras hopes that as the Minion War escalates, he'll get an opportunity to strike Modeus down. The problem is having to deal with Rabdos the Strangler, who is frequently at Modeus' side and often shares his bed, as well as the Lord of Hades' horde of Demon Locusts and other guardsmen at his beck and call. Unless the ruler can be struck down quickly, with but a few blows, any attack is likely to fail, and the attacker will have to face the minions of Modeus.

Andras has two schemes in place. One plan is to get his own claws on the Omega Book, which would give him the opportunity to find Modeus' true name, take control of the dark Lord, and command Modeus' own Demon Locusts to tear their former master to pieces.

That being an unlikely scenario, Andras is manipulating several assassination teams to try to kill Modeus. Andras, as Second-in-Command, would repay the favor by destroying them, taking charge of Hades, and seizing the *Omega Book* before it falls into the wrong hands. Thus, he keeps a close eye on his murderous pawns. This plan has its problems too. He must act quickly and seize the book to insure his position as Lord of Hades. However, Modeus doesn't always have the Omega Book with him, and if he is slain without the book, Andras does *not* know the secret places where Modeus keeps it hidden. Andras has a couple other schemes in mind, but for now, those are his two best options.

Notes on Andras: The Marquis of Hades considers the whole Eastern Fire Planes as his domain. It is the home to his shock troops, the Baal-Rogs, and his personal abode is in the

city of Magma. He is able to summon 2D6x10 Baal-Rogs at any given time as well as 6D6 of any Lesser Demon. In addition, he can personally summon the *Brass Guard II* anytime he wants. Over the years, Andras has gained about 50 true names of various Greater Demons, 15 of which are Demon Locusts. Andras rarely uses these 50 demons, and to date, has not called upon any of the Demon Locusts. He considers them his ace in the hole.

Rabdos the Strangler

Rabdos is the god of treachery and assassins. She has no domain to call her own, and she resides with Modeus in the *Death Mire*. Her place among the Demon Lords is that of *Assassin of Hades* as well as the personal assassin of Modeus. She is finding that there are numerous cults dedicated to her on the Palladium World and around the Megaverse. However, she was very surprised to learn that certain Gargoyle clans were worshiping her as well. This is something she is trying to conceal from Modeus as she fears he may come to regard her as a rival rather than an ally (and sometimes lover). Fortunately for her, he seems quite distracted with the Minion War and pays little attention to her these days, except for when he requires her services. She has been called to the battlefield, where she has assassinated over a dozen Deevil sovereigns weakening their leadership capability. She enjoys seducing them first, and killing them in the act of carnal bliss.

Rabdos' perspective on the Minion War. She questions the wisdom of the invasion and suspects it will all be an exercise in futility. That when it comes to an end, little will have changed except for making more enemies. She simply waits in the wings and does as the Lord of Hades asks of her.

Instead, Rabdos has become embroiled in happenings in and around Hades. Often for her own amusement she shows up unannounced at the various Demon Lord abodes. Not to meet with them, but rather to make them nervous and keep them in line, or to meet with a trusted contact or informant who can give her the latest details on the dealings of their respective patrons. This has allowed Rabdos to gather and compile a great deal of information about back alley operations, internal power plays, and outright betrayal. For example, she has learned of Charun's rally call to the masses of Gargoyles and how he is defying the Demon Lords in the North and subverting as much of their control as possible. All this information she keeps to herself, at least for now.

And then there's Andras, her *most hated enemy*. She often visits the city of Magma undercover to meet with her spies and informants, or to observe Andras from a distance. For some time now the canny assassin has known about Andras' dealings with Set in the Pantheon of Taut, as well as the super secret, Brass Guard II. In the past, Andras has had some close calls because of "accidents." He has survived them all, and in one instance it was Rabdos who saved him. Should she learn of his plot to take the throne of Hades, Andras may have one final and fatal accident delivered by her hands.

Notes on Rabdos: Rabdos is unable to summon any demons, having no minions of her own. However, being the sneak that she is and being the Assassin of Hades, and Consort to Modeus, she has a large network of spies and informers. This network extends far beyond Hades, and includes Phase World, the Splynn

Dimensional Market (Atlantis), Rifts England, The Kingdom of Monsters (Calgary), the Western Empire (Palladium World) and *Dyval*. The fact that she has a growing following of demonic and mortal worshipers, gives her even greater resources and a power base should she ever decide to use it. Rabdos has even gained fleeting access to the Omega Book on more than a few occasions. She finds the book interesting, she knows where Modeus hides it, and how to use it to summon demons from watching Modeus, but she has no desire to rule Hades nor earn the curse of damnation. In an emergency, however, she could use the Omega Book to crush a coup, avenge Modeus (if necessary) and, rather than let it fall into the hands of a usurper, she would take it, flee and hide it somewhere in the Megaverse.

Kubera-Loe

Kubera-Loe is the symbol of wealth, envy and the patron of thieves. Of all the Demon Lords, he probably has the most cunning and guile, being extremely clever and tricky. With all the plotting among the various Demon Lords, it is very surprising to find that Kubera-Loe is not involved in any of it. Perhaps it is because he does not wish to become a pawn himself.

Kubera-Loe's perspective on the Minion War. He could care less, however it is presenting opportunities for him to learn more secrets (his passion) and to steal more treasure (his other passion). He has one of the largest treasure hoards in all of Hades and has been bold enough to steal from other Demon Lords! Now with the war at hand, he sees it as a chance to perhaps go to *Dyval* and other worlds, and plunder them while others battle. For now, he assists the war effort by providing intelligence operations and smuggling supplies in hard to reach areas.

Kubera-Loe does not know about the Omega Book, and if he did he would probably have perished long ago because it would be something that he would want to possess. He doesn't trust Andras and suspects the Marquis has his eye on the throne, but doesn't know if the Demon Lord has the nerve to try to take it. He has also managed to learn about the deal that Abdul-Ra and Prince Ba'Zal have made. Not that it's much, but knowing the source of the Death Demons may come in handy some day. For now, he plans to ride things out and see how the dust settles after the war.

Notes on Kubera-Loe: He is unable to summon any minions, but considers a good part of the Thorn Forest his domain, and has many servants and slaves. He rarely concerns himself with anything beyond a hundred mile (160 km) radius around his home, though he does like to frequent places like the Timiro Kingdom and the Eastern Territory in the Palladium World, where he has managed to insert himself in several Thieves Guilds' and is the head master of at least four. Like Rabdos, Kubera-Loe has a network of henchmen, in this case, spies, thieves, smugglers and worshipers loyal to him.

Kubera-Loe has a small estate in the *Thorn Forest* not too far from the *City of Thorns*. There is no direct or easy route and that is the way he prefers it. Surprising to those who visit, his abode is small and not as lavish as the residences of other Demon Lords; another strategy to deter would-be thieves and prying eyes.

He has two Baal-Rog guards that have been with him for decades. They are in charge of his security and keep the few Gargoyles he has in line. There are about 20 Gargoyles in total.

Mictla the Devourer

Mictla the Devourer is the symbol of gluttony and greed, and appropriately so. There is very little she can resist consuming, or torturing for as long as possible. She always seems to be eating or toying with some hapless soul who has wandered into the Hades underground or fell through one of her trap doors. She is a disgusting, dark-skinned mass with tiny eyes, four smooth tentacles, and a huge mouth. She is so consumed with her gluttony that she even eats other demons!

Mictla's perspective on the Minion War. She is all for it and supports Modeus one hundred percent. She especially delights in feasting on Deevils, and looks forward to devouring thousands of them. She has invited Modeus to use the Hades underground as a prison, where Mictla can let prisoners who have revealed all they know seek haven in the catacombs, where she can hunt, catch and eat them. (She loves to play cat and mouse games with her food.)

On the battlefield, Modeus knows she is practically useless. It would be too much to restrain her from eating the Hades demons while waiting to engage the Deevils. It's too much of a risk, so Modeus is content to let her reside in Hades and essentially guard the underground. At least that is her official function, one that she is delighted to fulfill.

Notes on Mictla the Devourer: If Mictla ever had minions, she probably ate them all long ago. No demon in his right mind wants to have anything to do with her, which explains why Magots insist on serving this strange and diabolical Lord of Hades, and she has grown rather fond of them. Of course, Magots pretty much come, go and do as they please, so they are barely minions, or at least servants, in the traditional sense. This suits Mictla fine because she's never really wanted to rule a kingdom or an army of people who rely on her. She's too busy with her own agenda, treasure hunts, and stalking of small, easy prey in the Hades underground to suit her needs. Still, she appreciates that Magots accept her as their lord, protect her when necessary and do as she bids on matters of importance like the Minion War. Other than that, she resides in a massive cavern located under the *Infernal Crown*, with tunnels and passages to just about everywhere in Hades. She often stays in contact with *Belphegor*, who lives in the underground of the *Sulfur Pits*. When she wants to entertain herself, she travels to another cavern in the North that borders the *Forest of Stone* and the *Fire Bog*. And a small cavern underneath the western mountains in the Fire Flats of Hades is a favorite place where she goes to stalk and snack on the Fallen.

Succor-Bemoth

Succor-Bemoth resides in the *Fire Flats* of Hades with his herds of Magots. He is the symbol of jealousy, which means he watches and assesses what everyone else has and weighs whether it is better than his own. This makes him envious of others, a bit paranoid, contemptuous and prone to insane bouts of jealousy when something he wants catches his eye. The power and approval that Modeus currently wields is becoming most tempting, and he finds it difficult not to make sarcastic comments or quips when he meets with him. Modeus always seems to upset Succor-Bemoth by making new demands that diminish the Demon Lord's minions, holdings or other resources.

Not only is Succor-Bemoth jealous of Modeus, he becomes infuriated when the Master of Hades dismisses his (often predictable or lame) suggestions and ideas without even a second thought. This, among other reasons, is why Succor-Bemoth conspires with Charun to dethrone Modeus.

Succor-Bemoth's Perspective on the Minion War. At the moment, he thinks very little of it, because Modeus is reaping all the accolades, glory and power that comes with it. All things he desires. The only benefit he can see for himself in the war is a constant supply of Deevils to torture and experiment upon.

Notes on Succor-Bemoth: Succor-Bemoth is the master of the Magots and he can summon 3D6x10 at any time. In addition, he can also summon 2D4 Greater Demons or 4D4 Lesser Demons. Succor-Bemoth is often the victim of Kubera-Loe, however he is never the wiser because the patron of thieves doesn't usually steal items of value, but information from Succor-Bemoth's notes and journals without getting caught. And Succor-Bemoth is much more concerned about items than ideas or information.

Charun the Cruel

The only Demon Lord to officially reside in *the Abyss* is Charun the Cruel. Charun is the symbol of ambition and obsession, and he has been living those vices to the extreme. He has been winning over the Gargoyle clans and has several hundred who have stopped worshipping Modeus and have turned to him. His obsession with taking the throne from Modeus has been eating away at him for centuries. In fact, he was thinking about making a move when Modeus announced his plans for the Minion War, which scuttled Charun's scheme by bringing too much attention to himself.

Charun has been busy reassessing the situation and making sure that the millions of Gargoyles being sent to war do *not* include his loyal minions. He wants to keep as many Gargoyle loyalists at his side as he can. This isn't because he cares about their welfare, no, he wants them handy in case an opportunity arises for him to usurp the throne of Hades. To further his plans, he has sent envoys to the Gargoyles living in Europe on Rifts Earth. He hopes to win them over as well, because he has learned that they are becoming a fighting force to be reckoned with and that they have adopted technology to this end. This is something he approves of, especially if he can get elite Gargoyle warriors who may have access to new found power.

Charun is trying to convince Modeus to go to the battles' front lines, where his presence alone would inspire his troops no doubt to complete and utter victory. Charun believes this is where Modeus will be weakest and he can muster his forces to attack and slay the Lord of Hades. This way, should the attempt fail, he can claim it as an assassination attempt by the Gargoyles of Rifts Earth or the Deevils and that he, Charun, was not involved. That the enemy is trying to frame him. Little does he know that Andras has similar aspirations and would take Charun down in a heartbeat.

Charun's perspective on the Minion War. He is all for the war, and truly believes the Deevils should be crushed, but not obliterated. They would make much better slaves if Hades was able to include them among its minions as the Fallen. However, that is not really his chief concern, he'd rather be turning more Gargoyle clans to his side and plotting to take the throne from

Modeus. At the very least, the war may weaken Modeus, or create an opportunity to kill the Lord of Hades and take his crown. Once he is Lord of Hades, Charun can turn his attention to conquering and enslaving the minions of Dyval.

Notes on Charun: He has managed to become the master of the Alu, Lasae, and finally, the Jinn, but most are loyal to Modeus. Of these demons, Charun is able to summon 4D6 of each as needed. Charun is supposed to represent the Jinn and he has promised to go directly to Modeus and demand that they not be used as sacrifices in the use of deific powers. He keeps the leaders of the Jinn waiting for a response, because when the time for rebellion is right, he is going to bring them bad news, that Modeus will not agree to stop using Jinn, and has demanded a thousand more for the war effort. This will no doubt infuriate the Jinn, who will most assuredly join Charun in overthrowing Modeus. Adding Gargoyles to his list of minions will be a surprise, too. Charun is contemplating contacting some of the Fallen and seeing if he can swing some of them to his side. However, they are usually under the watchful eye of Succor-Bemoth, so he continues to work on winning over Gargoyle clans with alarming success.

Abdul-Ra

Abdul-Ra is the symbol of deception and cunning. He is brilliant, resourceful and a natural leader. He is the Lord of the Raksashas, and from his abode, deep in the *Thorn Forest*, he can assemble an army of them in a matter of days. Their primary role in the Minion War is gathering intelligence, espionage and undercover operations, as well as serving as officers in the army. Raksasha, known for their intelligence and cunning, are recruited as natural leaders and frequently serve as high ranking officers as well as leaders of elite, special units throughout the Megaverse.

Abdul-Ra still thinks about Lady Rhada, one of Dyval's illustrious rulers. They fell in love when he was imprisoned on Dyval, a secret he keeps to himself, lest his loyalty to Hades be put in question. Ever since his escape he has been undecided about what he should do about his feelings. To be honest, he's not sure if he is really in love . . . yet, he can't stop thinking about Rhada and hates that she has been imprisoned for allowing him to escape. Abdul-Ra would like to bring her to Hades, where he might get a better perspective on his feelings, and to that end he has been working on a magic circle that would allow him to Summon Deities (e.g. Rhada). Unfortunately, the circle requires some very rare components as well as something personal from Rhada. Abdul-Ra has been planning for some time to bring Rhada to Hades so he can have a face to face with her. At the very least, even if these "feelings" are nothing more than a phase, he believes he can use them to manipulate her into bringing the *Ferry* (intelligent, demonic wolves of Dyval) on the side of the Demons. Such a feat would divide the Deevil Lords, hopefully help bring the war to a quick conclusion, and give him and his queen a stronger power base than ever.

Abdul-Ra's perspective on the Minion War. The war is something that Abdul-Ra knew was inevitable, however he thought that he would have time before it began. His thoughts of Rhada haunt him daily and he had hoped to work this out long before the war began. Now that the Minion War has been (prematurely) launched, loyal Abdul-Ra stands at the side of

Modeus. The Lord of Raksasha has committed himself and his minions to the war effort and hopes to bring Dyval to its knees.

Recently, he has come to wonder if the war might not be a blessing, an excuse to raid the fortification where Rhada is being held prisoner, and rescue her. He can't help being enamored with the heroics and romance of the gesture, and knows it will cement Rhada's love for him. He can then get her to bring the Fenry into their army and exact bloody revenge for her imprisonment and disgrace. To this end he has ordered several loyal Raksasha to go to Dyval in disguise, and learn the current status and location of Rhada and what degree of effort would be required to free her.

As to other aspects of the war, Modeus has made his friend Chief Intelligence Officer, a task Abdul-Ra was born for. The Raksasha reports directly to Modeus on a daily basis. Since he has become the eyes and ears of Hades, Abdul-Ra's spies and shape-changers (Raksasha, Succubus, Incubus, Soul Catchers and others) are everywhere.

Notes on Abdul-Ra: He can summon 5D6 Raksasha at any given time and has an entire network of spies and informers. If necessary, he could raise an army in a matter of days, not just composed of Raksasha, but many other Greater and Lesser Demons, including Mares, Soul Catchers, Succubus, Incubus, Gallu Demon Bulls and Baal-Rogs. Such is the respect and trust he commands among the demon ranks. Should Modeus fall, the person who should succeed him is Abdul-Ra, but that is unlikely. As Chief Intelligence Officer, he has heard hints and gathered clues about a possible coup in development. He'll not be surprised to learn about Charun and Succor-Bemoth's dreams to rule, but he would never suspect Modeus' long time friend and Second-in-Command, Andras, Marquis of Hades. Abdul-Ra is completely fooled by Andras' sham, and if he should stumble upon his plot, might be Andras' first victim on his way to claim the throne.

Belphegor Lord of the Sulfur Pits

Belphegor is the symbol of lust and decadence. He rules the vast underground region called the *Sulfur Pits*. From this location he delights in the torment of mortals and loves to meddle in their affairs. He stays out of the business of the other Demon Lords and cares little for what goes on. Belphegor is too caught up in his own schemes to be concerned with matters of internal politics.

Of the Demon Lords, Belphegor gets along quite well with Mictla as they have much in common and have, from time to time, collaborated in causing misery in other worlds by pitting their pawns against each other in a game of life and death using real people. It's a Megaversal chess game that each delights in playing and has become a type of friendly rivalry that gives them bragging rights and much to talk about.

Belphegor's perspective on the Minion War. The impending invasion of Dyval has made Belphegor as excited as a kid in a candy store. While he has few minions of his own, he can and will manipulate his various legions of mortal pawns and worshipers to take action against the Deevils and cause as much mayhem as possible. Win or lose, Belphegor is delighted to play this high stakes game of conquest. The monster doesn't do this to help Modeus, but for his own amusement and self-interest.

Notes on Belphegor: Belphegor has adopted the *Demon Bats* as his minions. They are small, fast and agile, and he uses them to find out the happenings in Hades and elsewhere. They also make good messengers between him and Mictla too, that is, when she doesn't eat them! Belphegor is also able to summon 1D6+2 Gallu Demon Bulls, or 1D4 Magots.

Mantus, King of the Dead

Once a powerful Demon Lord, Mantus, King of the Dead and symbol of darkness has been lost in a deep depression for decades. He has all but abandoned his personal dwelling in the city of *Shek'Ra*, and has retired to his mountain retreat in the *Infernal Crown*. There he sits on his throne in deep thought, rarely getting up, sometimes not moving for days. Most of his *Mares* have left to fight in the Minion War or serve in the ranks of Abdul-Ra's intelligence force, and Modeus has taken command of many without even a word from Mantus.

His thoughts dwell on the glory days of the past, when he soared like a god over the endless legions of dead. During his heyday, Mantus commanded millions of dead and could form an army in a matter of hours. Long ago, he seeded the area around *Shek'Ra* and his mountain retreat with thousands of corpses and skeletons that could be called at his command. Today, they are all but forgotten, and even the other Demon Lords have forgotten they are there or how grand Mantus once was.

His thoughts also go to his one time love and wife, Mania. Together they were a force to be reckoned with. Now, she has betrayed him for another, and he has become a shadow of his former self, lost in mourning and self-pity. He believes it's only a matter of time before Mania and her lover, Charun, finally grow tired of tormenting him and finish him off once and for all. He's starting to think he looks forward to that day. (But why should they?)

Mantus' perspective on the Minion War. Mantus cares very little about current events around Hades. He barely rises from his throne, let alone gets out of his mountain retreat. He didn't protest when Modeus declared the Mares under his command. He's also ignored Abdul-Ra's attempts to rouse him from his depression and make him realize that the Minion War could return him to his lost days of glory. Other than the few visits Modeus and Abdul-Ra have paid the despondent Demon Lord, he sees no one and waits for a death that never seems to come.

Notes on Mantus: He used to be able to summon 1D6x10 Mares, but now he can only summon 2D6. Also in his heyday, he could summon and command 4000 dead at a time and commanded armies of dead. In his current state he can only command up to 40, but if he would stop wallowing in self-imposed misery, he could command as many as ever. Indeed, the ghosts of the dead whisper in his ear to once again raise his secret army of 500,000 and bring Hades victory over Dyval, but their pleas go unanswered.

As far as followers go, worshipers of Mantus are at an all time low! Those around the Megaverse have dwindled and the Gargoyles in the North are being subverted by Charun. If Mantus continues to lose followers at this rate, then in less than 300 years he could literally fade away. The Minion War could be his new lease on life, but is there anything or anyone who can make him realize that and take action?

Mania, Queen of the Dead

Mania is the symbol of immortality in Hades, and hasn't aged a day in over 10,000 years. She was once the wife of Mantus, but is now Charun's lover and the two derive great joy bringing him such misery and suffering. If they don't torment him by making public appearances together, then they are stealing his worshipers, or openly laugh and mock him. The "Lord of Tears," they call him.

Mania is fully involved with Charun's plot to overthrow Modeus, and her minions act as spies to this end. She can't wait for the whole plot to unfold so she can finally do her husband in and claim all that is his as her own. When Mania is not actively plotting with Charun, she entertains herself by participating in the blood orgies of Allvice.

The Queen of the Dead resides in her own city of *Allvice*, where she controls masses of Succubus and Incubus. She has also managed to carve out her own place in the city of Splynn in Atlantis, on Rifts Earth. It is a large estate on a hill overlooking the city. The house and surrounding grounds are all constructed in blood marble. On Rifts Earth, those not familiar with the unusual stone see it as white marble with red blood smeared all over it. There, her Succubus and Incubus bring unsuspecting victims back to her residence for all kinds of carnal pleasures that ultimately end in their demise.

Mania's perspective on the Minion War. She absolutely loves the carnage and mayhem that can be reaped during war. Her involvement in Charun's plot for the throne also provides her with plenty of anticipation and excitement. Her minions serve as spies and messengers in the war effort, which makes her privy to all the war information that comes in from them. This, she believes, gives her and Charun the advantage in getting the upper hand on Modeus. So great is her ambition that she already imagines herself as Queen of Hades.

Notes on Mania: Mania is able to summon 4D6 Succubus/Incubus at any time. She also has a few select Succubus/Incubus that act as her lieutenants as well as chief spies. Mania also uses Gallu Demon Bulls and Baal-Rogs when she doesn't care about subtlety. Also, thanks to her efforts with Charun, she can call on hundreds of Gargoyles when needed. Most used to worship her husband, but she has since taken control of them and actively subverts more each day.

Murmur

Murmur is the patron of music and musicians, as well as the symbol of desire and betrayal. Of all the Demon Lords, he is the least liked. The problem stems from his chronic lies and always remembering facts in his favor. His extraordinary prowess as a warrior has gotten Modeus to ask Murmur to lead troops into several important battles. Murmur has refused, not openly or outright, but he always has an excuse why he cannot. If not for the use of his Couril minions, Modeus would not even need the Demon Lord. More than once Modeus has considered just destroying the chronic liar and taking his minions for his own.

Murmur resides in the southwestern section of the Thorn Forest. The location he selected was done with painstaking patience so he could find the perfect location onto which he could build his tower and music hall. The area had to be just right for the acoustics of the music hall, from which he can listen to the nu-

merous concerts he plans daily. These days, Murmur is selecting musicians not only from the *Palladium World*, but from all over *Rifts Earth* as well. He is most pleased at the variety of music he is finding and has considered branching out to other locations in the Megaverse.

Various musicians are often coerced into playing for the Demon Lord. They are usually offered large sums of gold/credits as well as treasure and magic items. Of course, they don't know that there is a cost to leaving Hades, and that whatever Murmur promised them is usually that price. Only the most talented get to leave with anything, and they usually have to stay for a considerable amount of time. Of course, staying in any place of Murmur's is disturbing, especially with swarms of Couril and Banshees floating overhead, wailing and moaning along with the music.

Murmur's perspective on the Minion War. As far as Murmur is concerned, it's damned inconvenient! And he has told this to Lord Modeus on numerous occasions. It constantly interferes with his concerts as well as his own plans. Murmur doesn't care for the war, nor is he concerned about the Deevils or what they may be planning as retribution. He has begrudgingly sent a quarter of his Couril and Banshees to fight in the Minion War, and that's all he's willing to commit without stronger coercion.

The other Demon Lords hate this pompous lunatic. Andras has nothing but contempt for Murmur, and may very well kill him if he succeeds at dethroning Modeus, that is if Mormo doesn't kill him first. Mormo despises Murmur and may use the Minion War as an excuse to eliminate him.

Notes on Murmur: Murmur is able to summon 4D6 Couril or Banshees. His tower is located in a secluded valley on the edge of the *Thorn Forest*. Next to it is a music hall built from the best quality blood marble and it has perfect acoustics. Now, he not only coerces individuals, but whole bands and symphonies to play for him and his minions, even going so far as to arrange his own private concerts.

In an effort to find new talent he has expanded his searching to Rifts Earth and he has agents in Splynn with orders to obtain anyone they find who has musical talent suited to Murmur's tastes. His agents have even gone as far as England, Germany, and the Chi-Town 'Burbs searching for talent. One of their latest discoveries is the nefarious *Roane Piper* (see *Rifts® World Book 30: D-Bees™ of North America™*).

Murmur has even made an unlikely alliance with Yin-Sloth the Terrible. In exchange for Banshee and Couril, Yin-Sloth has his followers searching for musical talent, but with a special assignment: to find a child prodigy that Murmur could train himself in the musical arts as a student, and someone who could pass such knowledge on to others.

Mormo, Lord of the Ghouls

Mormo considers himself the symbol of nobility and treachery. A strange but fitting combination. Mormo often associates with the nobility of the Western Empire on the *Palladium World*, where he has his own little clique of nobles who fawn all over him trying to win his favor. When he is not participating in blood orgies, he is often plotting the downfall of some unsuspecting noble, king or kingdom. Either the poor fool didn't pay

the proper deference to Mormo at a party, or Mormo simply spotted a nice piece of jewelry and wants to indulge himself, by setting the noble up for a fall from grace. He has this thing for the jewelry of executed nobles. Among his clique, he likes to show off with feats of dexterity that belie his overweight appearance.

Mormo has a residence in the southern island chain south of the *Death Mire* in Hades. There he has a large mansion constructed of the finest blood marble and black granite. The two stones combined make for some odd but striking architecture, and appeal to the weird tastes of Mormo. Surrounding his mansion are thousands of Ghouls and Nasu and wherever he goes, he is sure to have some hidden in nearby graveyards.

Mormo's perspective on the Minion War. "What war? Oh, we're attacking Dyval? Well you surely don't need me now, do you now?" Modeus just about blew his top when Mormo uttered these words, but after he was able to calm himself, what more could he have expected from the lazy, pampered fool? At the very least, Mormo committed half of his Ghouls and Nasu to the cause, even though he cares nothing about it. Mormo has never thought much of the Deevil Lords, and so long as they don't bother him, well, he's content to return the favor. He just turned over his minions so Modeus wouldn't bother him, and does little to stay informed.

Notes on Mormo: Murmur is Mormo's most hated enemy and Mormo would very much like to see him dead. He has considered setting up the Demon Lord for some type of failure that would send Modeus over the brink and kill the slug. Murmur has talked down to Mormo for the last time as far as he's concerned, and Mormo won't even step into the same room with him. Once he learned that Murmur is plotting something with Yin-Sloth, Mormo was quick to seek out Tark and make a similar arrangement with her. Through her spies and minions he hopes to learn what they are plotting, as he won't have himself executed by the Demon Lords because of this fool. It would all be hilarious if it weren't so pathetic.

Mormo is master of the Ghouls and Nasu and can summon 1D6x100 of them at a time. He also raises and breeds his own special brand of Raven. Of late, they have started to spread out in the Thorn Forest, seeking out Murmur's tower to interrupt his concerts with cries and spy on him. The ravens have evolved, well at least some of them have, to exhibit exceptional intelligence, making them great spies. Furthermore, Mormo can see through their eyes and summon 3D6 at will. All this may be attributed to Mormo's growing deific powers.

Abrasax the Insatiable

The last of the Demon Lords with a sizable force of demons is Abrasax the Insatiable. As patron of the *Shedim*, he has the largest armed demon force in Hades. He was the first to advocate arming Lesser Demons in the Minion War as well as a chief supporter for the creation of mystic siege machines. Modeus might have actually respected this Demon Lord if not for his incessant complaining about his most hated adversary, *Kirgi the Rat God*. Whichever Demon Lord is present, he always gets an earful from Abrasax.

Surprisingly, Abrasax's continued obsession with Kirgi has put off all of the Demon Lords, and none suspect him of being involved in any of the plots circulating around Hades. It's a deadly error they are all making, and he is sorely underestimated. Abrasax is far more intelligent and cunning than he lets on, and is involved in just about every plot and coup being planned. Andras doesn't trust Abrasax in the least, but he is willing to work with him toward common goals.

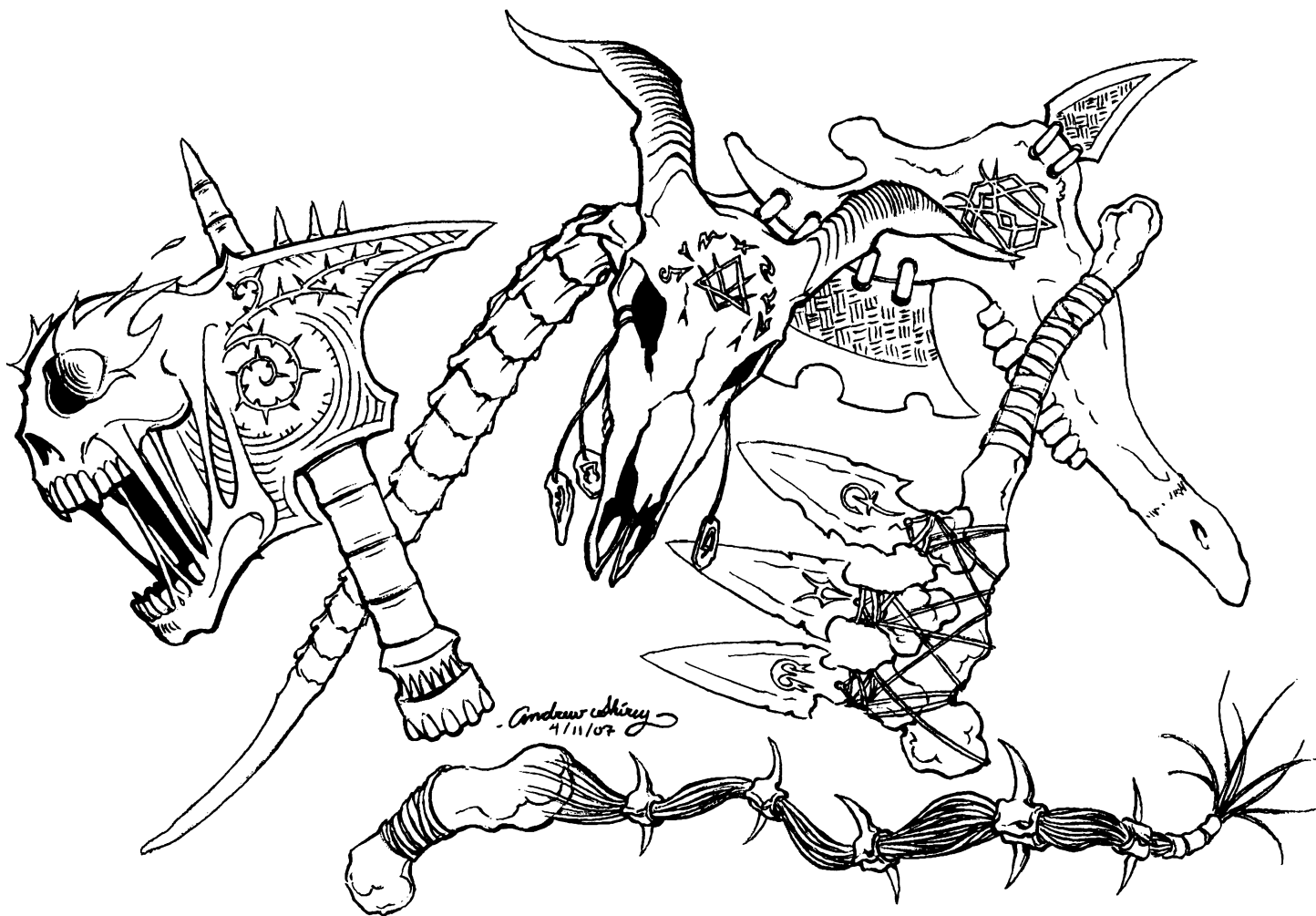
Abrasax has forced himself into Charun and Mania's coup plot, complaining to them that Modeus shows him no respect and if someone stronger and willing to show him more respect were to take the throne, he would be willing to commit a sizable chunk of his personal forces to that end. Charun and Mania are more than willing to take him into the fold as they see him for a fool, and along with the Gargoyles, will use his forces as expendable fodder if need be.

Abrasax has also involved himself with both Mormo and Murmur. He is trying to get the two Demon Lords to declare outright war on each other, and has once again volunteered his support to both of them without the other realizing it. With these two fools, Abrasax plans to turn on the weaker, help destroy him, and when the other embraces him as a trusted ally, cut him down and seize both of their assets and minions. With so many tangled plots it's a wonder how he keeps them all straight.

Abrasax's perspective on the Minion War. The war leaves Abrasax with mixed feelings. In one respect, he is delighted to use his *Shedim* forces in battle against the Deevils. However, he'd rather be sending them against Kirgi, the Rat God. His hopes are high that with a sweeping victory over the Deevils the momentum will be carried on and Hades will attack other enemies in their war of conquest. Kirgi being on top of that list, because he conspires with renegade Deevil Lords and is slowly gathering more Deevils as minions each day.

The war also has so many opportunities he hardly knows where to begin. For now, he grumbles that Hades should be focusing on Kirgi and plays the fool, while he plots his next ten moves.

Notes on Abrasax: Abrasax controls the *Shedim* that are found in Hades. There are only a few small groups not under his direct control, and they are renegades that he'll deal with in the future. He controls about 95% of them and that is enough for his plans. Having used the Gallu Demon Bull as lieutenants for so long, Abrasax has decided to include them among his minions and he is in talks (more like ultimatums) with the various Gallu leaders about joining him. Abrasax is able to summon 1D4x10 *Shedim* as well as 2D4 Gallu Demon Bulls.



Soulmancy

One of the dark magicks that has been banished from various worlds is *Soulmancy*. It is said to be a magic far darker than Necromancy and possibly associated with Rune Magic. At the very least, it's a branch of Necromancy that has been long forgotten, except in Hades. This mystic art is known to only a few of the Demon Lords and some of their subordinates. Demon Lords such as Succor-Bemoth have been experimenting using demon souls, which is one of the reasons why demons, especially powerful ones like the Jinn, have been sacrificed over the years. Aside from trying to expand their own powers, the Demon Lords have been using the dark magic to create new minions, and more powerful weapons.

Soulmancy is a closely guarded secret that only a few worthy demons have managed to learn. Unlike conventional spell magic, all incantations and rituals require the power of a soul. This is usually in addition to a large sum of P.P.E. Soulmancy has had a large influence in Hades. Its magic has several applications, from the creation of bone weapons to battlefield artillery. Most of these items are the results of millennia of experimentation by various Demon Lords, but none more so than *Succor-Bemoth*. Thanks to the rituals of Soulmancy, conventional weapons can be made more potent, and artillery more devastating. If the demons continue to make such progress, it may only be a matter of time before they create a weapon of

mass destruction that can rival even the most powerful technological arsenal.

Demon Bone Weapons

Demons are fearsome creatures. They can rend Mega-Damage steel with their very claws, their hides are strong enough to survive all kinds of punishment, and some even wield powerful magic. So why would these creatures need a weapon? The answer is, most do not. Many, like the *Baal-Rog*, love to rely on their magic powers and natural abilities. However, a good spear, sword or long-range weapon can make the difference in a pitched battle, especially all-out *war* against other demonic beings. In the war against the denizens of Dyval, weaponry might make a big difference in the number of casualties and, more importantly, who wins the war. Most demons and Deevils are equal in power, and even share many of the same strengths and weaknesses. However, magic weapons can turn the tide. Demons have learned this the hard way in other wars over the ages and in their association with humans. Besides, using a good sword, spear, whip or pole arm can be fun.

Thanks to Succor-Bemoth, demons have developed bone weapons using a combination of Soulmancy and Necromancy. Demon Bone weapons are relatively inexpensive and can be produced in mass quantities. The most common weapon produced are *Bone Spears*, *Bone Swords*, and blunt weapons such as *Bone War Hammers*, *clubs with skulls at the end* and *staves* of all kinds entirely made of bone.

Basic damage is the same as it would be for any normal melee weapon, but most are giant-sized, adding an extra 1D6 (sometimes 2D6) to the damage the weapon delivers. However, the magical nature of the weapon is such that the type of damage varies with the environment the weapon is located in and the opponent it is used against. Thus, the weapon inflicts Mega-Damage (M.D.) in Mega-Damage settings and to Mega-Damage beings, but does Hit Point and S.D.C. damage to mere S.D.C. humanoids and when in S.D.C. settings. That means on Rifts Earth, a Bone Axe will inflict 4D6 M.D. against a Devilkin or dragon in one attack (they are M.D.C. creatures) and 4D6 S.D.C. to an ordinary human in the next. In the Palladium World and Heroes Unlimited, where everyone and all materials are S.D.C., the damage applies to S.D.C. and Hit Points.

Typical Mega-Damage for a Demon Bone Weapon: 3D6, 4D6, 5D6 or 6D6. Most are indestructible and eternally sharp.

More power. The magic and life energy used to create Demon Bone weapons means they can be endowed with certain *magic properties* just like Rune weapons. Such empowered weapons are usually commissioned by various demon Dukes, Princes and Demon Lords to equip special units with superior weapons. Moreover, Succor-Bemoth has learned that the entire weapon does not have to be made of bone. As long as there is a piece of bone (10% of the weapon or more), such as the handle, the bone can be enchanted via Soulmanancy and the entire weapon is made magical.

Magic attack capabilities are limited to spell equivalents from levels 1-4 and always affect others (i.e. Cloud of Smoke, Befuddle, Electric Arc, Energy Bolt, Fire Bolt, Paralysis Lesser, Turn Dead, etc.).

Magic abilities imparted upon the weapon's user are limited to spell equivalents from levels 1-4 and always include an ability the weapon's owner can bestow upon himself (i.e. Armor of Ithan, See the Invisible, Breathe Without Air, Chameleon, Float in Air, Levitation, Multiple Image, etc.).

Limitations: Typically, no more than *three* magical abilities can be instilled into a Demon Bone weapon and most (unless stated otherwise) can only be used 3 or 4 times each, per 24 hours.

Note: When a Demon Bone weapon is examined by practitioners of magic or psychics, they detect evil and magic within the weapon as if it were a living and evil being.

Notable Demon Bone Weapons

By Kevin Siembieda

Bone Whip – A chunk of bone attached to what looks like braided hair or strands of hair-like cord. The strands are knotted and bound with jagged bone or spinal bones in 5-6 places. It is swung like any whip with the large bone end being the main clubbing end of the weapon. **Damage:** 3D6 M.D.; double damage to animated dead, skeletons, mummies and zombies. **Range:** Melee combat but usually has a reach of 8-16 feet (2.4 to 4.9 m) depending on the size of its user. **Bonus:** +1 to disarm, +2 to entangle, and can be used to climb if there is an outcropping/limb it can whip around.

Bone Knife – Typically a hooked blade the size of a short sword. It can be made entirely of bone or just the handle. **Damage:** 3D6 M.D.; double damage to animated dead, skeletons,

mummies and zombies. **Range:** Melee combat. **Bonus:** +1 to parry and disarm, +2 to strike when thrown.

Bone Scraper Pole Arm – It is more pole arm than spear because its 4-7 wicked, curved blades, called "Bone Scrapers," are used in a chopping and slashing motion rather than stabbing, and the weapon cannot be thrown. On the opposite side of the raking blades are 4-7 barbed chains that end in wicked hooks. The chains and hooks are used for slashing and gouging opponents as well as entangling their weapons and ripping them out of their hands. Of course, skilled users of this weapon can literally "hook" an opponent and pull him by the chains. **Damage:** Bone Scraper Blades: 6D6 M.D., Hooks & Chain: 4D6 M.D., Handle Blade: 2D6 M.D. **Range:** Melee combat, but the pole arm is typically 30% longer than its user is tall! **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +2 to parry, disarm and entangle. **Note:** See the Gargoyle Mage for an illustration of this weapon.

Fire Trident Pole Arm – Considered a pole arm with three narrow blades like a giant, wicked forked spear. **Damage:** 6D6 M.D. **Range:** Melee combat or thrown up to 400 feet (122 m). **Bonus:** +1 to strike and disarm, +2 to parry. **Magic Ability:** Can unleash a 5D6 M.D. bolt of fire 2000 feet (610 m) three times per melee round. Each blast counts as one of the user's attacks for that round.

Forked Pole Arm – A long spear with a pair of large blades arranged like the two prongs of a serving fork. **Damage:** 6D6 M.D. **Range:** Melee combat or thrown up to 500 feet (152 m). **Bonus:** +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to disarm. **Magic Ability:** One third can fire a 6D6 lightning bolt 2400 feet (731.5 m) twice per melee round. Each blast counts as one of the user's attacks for that round.

Jaw-Bone Axe – An axe made from the jaw bone of an animal or monster. **Damage:** 5D6 M.D.; double damage to serpents and dragons. **Range:** Can be thrown 500 feet (152 m) and magically returns to its owner, but the act of throwing uses up one attack and the act of returning uses another. **Bonus:** Provides its user with one extra attack per melee round.

Screaming Skull Hammer – A weapon with an axe-handle but the head of the weapon is a skull (human or inhuman, or animal) with its mouth open as if screaming. The weapon screams every time it is swung in combat, flames come from its eyes, and in addition to its formidable damage as a blunt weapon, it can shoot a pair of fire bolts from its eye sockets. **Damage:** 4D6 M.D. blunt; double damage to Water Elementals, Water Warlocks and others whose power or nature is water based. 6D6 M.D. per twin fire bolts (can only shoot fire once per melee round). **Range:** Close combat or via fire bolts with a range of 600 feet (183 m). **Bonuses:** +1 to parry, +2 to disarm (the weapon will actually bite and grip an opponent's weapon in its teeth for a moment!).

Ram-Staff – The handle is covered with the bones from a spinal cord, the head is that of a ram or goat. **Damage:** 3D6 M.D., **Range:** Melee combat. **Magic Abilities:** The user can call upon any of the following up to three times each per 24 hour period: Shadow Meld, Mystic Fulcrum, Impervious to Fire, Levitation and Lantern Light (from the eyes, nose and mouth). **Bonus:** +1 to parry.

Ram-Whip – Fundamentally the same general appearance as the Ram-Staff except the spinal bones are strung together on a chain, leaving them loose and flexible like a whip or ball and

chain. The ram's head is the ball that strikes the enemy. Damage: 3D6 M.D., Range: Melee combat, but usually with a 10-15 foot (3 to 4.6 m) reach depending on the size of the wielder. Magic Abilities: The user can call upon any of the following up to three times each per 24 hour period to inflict additional damage: Fire: +3D6 M.D., Electricity: +3D6 M.D., Impale/slashing attack with the horns: +2D6 M.D. Light: as in a Globe of Daylight, deadly to vampires and certain other creatures of darkness (radiates from the eyes, nose and mouth of the ram). Bonus: Can also be used to climb and scale walls with the unbreakable horns of the ram working like a grappling hook.

Scorpion Spear – A short spear with a spearhead that comes to a wicked point, two other forked tips just below it pointing forward, and four pointing backward, giving it a shape reminiscent to an insect. The handle end of the spear has two crossed blades like the stinger of a scorpion. Damage: Spear Head: 4D6 M.D., Scorpion's Tail (small blade): 2D4 M.D. Range: Melee combat or thrown up to 1000 feet (305 m). Bonus: +1 to strike and disarm, +2 to strike when thrown, +2 to parry, +1 to disarm. Magic Ability: One third can fire a 6D6 lightning bolt 2000 feet (610 m) three times per melee round. Each blast counts as one of the user's attacks for that round. **Note**: See the illustrations of the *Gurgoyle* and the *Demon High Priest* for depictions of this type of spear.

Teeth of the Devourer – Typically a large sword with serrated edges made from 50-100 teeth per each edge of the blade. Damage: 6D6 M.D. Range: Melee combat. Bonuses: +1 on initiative and the wielder is impervious to infections and poison.

Thunder Club – An enchanted blunt weapon that makes a booming sound on impact like thunder or a small explosion (unnerving in combat). Damage: 4D6+3 M.D. Range: Can be thrown 1000 feet (305 m) and magically returns to its owner, but the act of throwing uses up one attack and the act of returning uses another.

Tri-Blade Axe – Bone handle, bone blades optional. Damage: 3D6+3 M.D., +1D6 vs bone or wood, +2D6 vs stone, +3D6 vs metal (this includes objects, weapons, fortifications and Elementals). Range: Melee combat; cannot be thrown. Bonuses: +1 to parry and disarm.

Battlefield Artillery

In preparation for a major siege against the minions of Dyval, demons have used Soulmancy to create a variety of magical heavy weapons. The war had certainly heated up when the demons raised the ante. Of course, Deevils are forced to contend with the new weapons and counter with their own inventions. The battlefield is rapidly changing and battle lines are constantly moving.

Hell Cannon

The Hell Cannon is the Hades version of a catapult. It has large stone wheels, and the rest is constructed of wood and bones. The front of the catapult has a demonic skull with yellow orbs for eyes. Magic animates the Hell Cannon so that it can function via verbal commands. A command tells it to move, adjust its position for firing and when to launch its payload. All a demon has to do is load the weapon and command it to fire.

Some rumors floating around various demon camps suggest that some demons are being sacrificed to construct these weapons. It's entirely possible, as the weapons seem to have simple personalities and radiate of supernatural evil. Furthermore, there is often disembodied, demonic laughter heard after every payload is launched.

M.D.C. by Location:

*Main Body – 300

Wheels (4) – 50

* Destroying the main body destroys the cannon, rendering it useless. (**Note**: On S.D.C. worlds the Hell Cannon has 400 S.D.C. for the main body, and 50 S.D.C. per wheel, with an A.R. of 14.)

Speed:

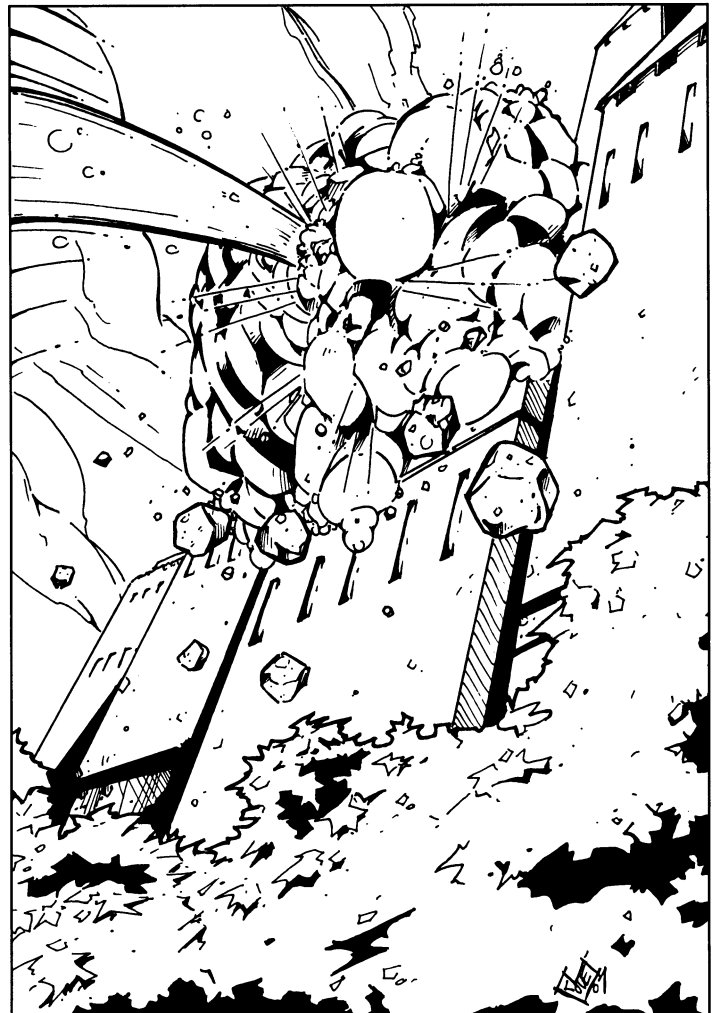
Driving on the Ground: 10 mph (16 km) on flat terrain. Though mobile and animated, they move ponderously slow. They are roughly equal to a speed of 16 (10 mph/16 km). They are sometimes mounted on top of trained *Infernal Mastodons*. These beasts are strong enough to support two Hell Cannons which are often fired in tandem.

Range: Unlimited if given directions, otherwise it sits and waits for commands.

Statistical Data:

Height: 15 feet (4.6 m).

Width: 12 feet (3.7 m).



Length: 10 feet (3 m).

Weight: 1600 pounds (720 kg).

Cargo: None.

Power Systems: None, animated demon construct.

Market Cost: None in Hades as they are not sold. However, in Splynn an elsewhere it could sell for 300,000-500,000 credits without any kind of ammunition. Double that in gold in the Palladium World.

Damage: Varies with ammunition type. In S.D.C. environments, damage is and equivalent amount of S.D.C./Hit Points.

1. High Explosive Gas Pods are harvested from the Northern Fire Bog and fired in clusters for maximum effect. A small cluster of 5 does 5D6 M.D. to a 10 foot (3 m) area. A large cluster of 10 does 1D6x10 M.D. to a 15 foot (4.6 m) area.

2. Lightning Balls – These are skulls enchanted with various dark magicks. Regardless of the type of skull used, they increase to the size of a beach ball. When they impact, a burst of lightning is released covering a 30 foot (9.1 m) area, inflicting 6D6 M.D.

3. Acid Balls – Gas pods from the Death Mire often fill with deadly acid. Like a vine full of grapes they are often launched in bundles. Damage is only 4D6 S.D.C. to a 20 foot (6.1 m) area. The acid continues to do an additional 2D6 S.D.C. for 1D4 melees.

4. Rock to Mud – Good only for stone fortresses, which are common among Deevils (and demons). This ammo is difficult to create and rare. When the skull-like projectiles hit stone structures, they shatter and large portions of the target wall are turned into mud, weakening the structure overall by 1D6x100 S.D.C./M.D.C. per shot. Approximately 1D4x1000 pounds (450-1800 kg) is turned into mud. Only the stone takes damage.

5. Conventional Rock – Boulders and large stones weighing up 500 pounds (225 kg) can be fired at large stationary targets or masses of soldiers. Damage is 2D6x10 S.D.C. or 2D6 M.D.

Effective Range: 2000 feet (610 m; magically enhanced).

Rate of Fire: Because of the magical nature of these catapults, they can be fired once per melee (every 15 seconds).

Payload: Varies, often a cart is pulled along that can have 50 assorted pieces of ammunition. Most often they carry 10 each of the types listed above.

Soul Cannon

As the name suggests, a Soul Cannon uses the souls provided by *Soul Catcher* demons as ammunition to launch its deadly payload. The cannon is constructed on a special mount that can only be carried or pulled by the *Infernal Mastodon*. These cannons are huge and deadly looking. In the rear is a glass-like tank that holds a red liquid the consistency of blood. This special “soup” hold souls for the weapon to use as ammunition and can keep as many as 32 souls/life essences at a time.

Constructed of various bones, the cannon’s primary component is a giant skull from which the cannon protrudes out of the mouth. The barrel is approximately 15 feet (4.6 m) long and demons sit in the skull like it is some kind of weapons cockpit. Magical displays present the battlefield and the demons are able to select their targets and fire the weapon’s payload with deadly

accuracy. When fired, the cannon launches a black and purple burst of energy that explodes on impact. The cannon has two firing modes. One is a more ammo conservative mode, and the other goes through souls in a flash.

The weapon has proven so effective that Deevils are constantly trying to send troops behind enemy lines to disable and destroy them. For now, this weapon is providing the demons of Hades a huge edge in the war, so Demon Lords are looking for ways to speed up production of this vicious weapon.

M.D.C. by Location:

Platform: 300

Cannon: 250

* Main Body: 500

** Soul Tank: 200

*Destroying the main body destroys the cannon, rendering it useless. On S.D.C. worlds, convert all M.D.C. values to S.D.C. and increase by 50%. A.R. is 15.

** Destroying the Soul Tank releases any souls it may have contained and disables the cannon. It takes 1D4 days to make a new Soul Tank, but just an hour to reinstall if a spare tank is available. However, the spare has no life essences contained within. Those must be loaded in by Soul Catchers. **Note:** Souls set free return to their proper body if the character is still alive, or vanish if the character is dead.

Statistical Data:

Height: 18 feet (5.5 m) tall.

Width: 12 feet (3.7 m).

Length: Including the barrel, 24 feet (7.3 m) long!

Weight: 2 tons.

Cargo: None, just enough room to hold a gunner and one other. Although most of the time, several demons like Baal-Rogs or Gargoyles will perch on the weapon while in transit, or while defending it.

Cost: None in Hades as available only to Modeus and his military, but if one were ever to end up at the Splynn Dimensional Market, if the Splugorth didn’t get to it first, it would sell for at least 10-20 millions!

Damage:

Light Soul Blast: 1D6x10+6 M.D. per single shot to everything in a 10 foot (3 m) radius. Uses up one soul per Light Blast.

Heavy Soul Blast: 5D6x10 M.D. to everything in a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius! To inflict such a large amount of damage the weapon must power up! This means it must consume a single soul which takes two full melees. It is quite obvious when it is about to fire, because the dark magic glows from the cannon’s eyes and it radiates all around! Uses up four souls per Heavy Blast.

Note: Even beings impervious to energy take damage from a Soul Blast, as it is a form of supernatural energy that defies convention. Damage is converted from M.D. to S.D.C. in S.D.C. environments.

Effective Range: Up to one mile (1.6 km), and as close as 2000 feet (610 m); it is a long-range weapon.

Rate of Fire: The cannon can fire four Light Soul Bursts per melee round, or one Heavy.

Payload: The tank at the rear of the cannon can hold up to 32 souls for up to 20 years.

Soul Eater, Demon Transport

Demon Transports or “Soul-Eaters” are another wicked and gruesome creation of Soulmanancy and powered by the devouring of life and souls.

Prior to escalating the Minion War, Modeus studied several conflicts around the Megaverse that involved massive numbers of troops. Inevitably, troop movement and the insertion and extraction of troops was an issue. While he was already versed in the arts of war, he lacked some knowledge that regarded employment of vast armies on a wide scale. Since increasing the demon arsenal, he felt it necessary to hone these skills so the weapons being created and troops being deployed could be used to maximum potential. The Demon Transport is one outcome of these studies. A great deal of time and effort could be saved with the use of large scale transports rather than travel by foot, wing or Netherbeast, so Modeus commissioned the creation of vehicles to carry demon-sized troops. Now, thousands of demons can be carried to Demon’s Gate from Gamora in a matter of days instead of months.

Demon Transports are built using bones from the bone yards. After these materials are assembled, the whole craft is brought to pseudo-life by the Demon Lords. This is where scores of demons are being sacrificed as the Demon Lords use their power along with the dark magic of Soulmanancy to bind them to the craft. To fuel the craft, souls are harvested and sacrifices are made right on the deck. There are several cages on the ship where mortal slaves are kept and used as fuel.

The Demon Transport is frightening to behold. The front of the craft appears as a giant-sized skull. Whether it is made to look that way or is actually the skull of a terrible monster is unknown. Each skull varies a little with each craft, lending credence to the belief that it is the skull of some massive monster. There is no lower jaw, but the skull does rise when troops are disgorged. The ship has two levels and this can be seen through the ribs that make up the main body. The rear of the craft is raised above the front as the ribs start out small and flare up until they reach the back of the ship. At the top rear are three ring sections that have bone protrusions like crenelations on a castle. The center is effectively the bridge, where the vessel is controlled. On either side are the two weapon platforms used for defense of the ship and to cover troops as they disembark in hostile settings. The bottom is flat and flared.

The principle of controlling the ship is similar to the Demon Black Ships found on Rifts Earth as well as the Palladium world. A sacrifice or soul is used to power the vessel and send it on its way. A Greater Demon is usually at the helm and there is a captain and several demons on deck to lend a hand and make additional sacrifices to fuel the vessel. These ships have yet to see combat, and at the moment are being used exclusively to ferry troops around Hades. It is only a matter of time before the first ships see combat somewhere in the Megaverse. One hundred and fifty are currently operational, with another 150 in the final stages of construction which should be ready to launch in 3D6 days. Another 150 are to be built immediately after the current set are finished. Demons and slaves working around the clock, it takes six months to build each.

Also known as Soul-Eater, Hellship, and Ship of Souls.

Model Type: Hellspawn 066.

Class: Demon Troop Transport.

Crew: As few as three Greater Demons, a Soul Catcher, a Baal-Rog and one other, can pilot the vessel, but 5-8 is common, with at least two being Soul Catchers, and the rest to pilot or help to make sacrifices on deck and run operations.

M.D.C. by Location:

Front/Skull – 575

Sacrificial Altar (1, upper deck, concealed) – 180

Disembarkment Ramp (1; front) – 330

Weapons Platforms (2) – 375 each

* Soul Tank (concealed, inside and reinforced) – 500

Internal Cages (6) – 100 each

** Main Body – 1,968

* Destroying the Soul Tank releases any souls it may have contained and disables the vessel, rendering it powerless and immobile. It takes 1D6+1 days to make a new Soul Tank for this vessel, but takes just 1D4 hours to reinstall if a spare tank is available. However, the spare has no life essences contained inside of it. Those must be loaded in by Soul Catchers. **Note:** Souls set free return to their proper body if the character is still alive, or vanish if the character is dead.

** Destroying the main body shuts down the ship, causing it to crash. On S.D.C. worlds, convert all M.D.C. values to S.D.C. and increase by 50%. A.R. is 15.

Speed:

Driving on the Ground: Not possible.

Flying: The ship can get up to a speed of 120 mph (192 km) or hover stationary; VTOL capable and unlimited altitude and can break the gravitational field of most planets.

Range: 5,000 miles (8,000 km) per soul used/mortal sacrificed; double that range per Deevil or lesser supernatural being sacrificed, quadruple when a greater supernatural being is used.

Teleport: The vessel can also teleport up to 2,500 miles (4,000 km), provided the location is known (99% success) or is wide open spaces like an ocean or desert, otherwise, teleporting to an unknown location will cause the vessel to smash into whatever is there (trees, buildings, mountains, etc.) and suffer 3D6x100 damage. **Fuel cost of Teleportation:** Teleportation on the same world is instant, but uses up/requires two mortal souls or one lesser supernatural being/infernal (from the Soul Tank or sacrificed on deck). **Note:** Teleportation can only be performed a total of 12 times per day (24 hours) and each must be at least 10 minutes apart. Of course, each minions of Dyval can be sacrificed and their life essence/soul used to fuel the ship and its teleportation.

Dimensional Teleport (DT): Ability is 48% plus the DT percentage of the pilot, himself, but can only Dimensional Teleport to places the *pilot* has visited himself. Dimensional Teleport requires firsthand knowledge to perform and is always dangerous. **Fuel cost of Dimensional Teleportation:** Teleportation to a different dimension is instant, but uses up/requires 10 mortal souls, five lesser supernatural beings/infernals, or two Greater Demons or Demigod or Godling (from the Soul Tank or sacrificed on deck). **Note:** Teleportation can only be performed a total of five times per day (24 hours), but must be at least 60 minutes apart.

Statistical Data:

Height: 84 feet (26 m).

Width: 480 feet (146 m).

Length: 1069 feet (325.8 m).

Weight: 900-1200 tons fully loaded.

Cargo: The ship is designed to carry approximately 1000-1,100 large (10-16 foot/3 to 4.88 meters tall) demons under cramped conditions. In lieu of Demons it can carry approximately 200 Hell Cannons, or 120 Soul Cannons. Cargo and troops are usually divided between the two decks, with each deck being able to hold one half of the ship's total cargo. This allows for a mix of troops and equipment if needed.

Power Systems: Dark magic called *Soulmancy* is the ship's power source. Without the life energy/souls of living beings, humans and D-Bees or lesser and/or greater supernatural beings, it cannot fly, teleport or even hold together (crumbles into pieces within 1D6 months). The ship's Soul Tank can store up to 120 souls and uses them as needed. Only a Soul Catcher demon can fill these tanks by transferring captured souls from itself into the tank. Otherwise, living sacrifices must be made at the special location on deck.

Special Abilities: The Demon Transport bio-regenerates lost M.D.C. at a rate of 1D4x10 M.D.C. per melee round (15 seconds). In S.D.C. worlds it recovers 1D6x10 per melee. The ship also radiates a supernatural aura and has a Horror Factor of 16.

Market Cost: None have yet to make it to the open market, but would certainly sell to evil beings for at least 100 million credits.

Weapon Systems: Two weapon platforms: Each platform holds either one Soul Cannon or two Hell Cannons.

Note: Demons also ride monstrous creatures known as "Netherbeast," as war mounts, and many can fly or Dimensional Teleport on their own. The problem with the latter is they can't Dimensional Teleport to a particular world until they've had someone take them there first. To Dimensional Teleport (pop from one world to another), the demon must have visited the place at least once. Until then, the place is off limits and impossible to locate. Only a small percentage (5%) have been to Dyval before the Minion War (and vice versa for the minions of Dyval visiting Hades). Furthermore, the chance of success even for most Greater Demons is small, typically under 40%. Only a handful of Greater Demons (and most Demon Lords) have a better than 50% chance. The Demon Transport increases the odds dramatically.

Demon War Drums

Keeping hordes of Lesser Demons, Sub-Demons, the Fallen and even Magots and Jinn organized, disciplined and focused is a Herculean task, and impossible for more than a month or so, at least without a great and powerful Demon Warlord, Duke or Prince to lead them. That's impractical, so the Demon Lords found an alternative: Demon War Drums.

With the use of Soulmancy and Demon Bone Magic, the Demon Lords are able to convey their deific presence on the battlefield via the beat of Demon War Drums. The drums are constructed on a large platform that is usually mounted on the

back of an Infernal Mastodon. They are large, made of bone and the skin is from the hide of an undisclosed animal(s). Rumor has it that the patchwork hide is made from the skin of their enemies (i.e. Deevils and mortals), but others suggest it is the hide of Netherbeasts. The power source for the drums is, of course, the souls of supernatural beings. Souls from Soul Catchers may be used, or an infernal enemy (e.g. Deevils) can be used by killing him on a sacrificial altar located in the back of the platform. The drums can be played indefinitely, but the magic that keeps the demon hordes focused, organized and obedient only lasts for five hours per each infernal soul put into the drums.

Positive Drum Effect: When the Demon War Drums are played up, all demons who can hear them (and they can be heard up to 3 miles/4.8 km away) are inspired, focused and ready to follow orders. With several drums placed at strategic locations, a million or more demons can be controlled in this fashion. Demon psychology being what it is, those not affected are bolstered by their brethren and follow their lead and the actions of the majority. That means if 60% charge forward, so will all the others. They become a more cohesive fighting unit, following orders, and trying to achieve the objective given to them. The units' leaders should still be out in front where their men can see them and barking out orders as the battlefield dynamic changes, but the Demon War Drums make their job that much easier. Without the drums, demon hordes tend to be much more erratic, uncertain, unfocused and are easily spooked into retreat. With the drums beating in the background they are a force to be reckoned with.

Negative Drum Effect: All non-demons (this includes the minions of Dyval and mortals) find the incessant drone of the drums unnerving, and suffer the following penalties as long as they hear the drums: -1 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 to parry and dodge, -4 to save vs Horror Factor, and -10% to perform all skills.

Other Technology

For the most part, demons of Hades have little use for modern technology or anything created and used by mortals. This stems from the fact that demons are primordial supernatural creatures of instinct and powerful emotions. They are what they are, by nature. They don't think like humans and live to inflict suffering and misery. Most are supremely arrogant, self-centered, and rely entirely on their own "super" natural abilities. Many demons feel it is a handicap and a sign of weakness to have to rely on technology and machines. Thus, those who wield technology are shunned, mocked and tormented by their demonic brethren. It's one thing to use a melee weapon (sword, spear, axe, club, etc.), it's another to use a gun.

Magic weapons are an exception, but even then, the vast majority are magic swords, spears, staves, knives, and other *melee weapons*, not long-range blasters, rifles, cannons, energy weapons or mechanical devices. That means Techno-Wizardry is too close to modern technology and uncomfortable for demons (and Deevils), but Rune Magic, Bio-Wizardry, Necromancy and Soulmancy are okay.

In the end, demons (and Deevils) rely on their teeth and claws, natural abilities, magic, brute strength, cunning and intimidation. How else can they enjoy the screams of their victims as their claws or teeth rend their flesh and crack their bones?

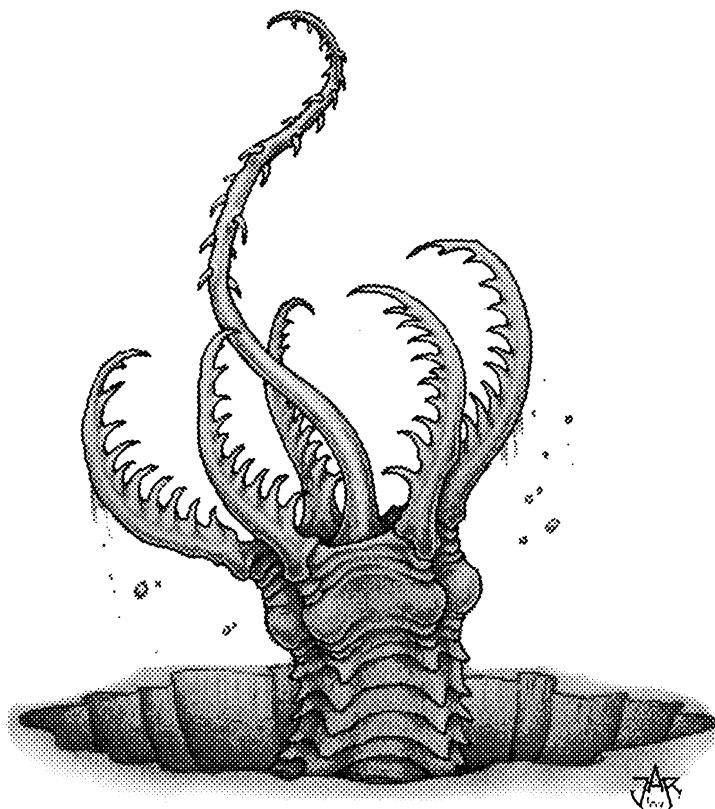
Notable Monsters & Netherbeasts

A number of animals and monsters from other worlds and dimensions exist in Hades. Exactly which are indigenous or alien is often difficult to determine. A few of the most dangerous and notable are described in the following pages, with monsters first.

Ant Lion

The Ant Lion is a predator that lives under the sands in the *Desert of Taut*, along with the many *Worms of Taut*. They set up traps using the surrounding sand and dunes to their advantage. The Ant Lion burrows under the sand and lies with its maw pointed up towards the sky. Surrounding its maw are five mandibles with large jagged teeth that can be positioned upward like some sort of rock or plant formation, or made to lay flat on top of the sand. The creature lays there, its mouth wide open, the rest of it underground, in a tunnel or just beneath the sand. In the center is a vine-like projection that curls and moves from time to time, like a snake or the tentacle of an octopus, to attract predators. Unsuspecting prey may fall or climb down into the open maw or on top of the mandibles, where the tongue lashes out and pulls them in to be gobbled up whole. Ant Lions are also able to *sense* when prey is near and may lunge to ensnare large prey, including humanoids and horses, and/or grab them with its long tentacle-like tongue. The tongue is both sticky (victim needs a P.S. of 12 or greater to pull free) and covered in wicked barbs that hook, impale and drag prey into the maw. The tongue can wrap around a limb of truly giant prey, and the Ant Lion will bite and thrash around, even rolling its body on top of its captive until the prey is rendered crippled, dead or unconscious. When the prey has stopped struggling, the carcass is pulled close enough for the mandibles to bite off large pieces to swallow, starting with the entangled limb. If the prey manages to run off after losing a limb, at least the Ant Lion has had a little snack, and other predators are likely to hunt down the bleeding and crippled animal. An Ant Lion can swallow a Grackle Tooth whole.

As a rule, all one ever sees of an Ant Lion on the surface is its chomping mandibles, spiked tongue and maybe a bit of its neck, so many assume it is some sort of worm. They are wrong. The Ant Lion has a bloated, egg-shaped body that resembles a giant flea, complete with four small legs and a pair or larger hind legs. Like a flea, they can hop (10 feet/3 m high and 20 feet/6 m across) and scurry across the sand, but prefer to tunnel under the sand to avoid attacks or prey that fight back. Its real weapon is its entangling, spiked tongue and massive maw. The mandibles are not well suited for biting and killing, but work more like serrated scissors that saw and cut giant prey as it shakes its head and thrashes around. The monster has no eyes, and relies on motion receptors in its mouth and psionic abilities to sense prey.



Alignment: Predator, considered Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4 (low animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6+3, P.S. 2D6+20 (Bionic), P.P. 2D6+10 (+6 more to the tongue), P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D4, Spd 1D6x10 above or under the sand.

Size: 15 to 20 feet long (4.6 to 6.1 m), 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) tall, and has a prehensile tongue twice as long as its body.

Weight: 1-4 tons.

M.D.C.: 5D6x10+40 (On S.D.C. worlds the Ant Lion has P.E. number x3 for Hit Points, 2D6x10 S.D.C., and an A.R. 17 when under the sand. If exposed and brought to the surface, then the A.R. is 13.)

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E.: 2D4

Average Life Span: 2D4x10+200 years.

Natural Abilities: Equivalent P.S. is Augmented/Bionic Strength, impervious to heat and fire (no damage, including magic fire and M.D. fire or plasma). Dig under the sand at its full speed. Sense vibrations on the surface at a range of 500 feet (152 m), motion receptors in mouth can pinpoint movement up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away, tongue can reach 30-40 feet (9.1 to 12.2 m). Sticky and barbed tongue is prehensile and can entangle (wrap around) prey or lash out and hit with tongue, in which case most animal and man-sized prey are likely to become stuck and/or impaled or hooked on the tongue, so they can be dragged into the mouth and swallowed whole. Stomach acid in the belly does 2D6 M.D. per melee round as it eats away at whatever has been swallowed.

Man-sized and larger prey usually get 1D4 “bites” from the mandibles before being swallowed. It takes an ordinary P.S. of 20 and 1D4+1 melee actions to get unstuck or unhooked.

Equivalent Skills: Underground navigation at 70%, Wilderness Survival 65%, Detect Ambush 40%, Detect Concealment 30%, and Camouflage 50%.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: None known, presumably it can’t fight or move well when not in sand.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Mega-Damage: The tentacle tongue is more for grabbing/sticking and reeling prey into the mouth than biting, and only does 1D4 M.D. from the impact and getting hooked by 1D4 barbs. Victim is pulled into mandible biting range within two melee actions (about 6 seconds) and swallowed 7-15 seconds later. Mandible Bite does 1D6 M.D. — 2D6 M.D. if the bug is shaking its head (counts as two melee attacks), 5D6 M.D. if violently thrashing and rolling around (counts as three of its melee attacks).

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +2 to strike with its tongue including any possible P.P. bonuses.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number x2. Powers are limited to Presence Sense (4), Sense Magic (3), and Sense Time (2).

Value: None; pest and vermin. Cannot be used as a Netherbeast.

Habitat: Primarily in the Desert of Taut, but can adapt to any type of desert region.

Allies: None, they don’t get along well with their own kind except to mate, and compete for territory.

Enemies: Various Worms of Taut feed on it, particularly Blow Worms and Sand Worms; both are its natural enemies. However, the Ant Lion can sense the vibrations of a burrowing Sand Worm up to 2 miles (3.2 km) away.

Murmur’s Black Vultures

The Black Vultures of Hades are descendants of *Ramsea*, Lord Murmur’s giant vulture. They are found mostly on the borders of the Thorn Forest and the Desert of Taut. They are predatory scavengers who feed on carrion, but will also attack people and animals that appear to be weak or injured and unable to put up a fight. Consequently, most Black Vultures give up a battle after losing a mere 20% of their M.D.C., flying off to find carrion or to wait and watch from a distance for the prey they’ve targeted to show signs of greater frailty or die. The vultures can be found in just about every part of Hades, especially near demon slaughterhouses, cities where slaves are worked till they drop, the Death Mire and the Thorn Forest. They’ll attack in waves, with 1D6 or 2D6 Black Vultures swooping in one at a time or in pairs to attack one or more very weak or injured individuals. When Black Vultures attack injured or old slaves out in the open, the slaves’ demon master is likely to enjoy a good laugh as he watches the birds tear the worthless slave(s) apart rather than chase the scavengers away. The demons may even wager on the outcome or how fast the slave will die, etc. Most slave owners figure if a slave doesn’t have the strength to fight off a Black Vulture attack, he has no remaining value and deserves to die.

These semi-intelligent, monster-birds are completely black, with bald heads, blood red beaks and sparkling eyes. Their claws and wing tips are also red in color.

Alignment: Anarchist or any evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+3 (low to medium animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+2, M.A. 2D4, P.S. 2D6+12 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 2D6+15 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D6+6 running on the ground or 1D6x10+60 flying (48-82 mph/76.8 to 131 km).

Size: 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) tall, 8-10 feet (2.4 to 3 m) long, and have an 18-20 foot (5.5 to 6.1 m) wingspan.

Weight: 200-300 lbs (90 to 135 kg).

M.D.C.: Main Body P.E.x3; wings have 42 M.D.C. each. (On S.D.C. worlds the Black Vulture has P.E. attribute number +15 for Hit Points, and 6D6+8 S.D.C., wings have 3D6+16 S.D.C. each; A.R. 10.)

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E.: 4D6

Average Life Span: 1D6x10+200 years.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, fly, smell blood and rotting flesh up to 10 miles (16 km) away, track by smell 75% (+20% to follow scent of blood or decay), enhanced nightvision (see clearly for up to two miles/3.2 km away), and is impervious to disease, but may be a carrier of disease. Recovers lost M.D.C. at a rate of 4D6 points every 12 hours.

Black Vulture Plague (special): Black Vultures are covered with parasites and bacteria. Each time the blood of a Black Vulture is spilled there is a chance its attacker (or anyone



splattered by its blood) will be infected with the Black Vulture Plague. Roll a 13 or higher to save vs disease. A successful save means no infection or damage, just wipe it off and move on. A roll of 12 or less means infection.

Within 24 hours the infected character begins to suffer from body aches and a high fever. Hot and cold flashes quickly follow and all combat bonuses and attacks are reduced by one third and skill performance is -10%. This condition lasts for 1D4+1 days. Diagnosis is likely to be the flu, but the character does not respond to medication.

At the end of that period (2-5 days) the character gets to roll *another saving throw*. 14 or higher means the fever breaks and the infection is *gone*! 13 or less means the fever flares and red blotches appear on the skin. Reduce the number of attacks and all combat bonuses of the victim by one third, again (that's reducing them by 66% total), reduce Spd by 60% and skill performance is -30%. 1D4 days later, the character falls into a *coma* for 1D4 days. The unconscious victim burns with fever, the blemishes turn into pussy open sores, and the victim has nightmares about Black Vultures attacking or eating him alive. At the end of the coma, a third saving throw is needed, this time a 15 or higher is needed to save. A successful save means the fever beaks and the character is up to full capacity in 1D6+3 days. *A failed roll means* the character fades in and out of consciousness, symptoms remain, and he will die within 1D4+6 days.

Plague Cures: If properly diagnosed as the plague from the Black Vulture (the victim will intuitively know this is what it is), there is help. A *Remove Curse* spell has a 01-50% chance of removing the plague (01-70% if performed in the first or second week), a *Restoration* spell or *Ley Line Resurrection* removes the plague and instantly heals the sick to full strength, and so will drinking a tea made from the petals of the magical *White Rose*. Of course, Murmur can remove it with a wave of his hand and the words "plague be gone." Likewise, any Prince or Demon Lord (or deity) can remove the Black Vulture Plague with a touch of their hand and willing it to be gone (uses up 50 P.P.E.). Any other type of healing (psychic, medical, etc.) has only 01-10% chance of success. **Note:** Game Masters, this can be a great opportunity to have one of those epic life and death struggles in which the heroes must find someone who can cure their friend.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Cowardly and have comparatively low M.D.C.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +1 to strike and parry, +3 to dodge while flying, and +2 on all saving throws.

Mega-Damage: Claw Strike does 2D4 M.D., a bite does 1D4 M.D.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Allies: Gather in small flocks of 1D6+3. Follow the wail of the Banshee and wait where she waits.

Rivals and Enemies: Psi-Hawks see Black Vultures as competition and try to chase them off. Ghouls hate them, and the vultures dislike Ghouls, because they both eat the dead.

Value: None, per se. Though human-sized and smaller demons have tried to tame Black Vultures to be riding animals, the birds are not well behaved, remain wild, and make a poor pet or riding beast.

Habitat: Black Vultures can be found anywhere in Hades, but are most numerous in the south.

Psi-Hawk

Psi-Hawks are one of the largest birds of prey in Hades! They are also one of the fiercest, and well known for their incredible fire powers as well as their blazing fiery aura. Even though most of their attacks stem from their natural Pyrokinesis and most demons have little to fear from fire, these birds can inflict some serious damage. Their razor sharp claws are deadly enough, but with their formidable psychic powers, their claws become deadly Psi-Blades that can even give a demon pause.

In the wild, the birds prey on *mortals*, *Black Vultures*, *Demon Flies*, *Demon Bats* and *Worms of Taut*, especially Fire Worms. Psi-Hawks swoop down and grab small prey, like Fire Worms, in their talons (inflicting damage) and fly off with the prey to a safe location nearby to finish it/him off. Some continue the attack in flight with bites. Psi-Hawks are solitary hunters, however when food is abundant several may congregate in the area. This leads to competition between young and older Psi-Hawks, who may try to steal the kill right out from under the claws of another Psi-Hawk.

The Psi-Hawk has golden or bronze, leathery skin, red feathers trimmed in grey or black, and a silver-colored beak and claws. When attacked by others (or just to show off), the demonic bird can engulf itself in a fiery aura (flame burst) that inflicts damage and startles many opponents. Psi-Hawks can often be seen blazing through the twilight sky like a phoenix.

Alignment: Considered to be Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+5 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+11, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 1D6+25, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 1D6+5, Spd 2D6+6 on the ground, 1D6x10+58 (45-80 mph/72 to 128 km) flying.

Size: 7-9 feet (2.1 to 2.7 m) tall from head to rump, the leathery tail is equal length as the body, 20-25 foot (6.1 to 7.6 m) wingspan, and weighs 400-600 pounds (180 to 270 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D4x10 + P.E. attribute number. (On S.D.C. worlds the Psi-Hawk has P.E.x3 for Hit Points, 1D4x10+18 for S.D.C., and A.R. 13.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D6

Average Life Span: 6D6+200 years.

Natural Abilities: Flight, nightvision 2,000 feet (610 m), see in infrared, and thermal vision. Superior sense of smell and can smell blood up to 4 miles (6.4 km) away. Track by scent at 65% (+15% to follow a blood scent), Land Navigation 58%, Wilderness Survival 45%, Detect Ambush 55%, psionic powers, Supernatural Strength and Endurance and bio-regenerate 1D6 M.D. (S.D.C./H.P.) per every five minutes.

Fire Burst Aura (special): Anything holding or touching the Psi-Hawk takes 3D6 M.D. every attempt to hit or hold it. The



aura can be maintained for 1D4+1 minutes at a time. Also used to show off, attract a mate, and may burst into flame when angry or frustrated. I.S.P. Cost: None.

Death Blast (special): An unusual aspect of this creature is that when it dies, all its remaining psychic energy is released in one powerful explosion — 5D6 M.D. (5D6 S.D.C. in those environments) to everyone in a 10 foot (3 m) radius.

Attacks per Melee: Five physical or psionic.

Damage: Beak does 2D4 M.D., 4D6 M.D. for a normal claw strike, 6D6 M.D. for a Psi-Claw attack (a Psi-Sword-like extension of the talons), or 1D6x10+6 M.D. (2D4x10+10 with Psi-Claws) for a power dive strike with talons (counts as three melee attacks and has a 01-60% likelihood of grabbing prey/opponent in its talons, and can fly off with it/him at half its normal speed).

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, strike, parry, and dodge. +2 on all saving throws

and is considered a Master Psionic for the purposes of resisting psionic attacks.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Hates water and is unable to activate its psionics when drenched or covered in it. Typically flees, seeing it as a Horror Factor of 15.

Magic: None.

Psionics: I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number x5, +30 to Psi-Hawks older than 150 years. See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (3), Pyrokinesis (varies), and its Psi-Sword-like extension of its talons power (15; one appears in each claw, adding 2D6 M.D. to claw attacks)! All abilities are equal to fifth level.

Languages: None.

Value: None, except maybe as a monster in the arena.

Habitat: Its primary habitats are the Forest of Stone, Eastern Fire Planes, and the Northern Fire Bog in the Abyss. In Tarterous they only reside in the Thorn Forest. However, the Psi-Hawk can also be found in mountainous regions around Hades, especially if Fire Worms are present.

Allies: None! They are solitary hunters who will kill their own kind for food if need be. From time to time, some demons have tried to use Psi-Hawks as Netherbeasts, but the animal is too aggressive and short tempered to be domesticated. The few who claim they have succeeded run the risk of the Psi-Hawk attacking them whenever it gets angry or frustrated (which is frequent), and if it gets loose of its reins, the bird flies away, never to return.

Enemies: None per se, but sees most mortals, humanoids and creatures as prey.

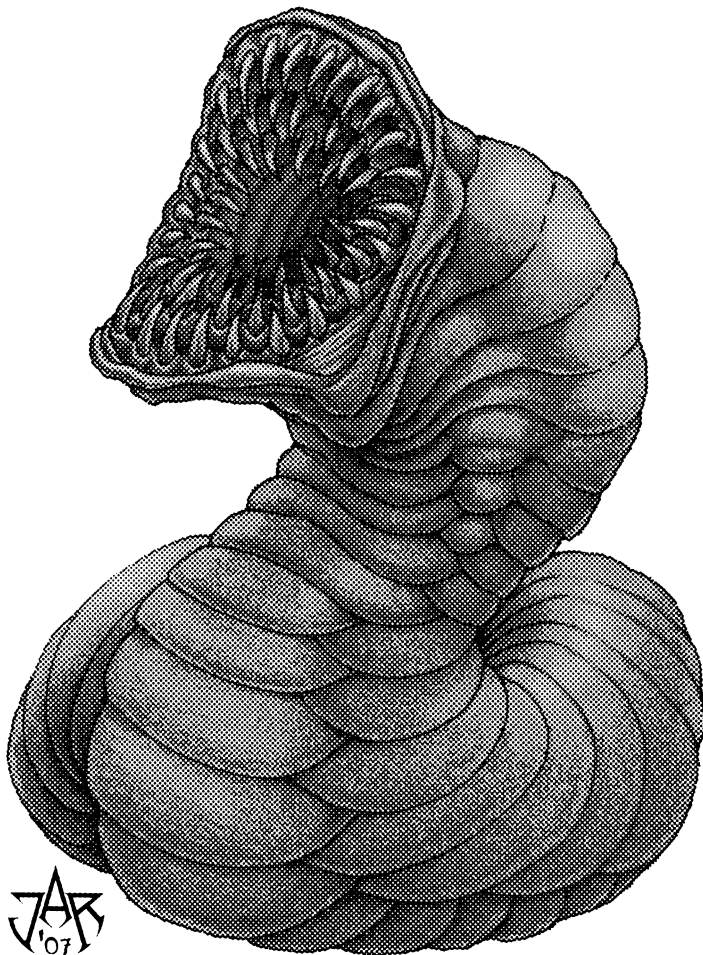
Sand Worm

The Sand Worms are native to the Desert of Taut in Hades. These huge worms are often mistaken for Blow Worms, until one opens its maw to reveal rows of razor sharp teeth. They burrow under the desert in search of prey and are not very picky. They will just as quickly consume a demon as they would a human or their favored prey, Ant Lions. They are completely blind and rely on sensing vibrations to hunt and navigate under the sand. Sand Worms are considered a Worm of Taut, but are very rare and not very useful out of their environment. Unless summoned to a sandy area, they are effectively useless.

The Sand Worm has the same rust colored complexion as the sand in the Desert of Taut. It looks like a typical worm with a large, ribbed ring near the head. All around the body are small finger-like protrusions that help to propel the sand worm underground. When it opens its maw the tip of the worm splits into six flaps like an opening flower. Each flap is covered with rows of razor sharp teeth. **Note:** The Sand Worm tends to swallow prey whole. As a result, victims will be conscious for 1D4 melees before they run out of air. While inside the worm its armor rating is not applicable and all attacks do double damage.

Alignment: Considered Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4 (low animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+2, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 6D6+30 (Supernatural), P.P. 3D6+10, P.E. 4D6+10 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D4, Spd 2D4x10 (under the sand), 4D6 (on the surface).



Size: The Sand Worms wander the deserts for millennia and become enormous. The typical Sand Worm is 600 feet long (183 m) long and 60 feet in diameter (18 m). Some truly ancient worms can be double in size.

Weight: 3D4+2 tons.

M.D.C.: 2D4x100. (On S.D.C. worlds the Sand Worm has 2D6x10 + P.E. for Hit Points, and 3D6x10 S.D.C., and an of A.R. 10.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 2D6

Average Life Span: 1D4x1,000 years.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, navigate underground at 89%, impervious to heat and fire (no damage including magic), Underground Navigation 89%, Tracking 77%, Camouflage 60%, and bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D.C. per hour. The Sand Worm is blind like its swamp dwelling cousin, however to compensate it is able to detect the slightest vibrations of surface creatures. This sense extends to a range of 1000 feet (305 m). It can sense creatures as small as a dog. Anything smaller is just not worth the energy. When it comes up above the surface it has to rely on its less developed motion sensors located in a ring around the front of the worm. It has a sensing range of only 300 feet (91.5 m). That combined with its sense of smell allows the Sand Worm to track prey at 77%.

Attacks per Melee: Four, but its power lunge attack takes *all* of the creature's actions.

Damage: The Sand Worm is famous for its power lunge attack. It begins by sensing prey and does a full bore run towards it. At the last second, it heads straight up and comes underneath its victim. An intense rumble in the ground precedes the surprise attack. It may even be possible to see the ripples in the sand from the approaching worm. Damage from the attack is 2D6x10 M.D. plus victims are thrown 2D6x10 feet/m. The characters lose two attacks and are -2 on all combat bonuses for the next melee. A successful roll with punch/fall means only half damage and characters only lose one attack with no loss of combat bonuses. The Sand Worm can hit as many as six human size targets. Once the sand worm has surfaced it will try to bite and swallow its prey whole. Damage from a bite is 2D4x10 M.D.C., and on a Natural 20 anything under 20 feet (6.1 m) in size will be swallowed whole. Damage from being swallowed is 3D6 M.D. from its rows of razor sharp teeth and the crushing action of the throat. A crushing attack with its body does 1D6x10 M.D. On S.D.C. worlds, convert all damage to S.D.C. and the damage from being swallowed is 6D6 S.D.C.

Bonuses (in addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +4 to strike with the power lunge attack, +2 to strike with a bite or body slam. +2 to save vs magic and psionic attacks, and +6 to save vs toxic clouds and gases/poisons.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Cold based attacks or spells do double normal damage. Due to their unique sensing abilities, they are stunned by sonic attacks, losing one half of their combat bonuses and one attack.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: None, per se.

Allies: None, they are loners who fight and chase away their own kind.

Value: None, most are too large and too wild to be tamed.

Habitat: Lives in the Desert of Taut. Can only survive in desert-like environments.

Note: Although sometimes confused for one, Sand Worms are not a Worm of Taut.

Netherbeasts of Hades

By Kevin Siembieda and Carl Gleba

Netherbeasts are large monsters semi-domesticated and used by demons as riding animals, guard animals and pets. The Pit Viper and the Infernal Mastodon cannot be transformed, but the Desert Howler and Serpent Lion can be altered by magic to be transformed into something even more monstrous.

It has become the fashion among the Demon Lords, Princes and Dukes to parade around on a Netherbeast. The creatures make wonderful guard animals, but more importantly, they can be trained to become riding animals, like a demonic warhorse, steady in combat and trained to recognize the minions of Dyval as enemies to be destroyed.

It seems that the Desert Howler and Serpent Lion are also susceptible to transformation via dark magick. A Demon Lord can tweak and change the appearance of the original animal a little or a lot as well as imbue the beast with additional powers and abilities. This means the Demon Lord can create a riding animal that reflects his personal sense of taste, style and need as a war mount, and different from all the others, a unique animal. A prime example are the **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**. Each has a Netherbeast that is clearly unique, but from the same species. Demon Lords are able to add such things such as horns, spiked tails, spines, fins, and physical enhancements such as strength and endurance (extra M.D.C.) to their Netherbeast.

Demon Lords and their most powerful underlings (Dukes and Princes) can also mass produce specially designed Netherbeasts for their troops. These are not as powerful (or weird) as the Demon Lord's own riding animal, but they are powerful and reliable war mounts ideal for transportation and war. With the advent of the Minion War, many Demon Lords have chosen a particular type and look personalize Netherbeasts for their army, and make all the riding animals used in their cavalries and elite troops look fundamentally identical. Only the Demon Lord's own beast, and possibly those of his top leaders, may have additional, distinctive features. **Note:** Of course, the Desert Howler and Serpent Lion can be kept exactly as they are without additions or modifications. When encountered in the wild, they will be the basic animal.

Customized Netherbeasts

Game Masters, use the Desert Howler or Serpent Lion as your *base*. That means the Netherbeast starts out as one of these two, similar creatures, with all of their particular abilities. "Customization" uses the tables below and even then the specific look can vary. Most have increased strength, endurance, speed or M.D.C.; they aren't able to gain any type of magic or psionic powers.

Attributes and Physical Augmentation: Make two selections. A particular enhancement can only be picked once. (A Demon Lord can pick a total of three for his personal mount.)

+1D6x10+55 to M.D.C.

Double existing M.D.C. (counts as three selections).

+11 to Supernatural P.S.

+22 to Supernatural P.S. (counts as two selections).

+1D6 to Supernatural P.E.

+1D4 to P.P.

+1D4+4 to P.B.

+1D4+1 to Horror Factor

+44 to Speed.

+88 to Speed (counts as two selections).

Leaper: Can leap an additional 40 feet (12.1 m) high and 100 feet (30.5 m) lengthwise.

Has a pair of leathery wings and can fly 50% faster than it can run (counts as two selections). Feathered wings is the same (but counts as three selections).

Has two, three or four tentacles as additional limbs (counts as two selections). The reach of the tentacles is equal to the length of the creature itself from the tip of its nose to its hindquarters,

and they may be located in the back/shoulders, chest, underbelly or head or mouth (in the case of head or mouth, the tentacles are half the length of the body from head to hindquarters). Does NOT provide any extra attacks per melee round.

Increase size by 50%.

Combat Advantage: Make four selections. A particular item/area can only be picked once. (A Demon Lord can make six selections for his personal mount.)

+1 attack per melee round.

+2 attacks per melee round (counts as two selections).

+3 attacks per melee round (counts at three selections).

+3 on initiative.

+2 to strike.

+5 to strike (counts at three selections).

+2 to parry.

+3 to dodge

+50% to Prowl.

+35% to Land Navigation.

+25% to track by smell.

+2 to roll with impact.

+3 to pull punch/bite.

+2D6 M.D. to bite damage.

Large claws, add 2D6 M.D. to normal Supernatural P.S. punch damage.

Small horns, add 1D6 M.D. to normal Supernatural P.S. punch damage from head butts and add 2D6 to its M.D.C.

Large horns, add 2D6 M.D. to normal Supernatural P.S. punch damage from head butts and add 4D6 the beast's M.D.C.

Whipping tail, does the same M.D. as a Supernatural P.S. punch. The tail may look different from the rest of the body.

Prehensile weapon tail with 1D6+1 spikes, or a large blade or club-like appendage at the end of it. +1 attack per melee round and a strike does an extra 2D6 M.D. in addition to normal Supernatural P.S. punch. The tail may look different from the rest of the body. (Counts as two selections.)

Double bio-regeneration ability and it occurs every melee round.

Triple bio-regenerative ability and it occurs every melee round (counts as two selections).

+2 to save vs magic.

+2 to save vs psionic attack.

+3 to save vs poison and drugs.

+4 to save vs Horror Factor, unlikely to be startled or run away even in heavy combat.

Impervious to fire and heat, even M.D. fire, though magic fire does half damage (counts as two selections).

Impervious to poison, toxins and disease (counts as two selections and includes gases).

Increase skill equivalent abilities (Climb, Prowl, etc.): +25% to each.

Altered Overall Appearance (Exclusive to Demon Lords Only): Pick one for the head and one for the main body (or the Demon Lord may elect to have a matching head and body). In

this case, the Netherbeast's original body transforms to look much more like one of the following.

Ape/Gorilla

Bird

Bovine/Bull

Canine

Crustacean/Crab (a crab's face or the body has six legs, an exoskeleton, and otherwise resembles some sort of giant, monstrous crab, lobster or similar creature).

Feline

Fish (a fish head, or the body has large, obvious scales, fins, and its tail more resembles that of a fish than an reptile or mammal).

Horse

Insect (an insect head, or the body has six legs, an exoskeleton, and otherwise resembles some sort of giant bug).

Pig

Reptile

Spider (a spider's head with 1D6+4 eyes, or the body has eight legs and the appearance of a giant spider).

Desert Howler Netherbeast

The name Desert Howler is a bit of a misnomer. Although they are most common to desert and desolate environments such as the Desert of Taut, Fire Planes and the Sulfur Pits, they are also found in mountains and, to a lesser degree, the southern forests. Having been bred and used by demons as Netherbeasts for eons, they can be found in the wild, here and there, throughout Hades.

The Desert Howler is a cross between a pit bull and an iguana, with an ape-like face, hooked claws that are like sickles, and a massive tooth-filled maw. The long claws enable the beast to climb rocks and scale the sides of mountains, including sheer cliff walls! Oddly enough, these skilled climbers dislike and generally stay out of trees. Vicious in the extreme, the stocky creature is a skilled predator and makes a reliable Netherbeast. It is believed the animal is indigenous to Hades, but no one knows for sure. In the wild they sometimes gather in small packs of 2D4+1, but may also hunt in pairs or as a solitary animal.

Alignment: Considered Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6+5, M.A. 1D6+3, P.S. 1D6+23 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+17, P.E. 2D6+15 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D4+3, Spd 2D6+19, but can climb as fast as it runs.

M.D.C.: 2D4x100+44. (On S.D.C. worlds the Netherbeast has 3D4x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 4D6x10 S.D.C., and A.R. 13.)

Horror Factor: 13

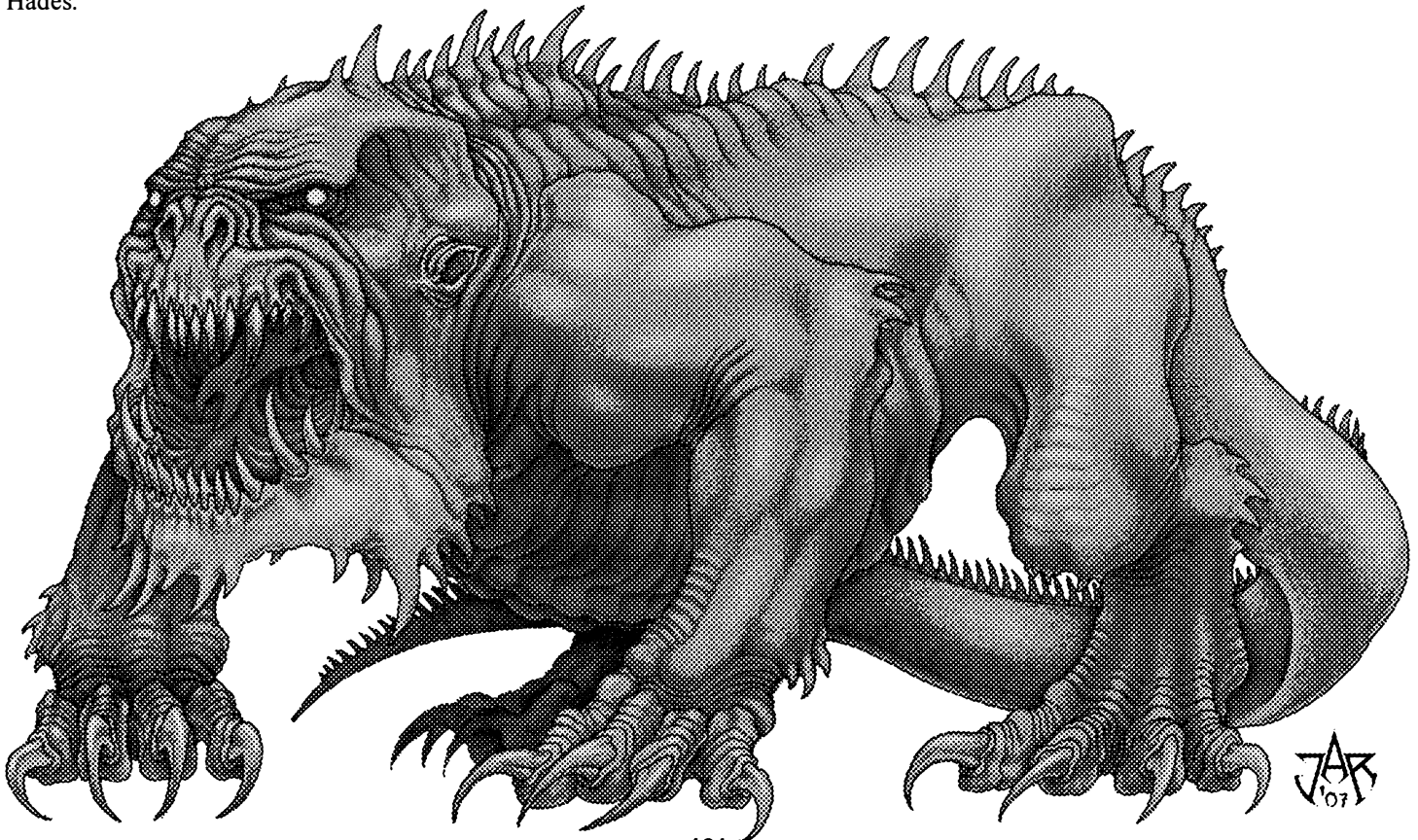
Size: 7-9 feet (2.1 to 2.7 m) tall at the shoulders and 14-18 feet (4.3 to 5.5 m) long from nose to rump. The tail is as long as the body and is semi-prehensile.

Weight: 3-4 tons.

Average Life Span: 1D6x100+120 years.

P.P.E.: 1D6x10

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, nightvision 1,000 feet (305 m), fire and cold resistant (half damage; magic based attacks still do full damage), Climb 70%/55%, Land Navigation at 45%, Prowl 55%, track by smell at 55% (+15% to follow blood scent), and can smell blood up to a mile away (1.6 km), bio-regeneration 2D4+2



per minute and can regrow lost tail, claw, etc. within 72 hours. Easily adapts to new environments and can eat anything, but prefers meat over anything else.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +2 to roll with impact or fall, resistant to poison, toxins and drugs (+2 to save, toxins do 30% their normal damage and penalties last only one third their usual duration), and +1 on all other saving throws.

Damage: As per Supernatural Strength from blunt attack, tail strike does half punch damage, a claw strike does an additional 1D6 M.D. Bite attack does 3D6 M.D. (nip does 6D6 S.D.C.). Pounce attack does 4D6 points of damage and has a 01-70% chance of knocking an opponent down (victim loses initiative and one melee attack) and there is a 01-55% chance to pin prey.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: 1. Cold based magic does double damage.

2. If encountered in a pack, and if the alpha male is slain, there is a chance that the rest of the pack will flee. Roll Hor-

ror Factor of 13, and those Netherbeasts who fail turn tail and run, leaving the area for 6D6 hours.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: None really, few creatures have what it takes to bring down a Netherbeast.

Allies: The Desert Howler has a pack mentality and will follow the group's alpha male. Typically, packs will have 2D4+1 members. A group any larger is rare in the wild and tends to cause a lot of infighting, especially for dominance of the pack. As a war mount, each Netherbeast sees its rider/master as its alpha male leader and obeys him completely (they are a pack of two).

Value: Used all over Hades as war mounts and, to a lesser degree, beasts of burden. Trained beasts go for 10,000-20,000 Modeus coins. On other worlds they would sell for 250,000-500,000 credits.

Habitat: In Hades they are found mostly in the southern continent and in the Abyss.



Serpent Lion Netherbeast

This beast has a thick, rough hide, like that of a snapping turtle, thick legs like a bear, clawed feet, and a head and tail that resemble a dragon or a crocodile. A pair of horns on the side of head and no apparent ears (they're small circles, like those of a lizard, near the base of the horns) only adds to its dragon-like facial appearance. This beast can be found most anywhere, but prefers forests, plains, hills and low mountains where it can run and leap to catch prey. It is said the Serpent Lion knows no fear, and the fact the it preys on Worms of Taut and Lesser Demons would seem to bear that out. In fact, a lone Serpent Lion is known to take on entire groups of humanoids and demons. A

canny predator, the beast first tests the mettle of a group or opponent in an effort to size them or it up. If the Serpent Lion thinks he can take them/it, the beast continues its attack. However, Serpent Lions seldom fight to the death, and know when it's time to call it quits and find easier prey. Like a cat, this Netherbeast may stalk its prey for hours before making its move, and engage in cat and mouse games before (and sometimes instead of) killing its prey.

Serpent Lions may hunt alone, in pairs or in packs (2D6+2 animals). It is believed the Netherbeast is indigenous to Hades,

but no one knows for sure. They are easy to domesticate and make wonderful, fast war mounts.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+6 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+8, M.A. 1D6+8, P.S. 1D6+19 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6+4, Spd 3D6+30.

M.D.C.: 1D6x100+80. (On S.D.C. worlds the Netherbeast has 2D6x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 3D4x10 S.D.C., and A.R. 16.)

Horror Factor: 12

Size: 8-9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 m) tall at the shoulders and 16-20 feet (4.9 to 6.1 m) long from nose to rump. The tail is half as long as the body and is not semi-prehensile, but is used as a rudder and for balance running.

Weight: 3-4 tons.

Average Life Span: 1D6x100+110 years.

P.P.E.: 2D4x10

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, night-vision 1,000 feet (305 m), fire and cold resistant (half damage; magic based attacks still do full damage), Climb 25%/10%, Land Navigation at 55%, Prowl 40%, Swim 50%, leap 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 40 feet (12.2 m) lengthwise, track by smell at 50% (+10% to follow blood scent, and can smell blood up to a mile/1.6 km away), bio-regeneration 2D6 per minute and can regrow lost tail, claw, etc. within 96 hours. Easily adapts to new environments and is a carnivore.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +2 to roll with impact or fall, and +1 on all saving throws.

Damage: As per Supernatural Strength from blunt attack, tail strike does half punch damage, a claw strike does an additional 1D6 M.D. Bite attack does 3D6 M.D. (nip does 6D6 S.D.C.). Pounce attack does 4D6 points of damage and has a 01-70% chance of knocking an opponent down (victim loses initiative and one melee attack), and there is a 01-55% chance to pin prey.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Ordinary S.D.C. silver weapons do their equivalent damage as M.D. (double damage in an S.D.C. environment). So a silver plated dagger that normally does 1D6 S.D.C., does 1D6 M.D.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Value: Used all over Hades as war mounts, riding animals, and, to a lesser degree, beasts of burden. Trained beasts go for 9,000-20,000 Modeus coins. On other worlds they would sell for 250,000-500,000 credits.

Habitat: In Hades they are found mostly in the Southern continent and in the Abyss.

Enemies: None really, few creatures have what it takes to bring down a Netherbeast.

Allies: The Netherbeast has a pack mentality and will follow a group's alpha male. A typical packs has 2D6+1 members. A group any larger is rare in the wild. As a war mount, each Netherbeast sees its rider/master as its alpha male leader and obeys him completely (they are a pack of two).

Infernal Mastodon

Netherbeast

The Infernal Mastodon is one of the largest beasts in Hades. Infernal Mastodons have a large, elephant-like head, minus the ears, glowing yellow eyes, an ape's snout, a pair of truly massive spiked tusks that curl down and up, and a large maw like that of a crocodile. Four large spikes come out of the back where each hip is located, and two rows of other, small spikes run down the spine and its very long, snaking tail. The legs are thicker than tree trunks and the hulking, elephant shaped body is like a mini-walking mountain. They are golden to rusty brown in color with a pale grey underbelly. Infernal Mastodons smell horrible and when first encountering them, most mortals must make a saving throw vs non-lethal poisons/toxins (16 or higher), or else they gag and vomit for 1D4 melees (reduce number of attacks and bonuses by half) before regaining their composure.

Infernal Mastodons are often used as a Netherbeast (though it cannot be transmuted into another animal form), war mounts, riding animals and beasts of burden. However, instead of holding a single rider, the massive creature can hold up to 24 human-sized riders or a half dozen of the larger demons, or a combination of both. Specialized harnesses and seating platforms or carriages are attached to the great beast's back. Such carriages are constructed on the creature's back using the four back spikes above the shoulders to support the structure. Many Dukes and Princes use the Infernal Mastodon in parades and festivals because they can sit high on the beast with their guards or entourage on the platform at their feet. Of course, the monster is being unleashed in the Minion War as a mini-mobile command center, pulling as well as supporting weapon platforms on their back, and for labor and heavy infantry support. The practice of mounting demonic weapons like catapults and Soul Cannons that fire magical ammunition to attack large enemy formations is new to the Minion War. The presence of dozens, even hundreds of these behemoths on a battlefield helps motivate demon troops and demoralize the enemy.

Alignment: In the wild, they are mean and nasty, and considered to be Miscreant. Domesticated animals are obedient and loyal to their master and considered Aberrant or Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+8 (very high animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+12, M.A. 1D6+10, P.S. 2D4+40 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+9, P.E. 2D6+20 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6+6, Spd 2D6+20 (at least 22 mph/35 km), and can swim at half that speed.

Size: 40-60 feet (12.2 to 18.3 m) tall, 80-90 feet (24.4 to 27.3 m) long from chin to hindquarters, the tail is 90 to 100 feet (27.3 to 30.5 m) long and the behemoth is 15-20 feet (4.6 to 6.1 m) wide!

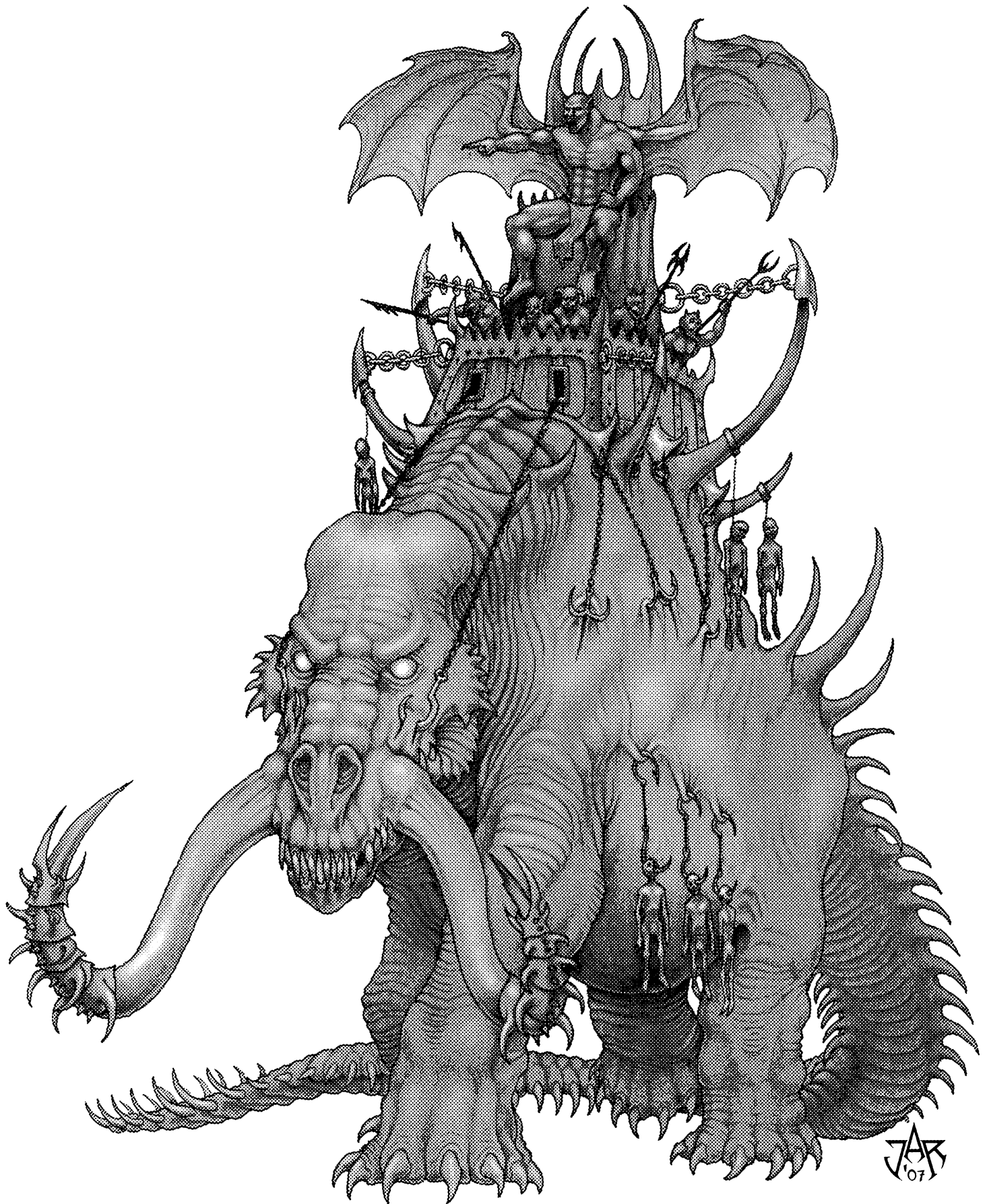
Weight: 9 to 12 tons!

M.D.C.: 1D6x1,000+280. (On S.D.C. worlds the Infernal Mastodon has 1D4x100 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 1D6x100 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 15.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 3D6+6

Disposition: Highly intelligent and cunning, it may feign death, pretend not to notice and use basic strategies such as ambush,



teamwork and the element of surprise. Otherwise aggressive and happy to stand and fight. Domesticated animals are surprisingly docile, obedient and loyal, at least to their masters. Taking their cue from their demon masters, they tend to ignore non-demons, toy with and are cruel and nasty to slaves, and hate the minions of Dyval and most other supernatural beings. They make excellent Netherbeasts and work animals. Unlike Earth elephants, this creature is a predator who eats carrion and preys on other living creatures (virtually any), but can eat just about anything when necessary.

Average Life Span: 6D6x100+120 years on average in the wild. Much shorter for those in the Minion War.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance. Impervious to toxic gases and fire (no damage, not even from M.D. fire, plasma or magic) and is often seen bathing in rivers, lakes and ponds of lava, or frolicking along the shoreline of acid lakes. Dowsing 60%, Land Navigation 80%, Track 35%, and Swim 75%. Nightvision 2,000 feet (610 m), superior sense of smell and can track by scent alone at 35%, sense seismic disturbances such as large creatures walking (like other Mastodons, or large creatures like Magots) at 60%. Bio-regenerates 1D6x10 M.D.C. per hour. Speaks no understandable language (grunts, growls, hisses, howls and screams), but can learn any language and understand rudimentary words and conversation at about a 64% skill proficiency, on par with an eight or nine year old child.

Attacks per melee: Four.

Damage: Strike with tusks, head butt, stomp or tail slash as per Supernatural P.S.: 1D6x10 S.D.C. on a restrained hit, 6D6 M.D. on a full strength strike. Power stomp does 2D4x10+10 M.D. (rises up on its hind legs and comes down fast and hard; but counts as two attacks), and bite attack (can swallow three men whole!) does 1D6x10 M.D.

Bonuses (In addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +1 to initiative, +1 on Perception Rolls, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +4 to pull punch, +6 to save vs ingested poison and Horror Factor, and +3 on all saving throws.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: -4 to dodge. Vulnerable to all types of M.D. weaponry (S.D.C. in those environments), but cold hurts it more than anything. Temperatures below 60 degrees (15.5 C) make the Infernal Mastodon sluggish, reducing Spd and number of attacks by half and all combat bonuses are reduced to zero. Magic based cold attacks do double damage.

Magic: None.

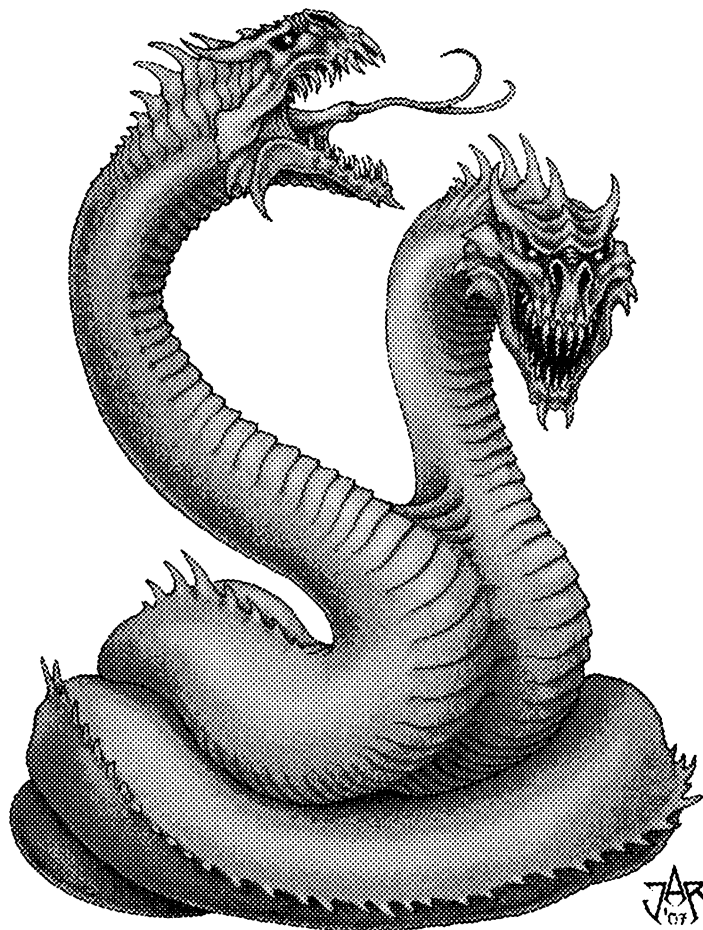
Psionics: None.

Value: Trained Infernal Mastodons are worth 150,000-200,000 Modeus coins, or 2D4 million of credits on Rifts Earth. They are trained exclusively in Gamora, where the slaves and various demons are experts in preparing them as mounts.

Habitat: Can be found most anywhere in Hades, but is most numerous in the Abyss, especially the Northern Fire Bog and Stone Forest.

Allies: Infernal Mastodons are solitary creatures in the wild and only gather for mating. Otherwise those that are trained by the demons are considered as beasts of burden.

Enemies: Packs of other predators and humanoids sometimes attack them as prey (Infernal Mastodon meat is delicious).



Pit Viper Netherbeast

By Carl Gleba and Kevin Siembieda

Pits Vipers have long, snake-like bodies, with a ribbing running down the spine, and two heads! The body can range in color from grey and green to yellow, orange, red, and reddish brown. Some males have yellow tiger stripes. The heads split off about a third of the way down the body. The Netherbeast gets its name from the fact that it often lays in wait for prey and sleeps curled up in the pits and steam vents found throughout the Sulfur Pits region. However, Pit Vipers, though most common in the South, can be found anywhere in Hades, including the Thorn Forest and the many underground caves and tunnels across the land.

Pit Vipers are distant cousins to the Tri-Fangs. Only these serpents have *two heads*, are larger and longer, and are better suited to swamps and wet environments, including caves, tunnels and rivers underground. They thrive in the *Sulfur Pits*, typically scavenging whatever scraps are left from the Demon Bats or one of Belphegor's avatars, and attacking unsuspecting prey. While not really part of the *Worms of Taut* "family," they can be summoned by those who know of the Worms and Pit Vipers, although that knowledge is very rare.

Pit Vipers are virtually blind, and have tiny eyes. They rely heavily on their super-keen sense of smell and heat receptors located around their eyes and in their tongues to target prey.

As Netherbeasts, a Pit Viper can be captured at any age, broken in a similar way as one would break a horse, and becomes

surprisingly tame and loyal to its masters. They are ridden by the demon standing on the back of the serpent, just behind its two heads. Vipers have fair speed on land, better speed in water and moving across rivers, lakes and seas of lava. Though they are comparatively slow on land, their keen sense of smell enables the animal to know when and where a Fire Jets, Fire Geysers, Gas Vents and similar phenomena are about to blow, and can easily navigate around them. Likewise the serpents know when dangerous storms are brewing, the direction they are coming from and when they should strike.

Pit Vipers are feared as predators by humans, because their jaws are not hinged and can open wide enough to swallow a man whole or bite him in half.

Alignment: Effectively Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+2 (medium animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+4, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6+22, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D6, Spd 2D6+18 on land, 4D6+26 swimming in water or lava.

Size: 32-40 feet (9.8 to 12.2 m) long and 1,000-2,400 pounds (450 to 1080 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D4x10+40. (On S.D.C. worlds the Pit Viper has 1D4x10 + P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 6D6 S.D.C., and A.R. 12.)

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 2D6+4

Disposition: Surprisingly calm and obedient as Netherbeasts or guard animals. Deadly in combat.

Average Life Span: 6D6+190 years.

Natural Abilities: Poor vision/nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), thermal sensors 220 feet (67 m), super-olfactory sense and can differentiate between different demon, Deevil, and mortal races, animals of all kinds and other scents and smells, including their specific master; range: 3,000 feet (914 m), track by smell 86% (+10% to follow blood scent and other strong scents); cannot be blinded, cannot be surprised by attacks from behind or above. Impervious to sulfur and other toxic gases, fire, heat and lava, and can swim on the surface of lava. Hold breath for a number of minutes equal to P.E. attribute number, bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per hour and can completely regrow tail/lower body, tongue, teeth and one head, provided the other remains intact.

Equivalent Skills: Swim 80%, Climb 50%, Land Navigation 65%, Prowl 55% (+15% in water).

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Pit Vipers are vulnerable to cold and cold based attacks, taking double damage. In temperatures below 60 degrees (15.5 C), they are slow and sluggish, having their speed reduced to one quarter as well as all combat bonuses.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Damage: A nipping bite, head butt or a tail slap does 1D6 M.D.; a full strength bite does 2D6 M.D. and a Power Bite does 4D6+6 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks. The serpentine body can be used to entangle and encircle opponents in an attempt to trip, entangle and hold him, or it can constrict to crush him. The latter attack does 1D4 M.D. per squeeze/constriction, and each crushing squeeze counts as one attack.

Combat Note: When facing large prey or multiple foes, one of the heads often clamps on and holds tight, pulling and try-

ing to drag the creature down, while the other head bites repeatedly. The monster may also use its tail to strike and trip prey, or coils around its victim's legs and/or body while biting and looking for the killing strike.

Bonuses (in addition to any likely attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, disarm and dodge, +4 to entangle and pin; unlike their smaller cousin, the Pit Viper does not have an automatic dodge. Impervious to toxic gases, acid rain, heat and fire (so it can swim on the surface of lava!), though magic fire does half damage, +3 to save vs Horror Factor, and +1 on all other saving throws.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Value: 3,000 to 6,000 Modeus coins for a trained guard, attack or riding animal.

Habitat: Throughout Hades, but largest populations are in the southern continent.

Allies: In the wild, they stick to their own kind and prey upon medium and large mammals, including humans, D-Bees, and even small or injured demons. However, domesticated Pit Vipers are tame, gentle and loyal to their master, can be trained to attack on command and be ridden like a horse.

Enemies: Most humanoids are considered prey and, oddly enough, they have a natural disdain for the minions of Dyval, especially Imps and Harpies.

Worms of Taut

The Worms of Taut are considered to be demons from the deepest pits of Hell, but in actuality, they are supernatural monsters presumed to be indigenous to Hades. However, like demons, Worms of Taut can be summoned with select magic and magic circles. To summon them in this fashion, a poisonous snake must be sacrificed and the name of the specific "type" of demon worm written in its blood. The Worms of Taut can also be summoned with a *Circle of Summon Serpents* (**Palladium Fantasy RPG®**), but only if the circle is drawn in the blood of a dead Demon Worm. On most worlds, these Demon Worms must be within the geographic area to be summoned by the Serpent Circle, but on Palladium, even this minor Palladium Summoning Circle can conjure these nightmare creatures from Hades. However, because they are not magical or real demons, they can't be sent back to their natural world. Once summoned, they remain in the world. At best, they can be controlled by the person who summoned them. At worst, they run wild, mate and multiply.

On Rifts Earth, they are found in the wild among ancient ruins, especially in the eastern United States, the jungles of the Yucatan and the Land of a Thousand Islands (South America). There, many primitive tribes worship a variety of snake gods and inadvertently Rift the creatures to Earth when they perform ceremonies at old stone pyramids and ley line nexus locations.



Blow Worm

The Blow Worm is the largest and least common of all the so-called Demon Worms. Its massive, 120 to 200 foot (36.6 to 61 m) length and easygoing demeanor make it a much less subtle agent of death and mayhem than its kin. Thus, it is seldom intentionally summoned by practitioners of magic unless wholesale destruction is desired. Such was the case during the siege against Chi-Town by the evil Federation of Magic in its most famous battle generations ago.

Blow Worms tend to be lethargic beasts, moving as little as possible and then only to hunt for food. They are not communal animals, territorial, or particularly aggressive unless agitated. A common ploy used to arouse the ire of these sluggish monstrosities is to refrain from feeding it for a period of time. Once unleashed, the hungry monster will attack any living creature it encounters and they have been known to swallow hundreds of people whole during a feeding frenzy. Another method is to hurt or agitate the monster with energy or magic so that it will plow through buildings, smashing anything in its path and eating several dozen people along the way. The giant worm can also be manipulated psionically via Empathic Transmission, Telepathy and Bio-Manipulation (agitation).

Blow Worms attack by spitting, or blowing, out a great glob of mucus-like slime up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away. This thick, slimy glob measures about 18 feet (5.5 m) in diameter, engulfs its prey and smothers it. Once the victim appears to be smothered, the worm swallows it whole.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist; attacks only to feed or when provoked.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+1 (very low animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 4D6+30 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 2D6+18 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 2D6.

Size: 120-200 feet (36 to 61 m) and weighs 1D6+4 tons.

M.D.C.: 2D4x100. (Has 3D4x10 Hit Points, 3D4x10 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 7 on S.D.C. worlds.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D4

Average Life Span: 600 years.

Natural Abilities: The Blow Worm is virtually blind, but has an excellent sense of smell and the head is encircled by dozens of special motion receptors that work like sensors, registering even minute movement (range of detection: 700 feet/213 m). The acute sense of smell and natural motion detectors enable the worm to accurately locate and track prey; track by smell 89%. Other abilities: burrow through dirt/soil at a speed of 8 and swim 19%.

Attacks per Melee: Three. One glob attack is possible every melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes): +1 to strike with body, +3 to strike with glob, +5 to save vs poison and other toxins, +2 to save magic and psionic attacks.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. Crush/smash by slamming its body into something or inadvertently rolling on top of somebody or something inflicts 1D6x10 M.D.

Glob Attack: Spits a huge glob of thick, sticky mucus. Range: 60 feet (18.3 m). An intended victim must roll a dodge to avoid the glob. Those struck by the glob are engulfed in the thick, sticky substance and cannot move, speak or breathe. Entrapment in its thick glob reduces most victims' speed to one eighth and melee actions/attacks to one! Characters with a P.S. of 24 or higher have their speed reduced to one third and melee actions to half. It generally requires an intense effort of about 10 melee actions to pull oneself free of the glob. Those without an independent oxygen supply will lose consciousness within four melees (one minute) and die from suffocation within eight melees (two minutes). Of course, characters in body armor, power armor, robot vehicle or who have some other means of independent oxygen supply will not smother, but are greatly impaired.

While trapped in the glob, victims cannot fight or attack anything other than the glob. Those without a face cover will

be blinded and choked by the mucus as well. Victims must concentrate on escaping the gooey substance or perish. If a victim should escape, he will find himself covered in a thick, sticky, unpleasant smelling slime. To clean himself completely will take at least an hour and to thoroughly clean his armor and possessions will take another 1D4 hours. Note that the Blow Worm will not swallow a victim stuck in the glob as long as the individual is still moving. No movement means the victim has been subdued and is ready to be swallowed whole, glob and all. This is a disgusting possibility, but in **Rifts®** and other Mega-Damage environments, demons, robots, cyborgs and body armor (with an independent oxygen supply), have a good chance of being swallowed up without being dead. This can actually be good news. The inside of the Blow Worm is far more vulnerable to attacks than its tough outer skin. A victim with great strength and firepower can maneuver inside the gullet and blast his way out. The M.D.C. for a 10 foot area (3 m) of the inner epidermis is 6D6.

Vulnerabilities: Dumb predator. Easily damaged and killed from the *inside* out.

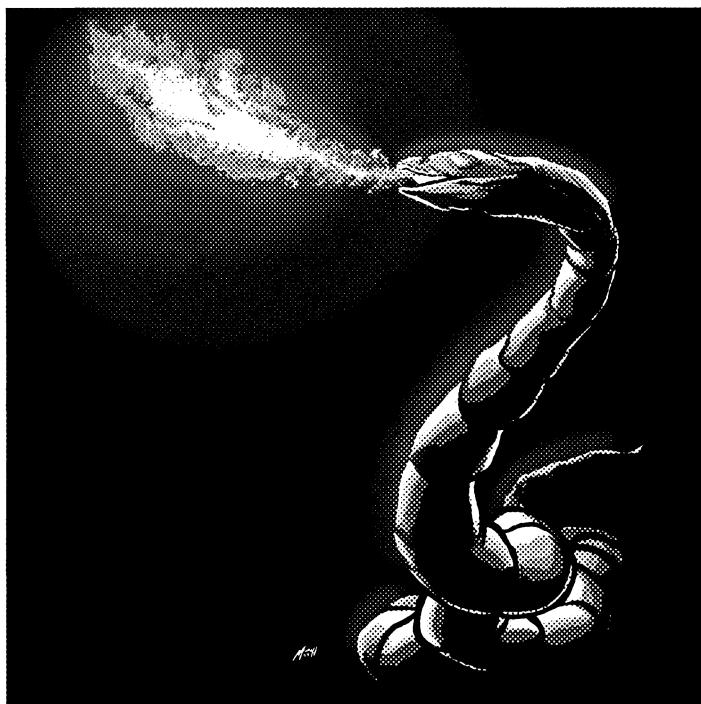
Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: None per se.

Allies: None per se, tolerates its fellow Worms of Taut.

Habitat: Found in the northern parts of Hades. The giant Blow Worm must have a cool, preferably dark, damp environment to survive and burrows in soft earth, not clay or bedrock. It will die in a matter of 1D4 days if left in the hot sun.



Fire Worm

The bright red Fire Worm is among the smallest of its kin, but every bit as deadly. They are able to spit forth bolts of flame. Like the other Worms of Taut, it is not a true worm or demon, but called such because of its worm-like appearance. Likewise, it is extremely cranky, aggressive, and hostile. 1D4

Fire Worms may be encountered at any given time. They tend to be very aggressive and jumpy, striking out at anything that moves or that invades its domain. Fire Worms enjoy dry, rocky terrain the best.

Alignments: Considered Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+3 (medium animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6+6 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+6, P.E. 2D6+6 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 3D6+10.

Size: 3 feet (0.9 m) long and weighs 15 pounds (6.8 kg).

M.D.C.: 4D6+40. (On S.D.C. worlds it has 2D6+40 for Hit Points, 2D6+12 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 6.)

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E.: 2D6

Average Life Span: 260 years.

Attacks per Melee: Three, usually by bolts of fire.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes): +1 to strike by bite, +2 to strike with fire ball, +1 to dodge, +2 on all saving throws, impervious to fire and heat.

Mega-Damage: Spit fire balls doing 4D6 M.D., range 60 feet (18.3 m), or bite 1D4 M.D.

Natural Abilities: Climb 40%, Swim 30%, Track by smell 66%, Prowl 60%, and infrared vision and heat sensor in its nose offers an additional bonus of +1 to strike. The Fire Worm is impervious to all fire and heat, including magic fire. Vulnerable to cold (does double damage) and can burrow through dirt at a speed of 6.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: All living beings are considered prey.

Allies: None per se; tolerated by the other Worms of Taut.

Habitat: Found throughout Hades but is especially numerous in the Thorn Forest, the Death Mire and Eastern Fire Planes. Fortunately, they don't seem to flourish in the Palladium World or Earth.

Nippers

This serpent resembles a multi-legged salamander or newt with a maw of terrible, tiny, razor sharp teeth, and slashing tail. While nippers may resemble amphibians, they are far from the slow-moving, soft-skinned water dwellers. They are fast, tough, and deadly.

Nippers can be tamed and trained much better than any of the other so-called Demon Worms of Taut. However, they are very jumpy, irritable, and aggressive, with a 50/50 chance of attacking their trainer or master, even under the best of conditions.

When encountered in the wild, they may be found in loose-knit packs of as many as 15-20. However, most Nipper packs are much smaller, usually 2D4 maximum. In most cases, even a single Nipper is rarely satisfied with simply chasing an intruder out of its territory, and is likely to attack and fight until all interlopers are killed or they slay it; will give chase for 1D4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km) before giving up. A single Nipper's territory extends to a two mile (3.2 km) radius, while a pack of six or more can have a territory covering a 25 mile (40 km) area.

Alignments: Considered Diabolic; extremely hostile, aggressive.



Serpent Beasts

This is a large and, arguably, the most grisly looking of the Worms of Taut. The creature has a 25 foot (7.6 m) long serpent's body with four stubby legs and a hideous, human-like head. The savagery of the Serpent Beast is legendary. They are reputed to kill any living creature that invades their territory or disturbs their sleep. Although only slightly more intelligent than a predatory animal, this terrible monster kills for sheer pleasure, deriving great enjoyment in slaying mortal humanoids. Although a Serpent Beast has no need for magic or gold, it often collects such items because it knows they are coveted by humanoids and can be used to lure unsuspecting people to their doom.

The immortality of the Serpent Beast is a misconception, as they are mortal creatures of flesh and blood. However, the Serpent's life span is incredibly long, an average of 1200 years. When food is not readily available, the creature hibernates, slowing its metabolism to a mere crawl. Thus, these monsters may spend much of their time sleeping, waking only to kill and eat. Adventurers beware! The Serpent Beast has a superhuman sense of smell, and incredible hearing, that alerts it to any new odor within a 300 foot (91.5 m) radius, even when it is asleep.

Alignments: Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6+6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 3D6+6.

Size: 25-30 feet long (7.6 to 9.1 m) from head to tail tip, and weighs 900-1200 pounds (405 to 540 kg).

M.D.C.: 2D6x10+40. (Has 1D4x10+40 Hit Points, 1D4x10+40 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 10 in S.D.C. settings.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 3D6

Average Life Span: 1200 years.

Disposition: Aggressive, cruel, mean, greedy and murderous.

The Serpent Beast is extremely vicious and willing to fight till the death. Rarely more than one or two serpents are ever encountered at any one time. Because they are so wild and hostile, they cannot be easily trained nor controlled, even by a Summoner or Druid.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m, can see in total darkness), super keen hearing (see initiative bonus), recognize familiar scent 90%, smell blood two miles (3.2 km) away 90%, Track by smell 85%, Swim 70%, Climb 40%, and is impervious to all poisons and chemicals. **Note:** If physically blinded the Serpent Beast suffers only half penalties as its extraordinary senses of hearing and smell will compensate for the lost sight. Speaks no understandable language (grunts, growls, hisses), but can learn basic commands in any language and understand rudimentary words and conversation at about a 40% skill proficiency. Some claim that the Beasts can be taught to say a handful of basic words in a guttural voice.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes): +4 on initiative, +2 on Perception Rolls, +4 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm, +2 to save vs magic, impervious to poison and +10 to save vs Horror Factor.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+3 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+10 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+6, P.E. 2D6+10 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 6+3D6.

Size: 10-12 feet (3 to 3.6 m) long, 60% of which is tail, and weighs 60-75 pounds (27 to 34 kg).

M.D.C.: 1D4x10+10. (On S.D.C. worlds it has 2D6+40 Hit Points, 2D6+20 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 10.)

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D6

Average Life Span: 240 years.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m; can see in total darkness), Climb 90%, a lousy digger (shallow burrows only), Prowl 56%, Swim 40%, and can leap up to 6 feet (1.8 m) high and long.

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Can be taught basic commands in any language and a certain degree of obedience to one or more masters, like a dog.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Bonuses (in addition to attributes): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, and +2 to save vs all magic.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. Bite does 2D4 M.D., restrained tail whip does 4D6 S.D.C. damage plus P.S. bonus, a full strength strike does 1D6 M.D.

It can also use the tail to wrap around a victim's neck and constrict, killing its prey by strangulation; inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. plus P.S. bonus every melee. To pry the tail loose, the person(s) must have a combined P.S. greater than the Nipper's and even then the player must roll a Natural 18-20. The tail is articulated like a snake's so it can also be used to entangle an arm, leg, or object.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Habitat: May be encountered anywhere in Hades, but prefers forests, mountains and underground environments.

Enemies: Humanoids and mammals.

Allies: None per se; tolerates its fellow Worms of Taut.



Mega-Damage: Strike with legs, tail or head butt is 1D6 M.D., a nipping bite 4D6 S.D.C. damage plus poison. Full bite inflicts 2D6 M.D. plus poison. Note that if the intended prey is wearing armor the poison will not affect the person. *The poison* causes a very high fever and nausea. Victims of the poison are -3 to strike, parry, and dodge for 24 hours. Multiple bites increases the severity of the symptoms. Example: Two bites, -6 to strike, parry and dodge (lasts 24 hours), three bites: -9 to strike, parry and dodge (lasts for 24 hours), and so on. All victims get to save vs non-lethal poison (16 or better to save). Roll each time bitten.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Value: None dead; alive, it can sell for between 200-400 Modeus coins or 20,000 and 40,000 credits, depending on the buyer. Live Serpent Beasts are sometimes desired by slavers, nobility, or evil men of magic as watchdogs, pit monsters, or for gladiatorial games. The great price discrepancy is the result of fluctuating need for such monsters. Trained and obedient beasts can command 50% more.

Habitat: May be encountered anywhere in Hades, but most common in the South.

Enemies: All humanoids are seen as prey.

Allies: None; tolerate fellow Worms of Taut and often work for or with other supernatural fiends, or powerful sorcerers.

Tri-Fang

The Tri-Fang is an aggressive, deadly three-headed serpent/snake of giant proportions. Although not poisonous, the middle head can spit acid (once per melee) up to 20 feet (6.1 m) away with frightening accuracy. The acid is potent and can completely blind a person within seconds when spat into the eyes, the favorite target of the Tri-Fang. Unless washed immediately, the person can become permanently blinded. Territorial, aggressive, and partial to tree-dwelling or living amidst rocks.

Alignments: Considered Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4 (*low* animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+12 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+14 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd 3D6+6.

M.D.C.: 1D6x10+40. (Has 3D6+30 Hit Points, 2D6+20 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 9 on S.D.C. worlds.)

Size: 16-20 feet (4.9 to 6 m) and weighs 500-600 pounds (225 to 270 kg).

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 3D6

Average Life Span: 220 years.

Disposition: Very hostile, an aggressive predator.

Natural Abilities: Spits acid, nightvision 30 feet (9 m; can see in total darkness), Swim 50%, Climb 60% (love big trees), and Prowl 32%.

Attacks per Melee: Six, +1 spitting attack (7 total).

Bonuses (in addition to attributes): +3 to strike and on initiative, +6 to dodge. The dodge is automatic like a parry because of the snake's quickness.

Mega-Damage: Bites inflict 2D6 M.D. each. A Tri-Fang will always aim for the head, throat, and eyes in all its attacks. Can also entangle its prey in its coils. 72% chance of victim being pinned and unable to perform any physical actions. The Tri-Fang can then constrict its body to crush its prey, inflicting 1D4 M.D. per melee.

The center head spits acid once per melee round. The acid is always directed at the apparent eyes of an opponent. The acid inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. points of damage the first melee and 1D6 S.D.C. each subsequent melee until washed or wiped away. There is a 01-50% chance of permanent blindness unless the eyes are washed clean within four melees (one min-



ute). Of course, characters wearing helmets or body armor should not be vulnerable to such attacks, although the acid spit will smear their protective lens.

A roll of a Natural 20 to strike always means that the dreaded snake has spit acid directly into the victim's eyes, resulting in the following:

01-44% Vision impaired temporarily (2D6 days); victim is - 2 to strike (only).

45-70% No damage if eyes are washed out immediately.

71-89% Permanently impaired vision; -2 to strike.

90-00% Permanently blind; -9 to strike, parry and dodge.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Value: 1000 credits for alchemical purposes; specifically for its acid and teeth.

Habitat: May be encountered anywhere in Hades. Dislike, cold.

Enemies: Men and mammals it considers to be prey.

Allies: None; tolerates its fellow Worms of Taut.

Tomb Worms

Tomb Worms are the smallest of the Demon Worms, rarely exceeding two feet (0.6 m) in length. They are ugly, carnivorous scavengers that feed mainly on dead carcasses. They have pointed, razor-like teeth, tiny eyes, a gaping maw, and clawed hands for grasping and tearing flesh. The jaw and teeth are powerful and designed for rending flesh and splitting bones. Bone marrow is a Tomb Worm's delicacy. Though primarily a carrion eater, a Tomb Worm can be surprisingly bold, attacking the living without hesitation. Prime targets are the sick, dying, weak, helpless, sleeping, and intruders who unwittingly disturb its nest of rags and rotted wood, or who try to steal its food. They can be especially aggressive when there is a pack of 4D4 or more Tomb Worms attacking simultaneously. They are also known to feast on preserved meats and other common provisions if left unattended.

Tomb Worms are dangerous to unsuspecting adventurers, for they inhabit crypts, ancient ruins, and burial places. A typical encounter in an ancient ruin is likely to find a small swarm of 1D6+1 Tomb Worms. However, where food is plentiful, such as in crypts, burial places, sewers, and places with lingering sickness, 3D6+3 or more may be encountered at one time. It is when they are at their most plentiful that they are the most dangerous, boldly attacking the living. It is also only when food is plentiful that the terrible creatures successfully mate and reproduce, giving birth to approximately 1D4 young per litter. The young mature within one year (doing half damage while young).

Alignment: Considered Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4 (extremely low animal intelligence), M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6, P.E. 12+2D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd 2D6.

Size: 2-2.5 feet long (about 0.6 m) and weighs 10 to 15 pounds (4.5 to 6.8 kg).

M.D.C.: 4D6. (In S.D.C. Worlds, it has 3D6 Hit Points, 14 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 8.)

Horror Factor: 11 if only one or two, 14 for five or more.

P.P.E.: 1D6

Average Life Span: 600 years.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m; can see in total darkness), Climb 50%, Prowl 40%, Swim 50%, smell blood, sickness and decay 90% (range: 1000 feet/305 m), Track smell of blood or decay 80%, impervious to cold, and burrows into soft earth at a speed of 8. A carrion eater.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, and +2 on all saving throws, impervious to cold and disease.

Mega-Damage: Bite inflicts 2D6 S.D.C./Hit Point damage or by claws doing 1D6 S.D.C. points of damage, power bite inflicts 1D4 M.D. but counts as all four melee attacks. The bite of a Tomb Worm is particularly vicious, because they strike, not to damage or defend, but to feed, taking out entire chunks of flesh, not unlike a shark. Tomb Worms are generally found only near a food source such as graveyards, mass grave sites, slaughterhouses, sewers, or in dank, dark places



of decay. When there's no carrion to feed on, Tomb Worms prey on rodents and other small animals.

Magic: None. **Psionics:** None.

Habitat: May be encountered anywhere in Hades, especially burial places, ruins, caves and tunnel networks

Enemies: All life.

Allies: None per se.



The Dimension of Hades

Hades seems to be as old as the Megaverse. As far as anyone knows, there has *always been a Hades* occupied by hordes of demons. Of course, to ageless beings like demons, time rarely has any meaning. For those under the heel of the demons, every day seems like an eternity. For dimensional travelers, there are no time warps when going to Hades. The flow of time is considered normal and in sync with that of Rifts Earth and the Palladium World.

Experienced mages and well traveled dimensional explorers believe that the dimension is *not* natural, but are at a loss to explain it. It could be simply that the demonic presence corrupts the dimension, somehow spoiling it for humans. Hades is a dark mirror of the Palladium World and like Palladium, Hades is be-

lieved to be a pocket universe, in its own pocket dimension. This also suggests the dark beings reputed to have created the Palladium World may have also created Hades. Certainly there are hushed rumors that circulate in certain sectors that Hades is the result of a dimensional experiment at the hands of ancient and powerful Alien Intelligences ages and ages, and ages ago. Whatever the case may be, the dimension evokes feelings of dread and fear in any mortal and most creatures of magic who visit this nightmare place. And that's before one sees a single demon or monster. The presence of the demon hordes only completes the sensation that this is truly some plane of Hell.

At one point in the distant past, it is believed that Hades was a seething nexus of mystic energy, not unlike Rifts Earth. However, today Hades has low levels of magic, roughly equal to that of its sister dimension, the Palladium World. Even the most powerful nexus point is not visible anymore, and only practitioners of magic and those who can naturally see magic energy are able to locate these points of power.

Technology is a rare sight in Hades. This is primarily because the dimension is relatively underdeveloped. The demons were more concerned with keeping a tight rein on their subjects than with developing technology. With magic at their disposal and slaves to serve their every need, it has not been necessary to develop technologies of other things. This is definitely a good thing from the human perspective, because you wouldn't want to see a demon coming through a Rift with a pulse rifle. Technology can be used in Hades, so long as it functions within a negative dimensional energy matrix (same as Rifts Earth). Few pieces of technology are brought to Hades, just those brought by the occasional dimensional travelers. Dimensional vendors have sought to bring the gift of technology to Hades, but its rulers have no interest in it, and there is no market for it. With the majority of the population subjugated, and the remaining demons shunning technology in favor of their natural abilities, technology and machines are virtually unheard of, and what little is found is on par with Earth's Middle Ages. Hades does have a minor dimensional market in Shek-Ra, where the occasional piece of technology can be found, but this is the exception, not the rule, and is more likely to be used by slaves and visitors than any actual demon. Such items are insignificant, like the occasional energy clip, or even a low-grade pistol, and they are seldom openly advertised.

Dimensional quirks uniquely identify Hades. First time visitors to Hades are met by an extremely alien environment. Hades' most defining quality is the *reversed elements of fire and water*. A sea of fire surrounds the main continent, rivers of lava snake through the land, and fire rains from the skies. Where one would expect to find water, only fire is found.

As for finding water, one has to look in the most unlikely of places. What appear to be two extinct volcanoes on the edge of the *Desert of Taut* are actually huge basins holding millions of gallons of water. Some of Hades' most spectacular sights are where water and fire meet. When these two forces collide, huge, boiling clouds of steam are formed, adding to the existing sense of turbulence and rage.

The odd shifting of elements has also affected the *magnetic field*. This warping of the magnetic field only affects those who need a compass to navigate. Unsuspecting travelers end up becoming lost, and most of the time fall right into the clutches of a

Demon Lord. Anyone attempting to navigate via compass inevitably walks in circles or goes the wrong direction as the poles are reversed. North is south, and south is north. This also distorts east and west. Whatever direction the players think they're going will always be the opposite until they figure out what's going on.

One dimensional oddity that only visitors of the Palladium World are likely to notice, is that Hades is *the reverse* of the Palladium World. The only adverse effect this has is when it comes to random Rifts. Fifty percent of the time a random Rift opens, it leads to the Palladium World. Of course, this is not much of a concern, as with the low magic levels, Rift activity is at an all time low. The only relatively stable link is dimensional portal at *Demon's Gate* in the north that corresponds to the *Great Rift* in the Land of the Damned in the *Palladium World*. Here, an ongoing battle between demon and Deevil has transpired for centuries. (See **Land of the Damned™ One: Chaos Lands™** for details on the Minion War being fought in the Great Rift.)

The sky is red with smoldering black and yellow clouds, with the occasional streak of orange and yellow lightning. Visibility for humans is reduced by half, as Hades seems to be in constant twilight. This can last for anywhere from ten to twelve hours, at which point **Deep Night** falls. During Deep Night, the twilight becomes a dark purple with streaks of pink. However, as far as demons are concerned it is some sort of twilight or effectively the beginning of night around the clock; eternally twilight.

The air smells of sulfur. It is also very dry and feels like an uncomfortable weight on the chest. Near the swamps, the air has a bitter and sulfurous smell caused by the numerous acid pools found in those regions.

Everywhere one travels, the heat is oppressive. Depending on where you are in Hades the temperature can rise to as high as 150 degrees Fahrenheit (65.5 C). The lowest temperatures are in the north and at peaks of various mountains, and even then the temperature is round 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 C). The forests and swamp regions are also, generally, cooler than other locales, with temperatures usually in the range of 95-120 degrees (35-48.8 C).

Terrain Features

Hades has a variety of environmental conditions that are unique only to Hades. When traveling across an unknown world or dimension, one never knows what they might come across. The following are some of the most dangerous and should be avoided when possible!

Danger is found with every step in Hades. With the elements of fire and water switched around, the world is deadly. There are no rolling hills, beautiful skies or majestic waterfalls. Hades is full of acid pools, lava flows, and deadly weather that rains fire or acid. Below is a description of what one can expect while traveling in Hades. **Note:** See the **Death Mire** and **Thorn Forest** for weird and deadly plant life such as the *Blood Weeper tree*, *Demon Thorn tree*, *Acid Pods* and *Gas Pods*.

Fire Geysers

Magma flows through Hades like blood through a human's veins. In some locations internal pressures build up and cause the magma to burst through the surface with geyser-like effect. The spewing lava is sticky and burning hot. Fire Geysers dot the landscape of Hades in a variety of locations and are typically clustered in patches of 4D6 across a 100 foot (30 m) radius. When one blows, they all blow, either in unison or within 1D6 seconds of one another. They look like mini-volcanoes as the lava hardens around the geysers and stands 3-12 feet (0.9 to 3.6 m) high. They blow at exact intervals that are so precise that you could set your watch down to the second! Damage is 1D4x100 S.D.C. (or 1D4x10 M.D.C.). An eruption lasts for 1D4 melee rounds (15 to 60 seconds). The duration between geyser eruptions can vary from minutes to hours with each patch of geysers, so traveling through a field of them is like going through a minefield where one could erupt at any minute. However, there is always a *soft rumbling* before an eruption, followed by a plume of steam shooting up into the air from the mini-volcano *6D6 seconds before* a Fire Geyser blows. This gives alert travelers a chance to run for their lives (a typical Fire Geyser does damage to a 1D4x10 foot/3 to 12.2 m radius). It sure would make for an intense battle scene.

Fire Geysers are a large part of the landscape in the **Fire Flats** of Hades, with the **Eastern Fire Planes** coming in a close second. However, the phenomenon can be found here and there all across Hades. The density of Fire Geysers is tripled in the Fire Flats and they are a constant danger to mortal creatures anywhere in the Flats. The highest concentration of Fire Geysers is in *massive craters*. While few would want to travel through such inhospitable lands, these craters commonly have entrances to the vast network of *underground tunnels* found in Hades. Fire Geysers are found in all locations in the rest of Hades, however they are usually off the beaten path and miles apart.

Some caravan leaders purposely take their caravans through locations with Fire Geysers as short cuts that can save a few days travel, while others use it as a means to avoid thieves and brigands. It is not always a sound strategy, but then again, some of the most renowned caravan leaders are demons and since most are impervious to fire (or resistant) they don't have to worry about surviving if caught when a Fire Geyser blows.

Fire Jets

Fire jets are most commonly found in Hades's **swamplands**, especially in the **Northern Fire Bog** and the **Death Mire**. Fire jets are *pillars of flame* that shoot out of the ground. Most blow at frequent intervals, while others constantly burn. It depends on their source of fuel. If a constant source is available then the flames burn without pause, reaching heights of 4-16 feet (1.2 to 4.9 m). If the fuel is sporadic, or ebbs and flows, the Fire Jet may seem to die down to nothing, only to suddenly burst to life, shooting pillars of fire into the air for 1D6 minutes at a time. It typically takes twice as long for the fuel to build up before the next burst, but the time can really vary and is left to the discretion of the Game Master. Getting through a field of fire jets can also be like traipsing through a minefield, but is not as dangerous as the Fire Geysers. True, a Fire Jet could spout to life at any moment, but as long as the traveler is not right on top of one, he should be okay.

Fire Jets are easy to spot. Most (90%) look like small cones of rock, like a stalagmite rising up out of the earth, though they can just be a hole in the ground. Whichever the case, the ground around it for a foot or two (0.3 to 0.6 m) is crystalized, like glass, with a dark, charcoal burned rim. Furthermore, the area around it for a six foot (1.8 m) radius is devoid of life or may have the remnants of past victims laying nearby burnt to a cinder.

One can also hear a hissing sound from most 1D6 melee rounds (15-90 seconds before they ignite, and a flickering, like a lantern or candlelight, can be seen coming from the opening, especially at night, 1D4 minutes before it ignites. The largest and most powerful actually have a flame that hovers just above the hole, similar to a pilot light on a gas stove. They seem relatively harmless and can even be used to light fires. However, they can go from a small, 6 inch (0.15 m) fire to a jet of flame 4-16 feet (1.2 to 4.9 m) tall in seconds.

The heat of a Fire Jet is so intense that anyone within 3-6 feet (0.9 to 1.8 m) takes 2D6 S.D.C. damage, metal buttons start to melt, belt buckles heat and may cause clothes to smolder. A person can't get any closer and most will instantly recoil 30 or more feet (9.1 m). Anyone caught closer or right over one suffers 1D6x100 S.D.C. (2D6 M.D.) damage and there is a 01-70% likelihood that flammable items catch fire.

Rivers of Lava

By Kevin Siembieda & Carl Gleba

Rivers of lava dot the landscape. Where a human might expect a pond, stream, river, lake or sea, there is boiling lava. From as small as two feet (0.6 m) across and deep, to the size of the Mississippi River to lakes and oceans, lava pools are inescapable on Hades.

Crossing rivers of lava is dangerous and tricky for humans and other mortal races. Even flying over large, flowing bodies of lava the temperature is 10-30 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than the land areas around it, rising waves of heat create strong air currents and turbulence (-25% to piloting skills of aircraft, power armor and all flyers, -50% in a storm), and the air is acrid and foul even at 20,000 feet (6096 m).

Characters who fall into a river of lava are likely to be consumed by fire and heat in a matter of minutes. Remember, lava is *molten rock!* **Damage** is 1D6x100 S.D.C. per melee round (every 15 seconds) or 2D6 M.D. to organic Mega-Damage life forms (1D6 M.D. per 10 minutes to M.D. vehicles and armor). Plus lava is hot and sticky, melts flesh and leather in seconds and sets clothes, hair and flammable material on fire. Those who manage to climb out of lava suffer an additional 1D6x10 S.D.C. damage (1D4 M.D.) for an additional 1D6+2 melee rounds. Due to the thickness, stickiness and flowing nature of the lava, it takes *one full melee round* to travel five feet (1.5 m) regardless of Spd attribute. Rope and rags dropped into lava burst into flame upon touching the molten rock. Clothing, padded armor and hair also catch fire in a second. Leather armor, plastic and human flesh begins to melt and bubble within 1-3 seconds and even chains and thin metal begin to melt in 1D4 melee rounds (15-60 seconds). Mega-Damage armor and material do *not* burn or melt, but will quickly heat up and the cooling system of environmental body armor, power armor, man-sized

robots and light vehicles will begin to overheat after 3D6+10 minutes (temperature is 15 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than desired/setting), and may burn out after 1D4+1 hours.

Telekinesis and any means of *flight* is the ideal way to travel over bodies of lava. The demons use *enchanted stone barges* and there are some *Netherbeasts* who can run or swim across the surface of boiling lava. For that matter, most demons are impervious (or greatly resistant to) M.D. heat and fire, so they can actually swim through the stuff like a day at the beach. For mortals, however, even taking a stone barge is like traveling across a sweltering sauna with oppressive heat, steam and a sulfuric atmosphere that is not deadly (as a rule) but foul and sometimes stomach turning (roll to save vs nonlethal poison to avoid vomiting in the first 20 minutes traveling on lava). **Note:** See Gas Vents and gas bubbles in the previous description for additional dangers of traversing rivers, lakes and oceans of lava.

Just about all mortal beings are killed in a matter of seconds, while those who survive will be disfigured or scarred horribly for life. Only the possibility of magic healing would have any hope of making someone whole. Rivers of lava are found in every region of Hades, and if they aren't visible then they can be found just below the surface. They are a constant challenge to overcome and unless a bridge is available the only way to cross some of the rivers is to find an alternate path around or possibly fly over it. **Note:** Most demons and Netherbeasts are impervious or resistant to heat and fire, and all have remarkable powers of bio-regeneration.

Tar Pits

Tar pits are primarily found in the *Sulfur Pits* and the *Death Mire* regions of Hades, but can be found, here and there, almost anywhere. Some are obvious and easy to avoid as big, black pools sitting out in the open, but others are treacherous and hidden, like quicksand. Tar pits are heavy enough to support a pool of water or a coating of dust, sand or leaves. These pits either blend in with the surrounding environment or seem innocent or even helpful. ("Look Adrian, water! A pool of water.") The problem is, the next step or two could have the character stepping into soft, sticky tar that, like quicksand, slowly pulls one down into its suffocating depths.

Most tar pits are 1D4x10 feet (3 to 12.2 m) deep. The shape of the tar pit may vary, but most are circular or oblong and stretch 2D6x10 feet (6.1 to 36 m) in circumference.

Being trapped in a tar pit is like drowning in molasses. The more you struggle, the faster you sink. Calm victims sink one foot (0.3 m) per minute, those who struggle and thrash about sink one foot (0.3 m) per melee round (15 seconds)! The best tactic is to try to remain still and let a comrade pull you out with a rope or a staff. The use of *Telekinesis* or magic flight or even the Featherweight spell are all excellent means of escape. Levitation works too, *if* the pit is not too deep (Levitation heights starts at the floor/bottom of the pit). The sticky tar hinders all movement, and combat bonuses are reduced by half while fighting in tar. Game Masters may also want to take into consideration that the tar may actually blind some combatants and have further penalties as a result. Once out of the tar pit, the thick, sticky tar continues to impede movement: Reduce the number of attacks, bonuses, Spd and skill performance by half. It can be re-

moved by scraping it off, removing the tar covered clothing or armor and wiping the rest of the exposed body down with rags, but the skin remains stained black or dark brown and is still sticky unless cleaned with a solvent like turpentine, paint thinner, gasoline, etc., or the Cleanse magic spell but at double the usual cost.



Acid Pools

Acid pools are rare in Hades, but nonetheless, they're a dangerous obstacle to overcome. They also tend to be death traps as most dimensional travelers mistake them for ordinary pools of water. It's not until they attempt to take a drink that the danger becomes obvious as their hand begins to dissolve before their eyes.

The pools are most common after an *acid rainstorm* as well as where the terrain permits runoff to collect in small pools. Because of the extreme heat in Hades, most of these acid pools quickly dry up, but some don't. It's also not just the rain that makes these pools so deadly. To begin with, the ground itself is highly acidic. This does not affect inhabitants of Hades, but rather, the plant life. Most edible plants can't grow in this type of soil. Add the already acidic water, mix it up a bit and with the heat of Hades to evaporate some of that water, and what is left is a concentrated mix of sulfuric acid. Left alone, these pools are harmless, but anyone accidentally stepping in them or falling in one is going to have a very bad day.

Damage from stepping in a pool or being splashed is initially 2D6 S.D.C. (1D4 M.D.C.), and it burns for 1D6 melees doing 1D4+1 S.D.C. (1 M.D.) points of additional S.D.C. damage per melee round, unless cleaned off with water.

If splashed in the face, the character loses 1D4 points to P.B., and unless they receive medical treatment within five minutes,

the damage is permanent. A character or animal that falls or is thrown into an acid pool suffers 6D6 S.D.C. (3D4 M.D.C.), and suffers an additional 4D6 S.D.C. (1D6+4 M.D.C.) per melee round in the corrosive fluid. After leaving the pool, the acid continues to burn for an additional 2D6 melee rounds doing 1D6+2 S.D.C. (2 M.D.C.) per each melee. For most people, death is the only conclusion. Visitors clad in full environmental armor will survive the incident without physical damage, but their armor will take damage, especially to soft parts and areas.

Acid pools are most common in the **Northern Fire Bog**, where they dot the landscape as ponds and even a few lake-sized pools of boiling cauldrons. Everything surrounding these pools is always dead and the air has a very *bitter* smell. The pools are less common in the rest of Hades, but found in small concentrations in the swamps of the **Death Mire** in the south and also in the **Fire Flats** of Hades. **Note:** Any character with a *Chemistry* or *Holistic Medicine* skill should recognize the pools as acid. If they make a successful skill roll it they can avoid the pool and warn others of the danger. Both also know how to treat acid wounds.

Razor Grass

Razor Grass appears in only a few places around Hades. It has the color of wheat and can grow to be several feet tall. Each blade of grass has a ridged spine from the base of the plant up to its top, where there is a barbed crown. The spine and crown are razor sharp and are what gives the grass its name. Just like the Thorn Forest, Razor Grass tends to catch and nick the body in numerous places. Eventually, blood loss or infection might become a concern.

Whereas the Thorn Forest can be carefully navigated, Razor Grass is much denser and *cannot* be tread through easily. It is best to go around fields of the Razor Grass rather than try to go through it. Like normal grass, it bends when trampled on, but springs right back into place. Travelers who have to do any kind of activity in these grasslands find they are covered with nicks and scratches in a matter of minutes. Damage from slow progress through a Razor Grass field is more annoying than immediately deadly. However, the many little cuts and scratches bleed enough to attract predators who can smell blood scents miles away, and they may come to investigate this new blood scent. Damage from any kind of strenuous activity like running or combat is 1D4 S.D.C. per melee round or every 100 feet (30 m) traveled, whichever is greater. Armor can protect someone, but leather and padded armor will get cut to shreds (the armor takes the damage rather than the character). Of course, metal armor and M.D.C. armor offers full protection without taking damage itself.

Razor Grass tends to be dry and brittle under the best of conditions and is easily cleared with fire. However, it can also catch fire and create problems for characters if they get caught in a fast spreading grass fire. Furthermore, there is a pod at the center of the crown that pops open, allowing seeds to become airborne during fires. These seeds float for a time until they settle onto suitable soil, where they quickly take root and form a new generation of Razor Grass.

Steam Vents

Steam vents can cook a normal human in seconds. Hades is filled with old lava tunnels, underground caverns and passageways. Steam and gas may pass through them to the surface or fill these underground chambers, making subterranean travel difficult. As the water heats up and turns to steam, it collects in the caverns and tunnels until the pressure builds up to the point where they are filled with steam. As the pressure increases, the steam eventually makes its way to the surface where it shoots out of the ground with the force of a small bomb. Like the Fire Geysers, known steam vents blow at precise intervals, however, since water takes less time to heat than molten rock, the steam vents blow more frequently. The time between intervals varies greatly from location to location, and ranges from 1D6 minutes to 1D6 hours.

A steam vent shoots a pillar of steam 1D4x10 feet (3 to 12.2 m) high into the air before it rolls out as a steam cloud over a 1D6x10 foot (3-18.3 m) radius. **Damage:** An unprotected person suffers 4D6 S.D.C. from the initial blast and 2D6 S.D.C. per melee caught in the steam cloud. A typical steam cloud lasts for 1D6+1 melee rounds (30 to 105 seconds) before dissipating. Most supernatural creatures and those wearing environmental body armor are unaffected by a burst of steam.

Gas Vents

By Carl Gleba & Kevin Siembieda

One of the least known threats in Hades is gas vents. All the activity beneath the surface of Hades sends trapped gas up to the surface through cracks and openings in the ground. Some gas is harmless and only adds to the stench of Hades. It's other gasses that are a danger, like *sulfuric acid*, *ammonia*, *carbon monoxide*, *carbon dioxide*, *methane* and *natural gas*. Sulfuric acid, ammonia and methane burn the eyes, nose, throat and lungs to choke and suffocate their victim. However, only catching a quick whiff has that instant reaction, and if the character is just on the edge of the gas cloud, he should have the time and opportunity to run back the way he came and out of the suddenly vented gas. *Carbon monoxide* and *carbon dioxide* also choke and suffocate their victims, but do not have the instant burning effect. These gases are especially dangerous when traveling across the lava seas, as well as in caves where the noxious gases may be contained without venting and prevent easy access to fresh air.

Any of these gases will kill a human in 1D6 minutes unless the character has a breathing apparatus, magic that allows him to breathe without air, bionic oxygen tank and filter, or is clad in environmental body armor with independent oxygen supply. Toxic gas can bubble up or erupt on the surface and linger for 1D4+1 minutes, but may still be enough to kill everyone in its path (3D4x10 foot/9.1 to 36.6 m radius), because the average person can only hold his breath for 30 seconds to one minute. Characters caught in a gas bubble or venting should roll a *save vs lethal poisons/toxins* (14 or higher) to see if they survive a sudden gas bubble. **Note:** Those who roll successfully lose their attacks and bonuses for the duration of the gas and will cough and have some trouble breathing for the next 1D4x10 minutes (also reduce initiative and Perception Roll bonuses by half). Those who fail to save *die from suffocation!* However, immedi-

ate (within five minutes) CPR, application of oxygen through an air mask, magic or psionic healing touch, has a chance of reviving them. Roll to save vs coma and death with a +20% to survive (add any other bonuses to save vs coma the character may have). A successful roll means they come gasping back to life. Speed, attacks per melee and bonuses are all half for the next hour as the character recovers from this near-death experience.

If the gas is mixing with air, the effects are not so instant and dramatic. Again, *roll to save vs lethal poison/toxins*. 14 or higher is a successful save, and those who save just feel a bit light-headed. *Those who fail to save* beings to suffer from a sudden and severe headache. The body also begins to ache, he feels groggy, and all combat bonuses, attacks per melee, Spd and saving throws are reduced by half. If exposure continues for another five minutes the character should make a second saving throw. If successful, the character remains conscious, but now has no combat bonuses or saving throws, and skill performance is -1D4x10%. He can continue for another five minutes before needing to make another saving throw, but staggers when he walks. The character can continue on, but must continue to make saving throws for every five minutes of exposure to the toxic gas. **Note:** If the character fails the saving throw at any time, he falls unconscious and will die in 2D6+1 minutes from asphyxiation. To be rescued he needs fresh air or oxygen and a gas mask. The demons and Netherbeasts of Hades are immune to carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and most other toxic gases.

Methane and natural gas can choke and kill as per above, but are also flammable and explosive. A single spark, can cause a severe explosion and create a fire gout. Damage from a gas explosion is 6D6x10 S.D.C. (3D6 M.D.) to everything in a 1D4x10 foot (3 to 12.2 m) area. Fortunately, gas explosions are one of the least common dangers found in Hades and only happen if a spark is purposely put near one of the vents or gas trapped in a cave.

Actually, there are usually telltale signs for those who know what to look for (that includes *Wilderness Scouts* and characters with the *Wilderness Survival* skill). The first thing that is very noticeable is an abundance of green plants and moss in the area. Plants thrive on carbon dioxide, and green plants are very rare anywhere on Hades. The second sign is the absence of any other living creatures, including insects, except perhaps supernatural beings like *Ghouls* on the ground and/or *Black Vultures* circling overhead. Despite being immune to the effects of carbon dioxide, most demons avoid gas areas. The last sign may be the most obvious, if others have passed through this way before, their remains will litter the path! Of course, as time passes, all that may remain is a *bone graveyard*, but such bone yards should be plenty of warning.

Note: Toxic vents and gas bubbles occur with most frequency on *rivers, lakes and oceans of lava*. When they occur, there is a massive disruption in the lava, as if a big bubble (which is what it is) has just popped. Tiny bits of lava fly straight up into the air and back down, and a yellow or orange mist or cloud appears and slowly spreads out from where it first appeared. As the toxic cloud spreads, it dissipates, becoming less deadly with every passing second. It is usually safe for humans to go through the area within 1D6 minutes, but they should wait at least six minutes, or go around, to make sure the deadly vapors are gone.

Hellish Weather

The weather in Hades is far more deadly than most dimensions and it is as wicked as its inhabitants. Fire literally rains from the sky, and waves of fire and lava can engulf large parties in an instant. The weather is punishing and unforgiving in Hades, and one had best take cover when a foul storm is brewing.

Toxic Atmosphere

Possibly one of the first things any visitor to Hades will notice is the thick and heavy atmosphere. The air smells like someone is burning wood (that's the nice smell), or smells of smoke and ash, or of sulfur (rotten eggs), or an acrid chemical smell. This is the result of two factors. The first is the oppressive heat. It makes the air feel heavier and as a result, somewhat harder to breathe. The second is the numerous chemicals that are spewed into the atmosphere every day from the rivers and seas of lava, geysers, Fire Rain and other weird anomalies. Sulfur, methane, and carbon dioxide are only a few of the toxic gases released into the air. In large quantities, all are deadly to most mortals, but at most locations in Hades, they are just bad enough to make life miserable, but not enough to kill you. Such pollution has little to no effect on the demons.

Certain areas of Hades have these chemicals in greater quantities than others, but fortunately there are several areas of Hades, like the Thorn Forest, that filter and clean the air.

Anyone initially arriving to Hades needs to make a *saving throw vs non-lethal poisons and toxins*. If the saving throw is successful the character feels a wave of slight nausea for 1D4 days, but suffers no adverse effects.

A failed save means the character has suffered a toxic dose of the atmosphere and vomits every 1D6 hours for the first 24 hours, feels nauseous for the next 2D6 days and suffers the following penalties for that period: -10% on the performance of all skills, -4 on Perception Rolls, -4 on initiative, -2 on all other combat rolls, reduce speed by 30% (trying to go faster causes the character to vomit), and suffers from stomach upset and migraine headaches. In addition, some of his strength is sapped, with P.S. temporally reduced by 1D6 points. This may impact his ability to carry his gear. Characters also suffer 2D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points if they have to engage in heavy activity, including manual labor and combat. Fortunately, characters get used to the toxic atmosphere in a few days to a couple of weeks. There is just that initial adjustment to the atmosphere upon arrival. Of course, dimensional travelers who wear full environmental body armor, or have a simple gas mask, are safe from these effects (at least until they are exposed to it). A primitive cloth filter that has been drenched in water provides a +1 to save. There are also spells like *Breathe without Air* and *Negate Poison* that can help in adjusting to Hades.

Acid Rain

Acid rain is common to several regions of Hades, including the *Death Mire*, *Thorn Forest*, *Sulfur Pits*, the *Fire Flats* and the *Northern Fire Bog*. Acid rain is a very real threat as sulfur is one of the most common elements in Hades, especially in the swamps. There, it is released in a gaseous form in such high

concentrations that it bonds with the water vapor, forming a highly concentrated version of sulfuric acid! Due to its unique nature, it only condenses after the area has been super saturated with the gas and water vapor. At certain temperatures the vapor condenses into liquid to form acid rain. Storms vary in duration from light to a heavy downpour with light storms lasting only 3D6+4 minutes and heavy lasting 6D6+12 minutes. Damage from these downpours is 1D6 S.D.C. per minute. Magical and supernatural creatures take the same damage except it's every 10 minutes. M.D.C. materials and M.D.C. flesh suffer 1D4 M.D. per 20 minutes of rain. Seeking some type of shelter is the only way to avoid the severe damage of this lethal rain. However, the environment of Hades has adapted to these storms and the rain has little effect on the terrain or its vegetation.

The chance of an acid rain varies across the three continents of Hades. It is most common in the north, with a 01-45% chance of a downpour occurring at least once every three days. Downpours in the western continent are far less frequent. The chance of a storm brewing is 01-45% every two weeks. The southern continent is the driest of the three, mainly because of the *Desert of Taut*. Acid rain storms never happen in the desert, as it's just too dry. The same holds true for the Eastern Fire Planes. **Note:** Game Masters should not feel limited by the above chances, as they are just an average. There are going to be locations where it rains far more frequently, they are just rare and usually devoid of demons.

Ash Storms

If dust storms weren't bad enough, events in the Desert of Taut can get even worse! The desert is not just composed of sand, but also a fine ash. Ash is constantly being spewed forth from various vents around Hades, especially anywhere a Fire Geyser can be found. This ash is usually released in giant clouds. In areas of Hades such as the Abyss, it combines with other elements to create Fire Rain. However, as the Desert of Taut is too dry to create fire rain, the clouds of ash just get bigger and bigger as more ash is pumped into the atmosphere. Over the course of several days, these ash clouds become enormous in size and unable to bear their own weight so they fall to the ground. As they do, the atmospheric conditions become unstable and effects similar to a dust storm are created. These storms are often times hundreds of miles in size (roll 1D4x100 miles/160 km) and it can take up to a day (roll 4D6 hours for the storm's duration) for the storm to pass.

During Ash Storms, hot ash blows violently around. Like a normal dust storm, it obscures vision and makes travel very difficult if not totally impossible. There is even a chance for combustibles to catch on fire, 1-20%. For demons, this is just another inconvenience that they have adapted to, however, for mortals it can be quite deadly. Those exposed suffer 1D6+3 S.D.C. damage per minute until some kind of cover can be found, and being out in the desert, there is often no such luxury nearby.

Dust or Sand Storms

Dust storms are a major problem when encountered in the *Desert of Taut*. These storms often appear without warning and as if out of nowhere. They are debilitating to everyone, man and demon alike. While dust storms do not do any significant dam-

age, they last long enough for everyone to lose their way. With no real landmarks other than the *Infernal Crown*, it's not uncommon to become totally disoriented and lose your way during and after a dust storm.

The size of a dust storm can vary from minuscule to storms so big that they blot out the horizon, stretching hundreds of miles in all directions. The average size is 4D6x10 miles (64 to 384 km), and lasts 2D6 hours. When the storm ends, 1D6 yards/meters of sand are deposited, leaving people and demons to have to dig themselves out.

The Desert of Taut has a storm season that occurs roughly at the same time each year (the fourth month). The period last for about a month, and during that time, travel in the desert is nearly impossible. Small storms kick up all over the desert and last for double their normal duration. Throughout this storm season, dozens of these storms collide and combine to form even larger storms. The energy of these storms combines, extending the duration even longer, plus the storms increase their size several fold. It's a non-stop sequence of events that dominos until the entire Desert of Taut is engulfed. This super storm lasts for 2D6+2 days and signals the end of the stormy season. The cities of Shek'Ra and Allvice then spend the next few weeks digging themselves out.

If caught in a dust storm there is little one can do, unless they can find shelter. Visibility is reduced to a maximum of 10 feet (3 m), speaking and verbal communication is impossible (even if the mouth is covered to prevent gulping down fists full of sand, the roar obliterates verbal sounds). Combat is nearly impossible as opponents can barely see or hear each other, the wind is hammering and the grit is blinding. All combatants are -6 on initiative and Perception Rolls, and attacks per melee and all combat bonuses are *reduced by half*. Even those in fully environmental body armor suffer the same penalties, with sand and dust covering their face plates/masks, and the sand pounding the armor sounds like they are inside a tin can. Radar and motion detectors are negated, and radio communication is reduced to one tenth the usual range. 01-50% likelihood that uncovered weapons and vehicle engines get clogged after 1D4 hours and require 1D4+3 hours to clean and get functional again.

Trying to travel during a dust storm is definitely not advised. Regardless of how good one is at Land Navigation, there is nothing to see and orient oneself, and for every fifteen minutes of travel the characters will find themselves going further and further off course (roll for a new direction every 15 minute interval). Walking in circles and wandering of into oblivion is common. If a Land Navigation skill should apply, it is -60% during such storms.

After the storm, the surrounding area will be waist to shoulder deep, with drifts many times higher (1D6 yards/meters). If camped in a tent or some type of vehicle, it will be at least partially buried and digging it out and cleaning air intake valves, the engine, etc., can take hours. (Only 4D6 minutes if the vehicle was covered and intake valves blocked.) This can cause a huge delay, as everything will have to be dug out and cleaned of sand. Equipment, if not carefully covered, will be clogged. Laser rifles and other weapons not locked away inside a vehicle or crate, or wrapped in a tarp or case, require cleaning. If not cleaned there is a 01-33% chance, plus a cumulative +10%

chance per shot, that the weapon will jam, and once jammed it does not work until completely cleaned. This also applies to projectile weapons such as rail guns to ordinary slug throwers.

Fire Rain

Fire rains down from the sky! The atmosphere is composed of high levels of sulfur and methane, which combine with water vapor to form a volatile mixture that only requires a spark. That spark is simply static electricity, with the result being plasma that drops to the ground like mini-comets or fire balls. This is why flying creatures avoid these yellow and black storm clouds and local people run for shelter when these storm clouds appear on the horizon. The air reeks of sulfur as these storms approach, giving a little warning (2D4 minutes) before they roll in.

Fire Rain is common in the *Northern Fire Bog*, where it rains fire almost daily. It is far less common in any other part of Hades, but can happen almost anywhere in the dimension. In the *Northern Fire Bog*, Fire Rain can occur 1D4 times *per day* with a 01-45% chance of a downpour that lasts 2D6 minutes – an ordinary rain only lasts 1D6 minutes. Damage is 3D6 S.D.C. per melee round and there is a 01-45% chance of setting combustibles on fire. Flyers (living beings or vehicles) take double damage (6D6 S.D.C.) when in the air at altitudes of 100-700 feet (30.5 to 213 m), and at 800 feet (244 m) or higher, damage is tripled. Flying through the clouds is like flying through a furnace with blasts of heat and heavy Fire Rain that do 2D6x10 S.D.C. or (1D4 M.D.) per melee round. Mortal creatures should find shelter immediately, but to demons its only an annoyance thanks to their fire impervious or resistant hides.

Elsewhere in Hades, Fire Rain has a 01-33% chance of occurring once per week and lasts only 1D6 melee rounds, with a 01-15% chance of a downpour that lasts for 1D6 minutes. The good thing is that the fuel for these storms burns up quickly, making for short rains and downpours.

Hades Lightning Storms

The atmosphere of Hades is just as chaotic as the rest of the dimension. Black and yellow clouds constantly churn in the skies to disgorge Fire Rain. A Lightning Storm often follows a Fire Rain Storm. The atmosphere is so charged after a Fire Storm that lightning begins to shoot across the sky, lighting it up as bright as day, and soon after, the thunder starts. Loud and deafening, the thunder can be heard dozens of miles away and shakes the very ground. As the thunder continues, the lightning seems to begin to coalesce into green and yellow clouds. Then without warning, massive columns of lightning strike the ground. When these columns of lightning hit the ground, they remain standing for several seconds and are quite a sight to behold. During these few seconds, dozens of little lightning tendrils spread out in all directions and travel a good distance before dissipating. Fortunately these storms only last 2D4 minutes, with 1D6 columns of lightning striking the ground per melee round.

Those caught in close proximity of a Hades Lightning Storm are in grave danger. If struck by a *lightning column*, damage is 1D4x1000 S.D.C. (or 1D4x100 M.D.C.). A dodge is applicable with a +2 to make it, because the column is so large and seems to form in slow motion. The *tendrils* that fire off from the main column are the next danger and are likely to hit any-

thing that is not laying flat on the ground. Lightning tendrils travel up to 300 feet (91.5 m) from the main column and do a comparatively small 1D6x10 S.D.C. damage (or 1D6 M.D. if an M.D.C. being or vehicle). Roll 1D6 to determine the number of columns that strike the ground per melee round. From start to finish, the storm lasts for 2D4 minutes. **Note:** Going flat on the ground is the best safety measure. Staying in side a vehicle or other tall structure may be a bad idea because they have a 01-20% chance of getting hit by a giant column and 01-60% chance of getting hit by one or more electrical tendrils. Even standing or kneeling there is a 01-07% chance of getting hit by a lightning column and a 01-45% chance of getting hit by tendrils (01-55% if clad in metal).

Determining whether any of the characters is struck by the lightning is at the discretion of the Game Master or percentile rolls. If the character is down flat, he should survive without incident; 01-02% chance of getting hit by a tendril.

Fire Storms

Fire Storms are far more furious than a simple Fire Rain downpour. Fire Storms brew and build for weeks at a time before suddenly bursting to violent life. The black and yellow clouds are a menacing sight to behold as they constantly churn and merge into an ominous, yellowish brown cloud that stretches to the horizon. Damage is the same as Fire Rain, only the duration is far longer, 6D6+6 minutes.

Fortunately, Fire Storms are rare in most places, occurring no more than once every five weeks. Specific regions will state if Fire Storms happen more or less often.

Fire Tornadoes

The worst thing that can happen during a Fire Storm is a Fire Tornado. Once a Fire Storm begins, there is a 01-20% chance that 1D4 Fire Tornadoes form. The Fire Tornado is a swirling cone of fire with thick black and red clouds in the center and top of it. It sucks the air/oxygen out everywhere within a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius as it passes by. Thankfully that's usually only for 1D6x10 seconds. All S.D.C. structures hit by the tornado take 2D6x100 points of S.D.C. damage (2D6x10 M.D.). Surprisingly, fires are uncommon (01-10% chance) because the Fire Tornado itself is using up all the available oxygen as it makes its path of destruction.

Getting sucked into the tornado is almost certain death. A Supernatural P.S. of 45 or greater can resist or hang on to something firmly anchored into the ground, but most others within 80 feet (24.4 m) of it are pulled right inside, spun around and thrown out the opposite direction. A character can get stuck in the whirling fire for 1D6 melee rounds (15-90 seconds) and takes 1D6x10 S.D.C. damage per melee inside the tornado. Ironically, being small and traveling so fast, they take less damage than large structures struck by the whirling inferno. **Note:** Mortals in M.D.C. body armor or power armor suffer one quarter the damage to their S.D.C. and then Hit Points from being battered in the storm and the impact of being hurled out. Each character in an M.D.C. vehicle takes 10% of that damage, but the vehicle takes 1D6x10 M.D.; so do demons caught in such a tornado.

These deadly tornadoes are a constant threat in the *Fire Flats*, where at least one storm a day creates 1D4+1 Fire Tornadoes!

This is one of the reasons why demons high in the hierarchy do not even visit this region of Hades, and the downtrodden and rejected demons are *forced* to live here.

Fire Tornadoes are not an uncommon sight in the *Scorched Lands of the Abyss*, where one can encounter them two or three times within a one month span. A storm constantly brews there, and it's only a matter of *when* a Fire Tornado appears. The *Northern Fire Bog* and *Forest of Stone* are also plagued by them, but far less frequently than the Eastern Fire Planes. Fire Tornadoes are far less common elsewhere in Hades, perhaps one every six months in the *Thorn Forest* or along the fringes of the *Desert of Taut*. Elsewhere they only occur once a year unless otherwise indicated.

Fire Walls

Fire Walls are the most dangerous weather phenomenon in Hades, and fortunately, the rarest! This killer weather can pop up out of nowhere! What looks like a Fire Storm on the way is actually a Fire Wall forming in the distance. More yellow than black clouds with hints of green dominate the sky. This is methane and sulfur rolling in as a dangerous combination. This cloud grows in size until it's too heavy to support itself. Once it strikes the ground, all it needs is one spark to form a Fire Wall. Like a fog bank that has touched ground, it rolls over the land, only it is a blazing inferno that barbecues anyone caught in its wake.

Like a tidal wave of fire, these walls measure 2D4x100 feet (61 to 224 m) wide, 1D6x100 feet (30.5 to 183 m) tall and 2D4x10 feet (6.1 to 24.4 m) thick. They move at about 40 mph (64 km) and the damage inflicted is devastating; 2D6x10 S.D.C. (1D6 M.D.) per melee round. It typically takes 1D4 melee rounds to pass. The safest place to be is beyond the wall's reach, but if it is rolling over you, finding some type of cover and holding your breath is the only way to survive. Like the Fire Tornado, the Fire Wall momentarily consumes all the oxygen as it passes. Furthermore, trying to breathe while the wall goes by means the character breathes in flame and scorches his lungs (1D6x10+60 S.D.C. to mortals or 6D6 M.D. to Mega-Damage beings other than demons).

While the Fire Wall only takes a moment or two to pass a certain point, they have enough fuel to burn for several minutes, with a typical range of 1D10 (or 2D4+2) minutes. It should also be noted that Fire Walls just roll over everything in their path, like a storm front.

Heaven's Tears (real rain)

It does rain water in Hades, though only 2D6 days a year in the Taut Desert, and only 1D6+1 times a month most elsewhere. The rain is usually a light shower that lasts 2D4x10 minutes. Rain usually cools temperatures by 4D6 degrees Fahrenheit for the next 4D6 hours and is a welcome relief to the mortal slave population. However, the way most demons run for shelter, shout and moan about it, you'd think it was raining daggers or a blistering acid. Most demons tend to react to rain in Hades like a cat to the idea of a bath. Oddly enough, this reaction is minimal in environments away from Hades, where they expect water and rain to be much more plentiful. **Note:** Water and rain does NOT hurt the demons of Hades (nor the minions of Dyval).

Rainwater is collected via a series of man-made collection networks and it also collects naturally, underground and in small

pools and ponds on the surface. However, shallow rain pools usually evaporate within 6D6 hours. There are also a few small, water lakes and streams on Hades, but they are rare, and usually in the forest areas.

Hades

Deep Night

The dimension of Hades is cast in *perpetual twilight*. If there is a sun in Hades it never rises or sets, and none has ever been seen. The sky, when visible through the cloud cover, is an eerie crimson red, not unlike the rivers of lava that dominate the land. Sometimes the red sky is brighter red, orange or pink at the horizon line, but it is still twilight, like the last hour of sunlight as the sun dips low above the horizon line. This period is known as twilight and would be considered *day* in any other dimension. It is a time when demons are the least active and most are at rest. However, this twilight does not endure, and after about 12 hours, it fades to a dark purple twilight with a few streaks of pink, roughly what you'd expect on Earth a few minutes after the sun completely vanishes beneath the horizon. This is the equivalent of *night*, when demons tend to be most active. The purple twilight is what the demons call "Deep Night."

The hours of red twilight and dark twilight are seasonal, but like everything else in Hades are reversed. Consequently, the spring and summer months have longer hours of purple skies and *Deep Night* (typically 16 hours of darkened skies) and in wintertime the hours are split evenly, with about 12 hours of red twilight and 12 of Deep Night. There are no stars to speak of in either twilight sky, and no moon to help light the darkness either. The only light comes from the glow of lava and various types of Fire Storms. This could explain why the majority of the demons and other life forms in Hades have some degree of nightvision.

After generations of living in Hades, the mortal slave races have also adapted to life in twilight, with most developing nightvision with a range of 40 feet (24.4 m). Other races who have natural nightvision and have lived in Hades for several generations find that they have enhanced nightvision and can see 30% farther than their dimensional cousins. However, this adaptation comes at a steep price. Having lived without sunlight all their lives has made them photosensitive. Any type of intense light, either from a spotlight or even a Globe of Daylight, will blind them. The same holds true of daylight. It is a major disadvantage, but one that is needed in order to survive in the realm of Hades. Were any of these beings to leave Hades, they would need some type of eye protection for the rest of their natural lives. A small price to pay to leave a demon-infested land.

The Topography of Hades

The dimension of Hades is truly an epic dimension. Its sheer size defies comparison. By all estimates, it is four or five times the size of the Palladium World even though its general shape is

the same as that world. But even that's only a guess, as it could easily be ten times that size and may have a number of dimensional anomalies that distort space and time. This would seem to be by design, as there are not only millions of demons in Hades, but millions of mortal beings as well. Despite some eerie similarities, the topography of Hades is vastly different than the Palladium dimension. There are similar landmarks, similar rivers, and they even have the same mountain ranges. However, in Hades, they are ten times deadlier than those found on Palladium and are often larger, longer or twisted. For example, lakes and seas are lakes and seas of *lava* in Hades. The mountains that curl into the *Desert of Taut* are called the *Infernal Crown* and they are frightening to behold. The peaks are black and charred, the mountains themselves are a dark, dismal gray and they're jagged and uneven. Lava flows freely down various channels in the mountains and there is always a cloud of black ash hovering over the highest peaks, raining down bolts of yellow and orange lightning. Often the ground quakes and some unearthly sound such as the screech of a Harpy or the roar of a demon is heard in the distance. There is nothing regal about the Infernal Crown. The mountains are dark, scary and dangerous, and the same can be said of most of Hades. But then, it is a dimension of Hell.

Hades has three continents. The north and south are divided by a sea of lava. **The northern continent**, known as **the Abyss**, is the largest. A no-man's land where chaos resides and the Gargoyles are the undisputed masters of the realm.

The southern continent is called Tartarus. It is home to the well-known **Desert of Taut**, and is home to the majority of the Demon Lords.

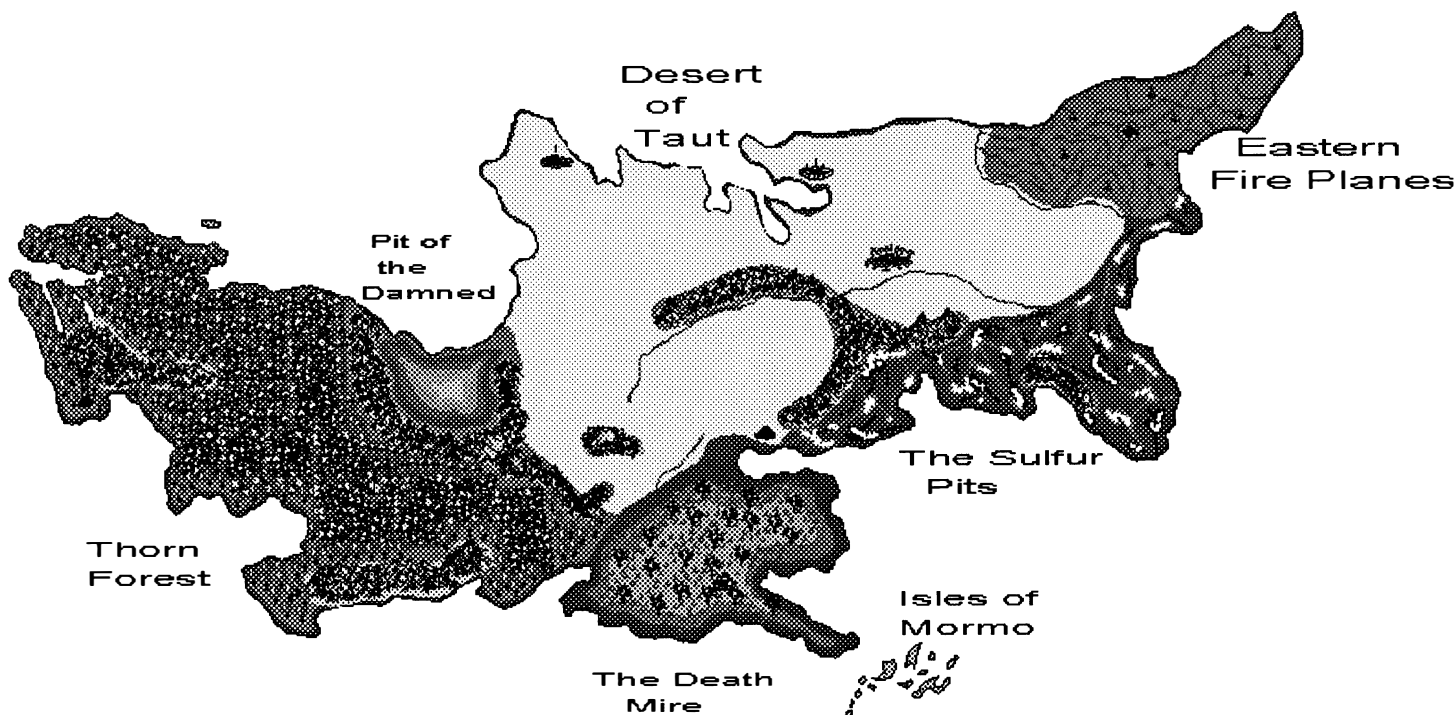
The third and final continent of Hades is a region controlled by Succor-Bemoth, and it is the **Fire Flats of Hades**, but in Hades it is simply known as "Hell."

Tartarus

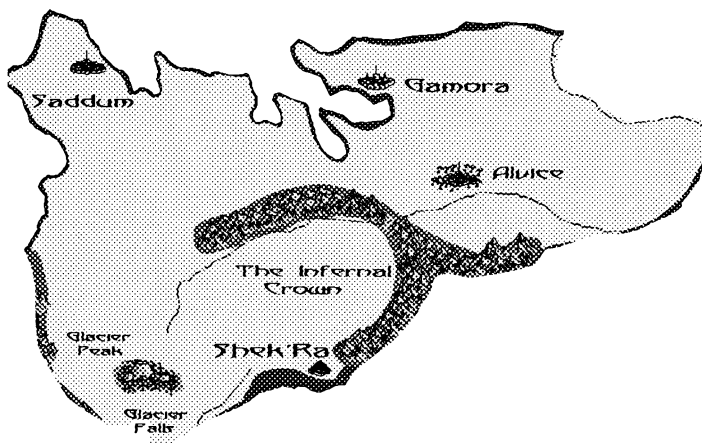
Tartarus is the southern continent in Hades and is divided into six regions. They are, from east to west, **the Eastern Fire Planes**, **the Sulfur Pits**, **the Desert of Taut**, **the Death Mire**, **the Pit of the Damned**, and **the Thorn Forest**. Each region has its own individual characteristics, however the overall climate of the region is very dry and hot with little moisture at all. The average temperature year round is 120 degrees F (48.8 C). That's average, and temperatures have been known to soar as high as 150 degrees F (65.5 C), especially in the desert. This is the way the demons prefer it.

A few regions along the coast are somewhat damp from the constant steam produced by the contact between the running water and the oceans of fire and lava. The driest region is the Desert of Taut, and with its location right in the middle of the continent, it acts as a sponge absorbing and dissipating any and all moisture. The desert also acts as a blast furnace heating up the surrounding continent. The winds always originate from the desert and blow to all regions across Tartarus. This constant blast furnace-like heat is what keeps everything so dry and hot.

Tartarus also happens to be home to the majority of the Demon Lords and their minions. The land is very active in terms of commerce and demon activity. Caravans travel through sev-



eral well-known trade routes and armies of demons head to the north to **Demon's Gate** in *the Abyss* to fight in the Minion War. All activity is centered around the **Desert of Taut** because several of the largest demon cities are found there. For such a large expanse of desert it is the *heart of Hades*.



The Desert of Taut

The Desert of Taut is the largest region in Tartarus and it sits right in the middle of the southern continent. Its borders stretch from the *Eastern Fire Planes* to the *Dire Mountains* surrounding the Pit of the Damned. The northern borders are in direct contact with the *Bloody Gulf* and the *Channel of Blood*. Cutting the desert nearly in half lies the *Infernal Crown*, a series of jagged peaks and mountains that constantly spew forth hot ash and molten lava.

The average temperature within the Desert of Taut is a balmy 150 degrees Fahrenheit (65.5 C). Unlike a normal desert, where there is a day/night cycle to warm and cool it, the Desert of Taut does not have such a luxury. During Deep Night the temperature may drop as much as 30 degrees, but it quickly warms up less than an hour after Deep Night is over. The landscape is mostly

open, with rolling, rusty brown sand dunes and rough, rocky terrain. The occasional river of lava breaks up the terrain as well as a few Fire Geysers here and there. Dust Storms frequently roll across the desert, usually from west to east, with the *Infernal Crown* acting as a buffer, preventing them from engulfing the whole desert. The heat is a real problem, at least for mortal creatures. Demons suffer no penalties from heat and fire, so most enjoy the barren expanse of land.

The **Desert of Taut** is not unlike most other deserts known to man in respect to its makeup. It has rolling mounds of sand dunes, the heat is like an oven, and people unfamiliar with desert survival die within two or three days trying to cross it. Crossing the desert is an impossibility for most mortal beings, unless they have access to lots of water or magic that can produce water and/or protect them from the blast furnace heat. Desert conditions just suck up the moisture from everything, and the effects of heat exhaustion only take half as long to appear. Conditions are such that most mortal beings are drenched in sweat, but it evaporates very fast. In addition to heat exhaustion, this very quickly (within hours) promotes dehydration. Even stored water will evaporate right from the container unless it's kept under cover and in some type of shade. If the water is not covered it will evaporate at a rate of 25% per day. The desert claims more lives within the first day of travel than any other region in Hades.

People have less to fear from Fire Rain or any weather conditions typically found in Hades than the desert climate and conditions. The climate is simply too dry for most storm fronts, and the ones that do hit the desert are along the borders of the *Thorn Forest*, the *Sulfur Pits*, and the *Eastern Fire Planes*. Even then, these storms rarely creep more than a few miles into the desert before they evaporate. The most anyone ever sees is a vast expanse of dark clouds that seem to stretch to the horizon. There may be the occasional clap of thunder, and during Deep Night, orange heat lightning is seen dancing among the clouds. Rarely are there any gaps in the clouds or a completely clear day.

Rivers of Lava are found throughout the desert. They are not as common here as they are in the rest of Hades, due mainly to

the major vein that flows through the desert. One branch runs west following the curve of the *Infernal Crown* and ends in the vicinity of *Glacier Peak*. The other branch runs east and follows the desert's border with the *Sulfur Pits* and the *Eastern Fire Planes*. The occasional smaller lava river branches off these two major branches, but rarely goes more than a hundred miles (160 km) in any direction.

Visitors are more likely to come across **Glass Plains** – areas in the desert where the heat of the lava has turned the sand to glass. It looks like a large sheet of brown glass that is hot, slippery and jagged. While portions are melted and smooth, there may also be boulder-like glass protrusions and uneven ground, and sharp, jagged glass shards also protrude up from Glass Plains and inflict 1D6 S.D.C. damage for every five feet (1.5 m) a person slides or walks across them. Glass Plains can be navigated by characters who take their time and tread slowly (no more than a Spd of 11) and don't get caught by the strong winds that sweep across the desert. If people are not careful, the wind will push them down and slide them across the ground 2D6 yards/meters. Going *around* is advised, as the typical Plain is only a few hundred feet in diameter (2D4x100 feet/61 to 244 m). This weird phenomenon is unique only to the *Desert of Taut* and is not found anywhere else.

Fire Geysers are also another threat in this region and are often found near Glass Plains and along Rivers of Lava that flow around the desert an 1D4x100 feet (30.5 to 122 m) from any of the rivers' edge. They are rarely found deep in the desert, and when they are found it's usually within or near a Plain of Glass.

The Sandy Desert

The majority of the Taut Desert is *sand mixed with ash*, making it very fine like silt, easily kicked up by fast movement, monsters and vehicles. It also makes for some terrible Dust/Sand Storms.

If there are more than a dozen individuals in a group passing through the desert, small dust trails mark their passage. This makes sneaking across the desert impossible and provides a distinct advantage from the air. There are no technological vehicles or transports native to Hades, but there have been some instances where such items have been brought to Hades. Unless the vehicle can fly high (this has its problems too), the sand and ash will clog all types of intakes in 1D6+1 hours. This requires a thorough cleaning every few hours which can take nearly just as long (1D6 hours). A trained Operator/mechanic or somebody with the appropriate skill (e.g. Automobile Mechanics, etc.) is needed to properly clean out the engines of vehicles.

'Borgs and robots can handle the environment fairly well, but will find their built-in weaponry may get clogged and jam, their joints and jet thrusters encrusted and partially clogged (reduce Spd by 1D4x10%), and their bodies covered in ash and dust. Thus, weapons (built-in or carried by hand), ammo drum feeds, and so on, should be cleaned at least once or twice a day. Cleaning rail guns, rifles and other guns typically takes a few minutes for military O.C.C.s, 3D6+15 minutes or not at all by O.C.C.s not as familiar with their weapons. Some kind of body covering, like a poncho, cloak or robe will help minimize dust and sand damage to man-sized units. Likewise, weapons kept in a case or wrapped in cloth will not suffer from the environment, however, 1D4 melee attacks/actions are used to unwrap them to

use in combat. The only vehicles that do well in the Desert of Taut are those specifically suited to a desert environment.

Flying, whether by natural ability, magic, power armor or aircraft, is not much of an option either. Heat rises and in an environment like Hades, there are thermal currents that will toss flying power armor and aircraft (even those with contra-gravity systems) around like a kite in a storm; -25% to piloting skill under regular conditions, -50% in storms. Failed rolls may result in a momentary loss of control, an inability to execute trick maneuvers or evasive action, or even a crash. Flying close to the ground (under 200 feet/61 m) kicks up huge plumes of dust easy to see for miles away, especially from the air, revealing their position to everyone within a radius of 10 miles (16 km).

Flying high takes the pilot into the cloud cover where there is poor visibility and radar and normal sensors have their range reduce by half of normal. This actually applies to most of Hades. Flying over the desert or any of the lava seas imposes a -25% (-50% in stormy weather) penalty to the piloting rolls, because of the rising thermal currents. Over the fire oceans temperatures can soar as high as 500 degrees Fahrenheit (260 C), and the resulting thermal currents that rise will do 2D4x10 S.D.C. (1D4 M.D.) per every five minutes exposed to them.

Flying creatures that are used to Hades' environment are not as badly affected (-10% to flying skill and making trick moves) because they have learned to adapt to the thermal currents and fly much slower, and lower than aircraft or power armor.

Sand Dunes

Sand dunes roll across the desert thanks to the ever present wind that howls throughout the region. The dunes can be as high as 300 feet (91.5 m) and climbing up and down can be an exhausting exercise, which combined with the blast furnace heat, quickly wears out anybody. The majority of the dunes are found east of the *Infernal Crown* and as you move west, they get smaller.

The western portion within the Infernal Crown all the way to *Shek'Ra* is relatively flat as the result of the dust and ash storms that plague that part of the desert. Sometimes they form into tornados, which temporarily transform the landscape, but not for too long.

The eastern portion of the desert, however, is a sea of sand dunes. Traveling through this part of Hades takes extra hours and is a trial in duration and stamina. Foot speed is reduced by 50% and even the hardest of warriors wear out after a few hours of travel. Those who are forced to live in the desert must learn to pace themselves and do everything they can to conserve energy and precious water.

Rocky Desert

Rocky deserts in Hades are a combination of sand and large, rocky outcroppings. Mixed with the sand are large chunks of rock, which can make travel more difficult. They are mostly found along the ranges of the *Dire Mountains* and the *Infernal Crown* as well as along the *coast* and the border to the *Eastern Fire Planes*. One of the largest sections of rocky desert is found around *Glacier Peak* and its sister mountain *Glacier Falls*. Depending on where you are, some parts of the rocky desert form huge crevices and canyons. This can make travel more difficult,



especially if they block the path you're following. Resources are also far more difficult to find here. Nothing can grow in the hard, rocky ground except for a few scrub bushes, and they provide no water or nutrition at all.

Foot traffic is slightly easier than climbing sand dune after sand dune, but not by as much as a traveler might wish. The ground is broken and uneven, the loose rocks pose a constant danger of slipping and falling (especially when running), and there are numerous crevices, tar pits and rivers of lava that travelers have to find a way over or take the long way around. The rocky desert portion of the Desert of Taut is no picnic, but at least a traveler *might* be able to find some shade that is a few degrees cooler. Even then, you can't let your guard down or else you may become victim to one of the numerous monsters that calls Hades home – particularly the infamous *Worms of Taut*.

Sand Pits

The desert's ever shifting sands often cover up one of the more deadly obstacles found in the region, *Sand Pits*. They are the result of the numerous lava tubes running under the desert. If a tube becomes clogged or the lava is diverted somehow, the upper portion of the tube becomes hollow and empty. The result is an open hole in the ground that someone not paying attention could fall into and down a long tunnel. The hole is sometimes capped by a thin, glass cap created by the lava that once flowed in the tube (or covered with a tarp and sand by local inhabitants as a deliberate trap). That thin cap is covered by sand. The cap (or trap cover) is not strong enough to support more than 100

pounds (45 kg) of weight. Step on it and it gives way and the character falls into the pit 6D6+6 feet (3.6-12.8 m) down. Damage is typically 1D4 S.D.C. per 10 feet (3 m). Similarly, the tube may be partially clogged with 1D6 feet of sand. Stepping on it has the effect of pushing the clog down and the character and the sand clog both go sliding down the tube, same as above. The only difference being that the character is likely (01-50%) to have dropped anything he was holding and it is now buried in the sand. Digging through it for more than 1D4+3 minutes (01-20% chance of recovering the dropped item after 3 minutes of searching) might unclog the tube more and the character could slide another 6D6+6 feet down the old lava tube. This continues to happen for every three minutes of activity in the tube and could, by the third unclogging and sliding, drop the character(s) 1D6x100 feet (30.5 to 183 m) down a hole, bury him under the sliding sand (needs to dig out in a few minutes or suffocate) or drop him into a lava flow (1D6x100 S.D.C. damage or 1D6x10 M.D.).

Sand Crests

Another phenomenon is Sand Crests or funnels. Wind and/or seismic activity forms a funnel or wave-like crest of sand and the heat bakes it and holds its tubular or wave crest-like appearance. Most visitors mistake these opened, horizontal cones as just another peak and valley to cross or a crest that provides some shade. They find out differently once they walk on top of the crest or rest underneath its overhang and the whole thing collapses, like a mini-avalanche. Sand Crests usually collapse

with minimal pressure and weight, causing the crest to crumble and slide 2D6x10 feet (6.1 to 36.6 m). There is nothing to grab onto and in a matter of seconds (1D4 melees) everyone standing on the crest above, underneath or even in front of it are swept away and buried. Fortunately, they don't get buried deep and damage is only 1D6 S.D.C., however, anything the character was holding as well as loose items are likely (01-80% chance) to have been dropped and are now buried, god only knows where under the sand. Finding buried items is a difficult task that could take forever. Roll percentile dice after 3D6 hours of exhausting digging and searching, and there is still only a 01-50% chance that the item is found. Likewise, it will take 6D6+24 hours to dig out a buried vehicle and then many more hours to clear the engine and intake for sand.

Note: Those trained in Tracking, Detect Ambush, and Camouflage have a chance to identify Sand Pits and Sand Crests before they fall into them.

Bone Pillars

Across the Desert of Taut there are locations where humongous bones rise up out of the ground. Most seem to be complete skeletons of various types of creatures. They range in size from as small as 20 feet (6.1 m) to truly massive giants 1000 feet (305 m) long. With the ever-shifting winds these skeletons appear and disappear, seemingly at random. While they are of little value to the average adventurer, they are worth a great deal to the Demon Lords of Hades. Whatever these creatures were, their bones have been imbued with magic energy. Wanting to arm their troops with magic weapons and transport vehicles, Modeus and his lieutenants have learned how to harvest the bones and use them to make powerful weapons, vehicles and war machines. (See the section on **Soulmancy and Bone Weapons** for more specific details.)

Digging up these bones and selling them can be a lucrative effort. Prospecting Bone Pillars has become a new trend especially for the cities in the desert. Most meet with death and only about 5% of the expeditions ever find anything. This is a petty task for demons so they usually pay to have *others* do such menial work.

No one, not even the Demon Lords know who or what the creatures once were. Regardless of what they were, they have now become a resource to be tapped in Hades, and the Demon Lords seek as many of the bones as they can find.

Bone Yards

Bone graveyards may be found in and around the desert. They are areas usually littered with the bones of humans and other mortals, but may include the bones of animals, Netherbeasts and even demons. Such bone yards usually indicate the traveler is near the den or lair of a monster predator. In the desert, it is a safe bet that it is one of the deadly Worms of Taut, or worse, a pack of them. It is best not to linger in these places and to go around them before the source of these bones makes an appearance to add you to the pile. They may also be killing fields – places of ancient battles where weapons and valuables were scavenged and the dead were left where they fell. The shifting sands cover and uncover Bone Yards on a regular basis, so a Bone Yard found today may be gone tomorrow.

Other surprises in the sand. Likewise, travelers may come across half buried vehicles, mummified bodies (humanoids and animals preserved in the hot, dry sand), pieces of equipment, weapons, tools, magic items, tents or articles of clothing, water skin/canteen (01-25% chance it still has water in it), and other items that past travelers have lost in the desert. Most (75%) will be broken, damaged or clogged with sand, but some are good and useable immediately or after a thorough cleaning. Machinery and vehicles, while probably useless, will certainly have salvageable parts (1D6x10% worth) and sometimes the item can be a godsend for the person who found it. **Note:** Game Masters, use this with extreme discretion. Don't provide too many "gifts," but do so when appropriate. These artifacts of the doomed may also be used as clues and warnings for the player characters.

Denizens in the Desert of Taut

The desert is where the Worms of Taut get their name. They are found all over the desert. Fire Worms are found along the numerous rivers of lava and they use the Fire Geysers as nesting holes. Tomb Worms and Nippers are found in the mountainous regions along the Infernal Crown. They make their homes in the numerous crags and fissures along the mountains. The sandy desert is home to Sand Worms, and Ant Lions, while other Worms of Taut (and other monsters) stalk the region.

Roving bands of Alu wander the desert in small bands to nomadic tribes. They prey on the monsters and unwanted visitors. Alu tribes can grow to several hundred members, with the strongest and most experienced individual being the leader. The bands are very territorial and attack outsiders with little provocation. There are currently thirteen prominent bands that each have their own territory. However, this number changes often, as alliances are created and broken, some smaller bands get absorbed into larger, while others are completely decimated.

One of the common misconceptions is that the massive Blow Worm is also found in the Desert of Taut. They are actually predominantly found in the *Northern Fire Bogs*. The few Blow Worms found in the south are those along the border of *Zaglore Bog* and the *Forest of Death*. Adventurers commonly confuse the Blow Worm with its southern counterpart, the Sand Worm. The Sand Worm lives in the deepest part of the Desert of Taut, where it hunts other large prey. They look exactly like Blow Worms, but instead of being able to spit a glob of goo, they have massive jaws that grind and rip a prey to shreds. They are also extremely sensitive to vibrations and while completely blind, they are like sharks under the sand and can easily home in on prey.

Note: See the section on **Monsters of Hades** for descriptions of the Worms of Taut, Netherbeasts and other notable animals.

Desert Cities

In all, there are five cities that manage to do quite well in the region. **Allvice** is considered the unofficial capital of the region, as it is the only place that a Demon Lord (Mania) resides. **Shek'Ra** is the only city in Hades (except Saddam; see below) where inter-dimensional travelers and slaves actually outnumber

the demons! Dozens of merchants who travel from dimension to dimension come to Shek’Ra to trade or buy their wares. Some even come and go to the *Splynn Dimensional Market* on Atlantis, Rifts Earth. Shek’Ra is a hub of activity that few of the Demon Lords approve of, however, as it is a portal for spies, enemies and outsiders, and it may be only a matter of time before Diso is replaced with a more conservative Duke.

Closest to Shek’Ra, and one of the few major sources of *fresh, drinkable water* in Hades, is the city of **Glacier Peak**. The city proper sits within what looks like an active volcano. In the very center of the city is the second largest reservoir of fresh water to be found in Hades. As one might guess, the major export is water and other exotic drinks.

The remaining two cities lie on the northern coast of the continent. The first is **Saddum**, probably the only non-demon city to be found in all of Hades. It is even ruled by a court of mortals, although it is overseen by the *Greater Demon, Femus*. The mortals in the city live a life of luxury and are spoiled and contented. Little do they know that they are a cattle farm that caters to demons all over Hades. Finally, there is **Gamora**. The city is the demons’ last stop before they travel into *the Abyss*, and is effectively a large garrison of demon troops. It is a place for demons to blow off a little steam and have some fun before marching through *Demon’s Gate* and right into the heart of the Minion War at locations across the Megaverse.

Allvice

Land Area: Allvice covers approximately a 100 mile area (160 km) and is surrounded by numerous orchards.

Allvice Demon Population: Approximately 2.7 million demons, not including slaves.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 3,000
Gargoyles – 120,000
Gurgoyles – 30,000
Gargoyle Lords – 5,500
Gargoyle Mages – 1,000
Tauris – 6,000

Lesser Demons

Alu - 400,000
Aquatics - None
Banshees – 30,000
Demon Bats – 70,000
Demon Flies – 10,000
Ghouls/Nasu - 150,000
Lasae - 100,000
Mares/Nightmares - 3,000
Shedim - 50,000
Succubus/Incubus - 1.7 million

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs – 10,000
Demon Locusts - 1,600
Brek-Shall – 3,000
Death Demons - None
Gallu Demon Bulls - 8,000
Magots - None
Night Owls - 20,000
Raksasha – 10,000
Soul Catchers - 1,500

Allvice Slave Population: There are approximately 1.5 million slaves.

Humans – 750,000
Non-Humans – 650,000
Supernatural Beings – 100,000

Dimensional Travelers: Varies greatly. At any given time there are 1D4x1000 in the city.

The most prominent and recognized of Hades’ cities in the Desert of Taut is the city of Allvice, ruled by the Demon Lord Mania. The city sits right in the middle of a huge oasis and from a distance it appears to be a paradise in the desert, that is, until the demons are seen walking the streets and flying through the air.

The oasis is a rather large area that spans 100 miles (160 km). The land around the city is lush and fertile with many palm trees and orchards. Every few years the desert sends a ferocious sandstorm towards the city, but this has not had any significant impact on the surrounding oasis. The orchards are one of the main staples of food that sustains much of the slave population around Hades, but most notably, in the Desert of Taut. The demons have little use for them, but realize the need to sustain their slave stock. Thousands of slaves work the orchards, harvesting the many fruits that are produced, but few taskmasters are actually needed for those in the orchards. Slaves can try and escape, but they all know that they won’t survive a day in the desert, let alone long enough to make it to a safe haven. Gamora is the closest city, and it takes weeks to get there. Besides, few entertain such thoughts anyway, better to die a swift death from a demon master than a slow, painful death in the desert.

Allvice is a rather large metropolis for a city in the desert. There are approximately 2.7 million demons who call the city home. The majority of demons are Succubus/Incubus and Alu, with the remaining being a mix of demons and Sub-Demons. The city has a large slave population of about 1.5 million, of which the human population is around 50%, and the remaining are a mix of races (many from the Palladium World, including Goblins, Orcs, Ogres, and Trolls). Only the most monstrous races can walk around freely. Most slaves serve the city in one capacity or another. From street cleaners to builders of the hundreds of monuments that adorn the city, the slaves are worked constantly with little rest.

In the center of the city is **Mania’s Palace**. It is a large, double tipped pyramid. From the side it appears as if two pyramids lie side by side and share a common base. It is from here that Mania opens portals to various locations in the Palladium World to send her minions to plague the populace. While the city is nowhere near a ley line nexus, the pyramids have mystic properties nonetheless.

The buildings in the city are constructed of some type of red granite. Most appear to be domed buildings with columns adorning the corners and sides. It has an ancient Greek feel, except for the color, which most people call *Bloodstone*. Surprisingly, the streets are paved with cobblestones and the city is beautiful and frightening all at the same time.

The city proper is encircled by a massive wall that stands 50 feet (15 m) tall and is 15 feet (4.6 m) wide and serves as protection from the elements. The oasis is generally calm and the sands rarely creep to the city gates. The wall has also served other purposes in the past, when the Demon Lords would feud among each other, laying siege to their various capitals. Since Mania considers this her primary home, she has worked to protect it. Over the millennia, the walls have been magically reinforced and can take substantial damage. They have also been enchanted to resist the elements and they require little in the

way of maintenance. The walls effectively have 150 M.D.C. per 10 foot (3 m) area (or an equivalent of 300 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 16). Every 250 feet (76 m) there is a large, circular area where artillery (see the Bone Weapons) or a watchtower rests. Each watchtower has 6-8 Alu and two roving Gargoyles between towers. The rest of the city is constructed of Bloodstone, which is not quite as strong as granite, but is readily available in the region. None of the buildings, save for Mania's pyramids, are enchanted. Statues of Mania are found throughout the city and show her in the most favorable light. The city gates have her on both sides with massive swords drawn and crossing right over the gate. As one gets closer to her pyramids, the statues become more risqué, depicting her nude, which she doesn't seem to mind in the least. There are even a few statues of her and Charun, together.

City Highlights

Caravans come and go from Allvice on a weekly basis. The city produces and sells numerous types of fruits and vegetables, but demons are certainly not vegetarians and really have nothing to do with them. However, to maintain the slave stock all over Hades, these mere mortals must be fed, and fruits and vegetables are an important part of their diet. It's not something that Mania ever envisioned, but as far as she is concerned, the commerce is beneath her and left to her minions to deal with. To accommodate this industry, there are several large storehouses along the city walls. Caravan leaders often go to the various warehouses, trading with individual dealers for goods.

The city is also known for its unique pleasures. There are an abundance of taverns, dance halls, gambling establishments, drug dens and places of iniquity scattered throughout the city. Many of the warehouse dealers trade for a variety of drugs that can even intoxicate a demon. Here many types of supernatural creatures other than demons come to enjoy these exotic pleasures.

Finally, the city's darker reputation is really why outsiders visit. Succubus and Incubus are the primary inhabitants, and they indulge in dark, sadistic and sinister pleasures as well as carnal love. Mass orgies, however, can turn into blood baths for mortals and even the occasional lesser supernatural being. When Succubus/Incubus tire of what they can get in the city, they travel to other worlds where they indulge themselves and meddle in the affairs of mortals.

Mania's Sanctuary

Dominating the center of the city, constructed of bloodstone, is a most unusual structure. From the side it appears to be a normal pyramid, but when viewed from the front or back, viewers will notice that on a very large base are two pyramid-like structures rising up. Exotic gemstones line the angles up to the peak of each pyramid and mystic energy crackles up, down and between the two pyramids. These structures are completely unlike the Atlantean versions, and only have a similar shape. During Deep Night, they cast an eerie orange glow that lights up the city for several blocks.

The double pyramids serve as Mania's personal sanctuary away from the Demon Lords and her lover Charun. Her personal chambers are in one of the tops of the pyramids; a large, luxurious room crafted from the finest bloodstone marble in Hades.

Various depictions of her are in the rooms as well as all around the double pyramid.

Aside from serving as her personal dwelling place, the pyramids give Mania the ability to open two portals at a time to any world practically anywhere. Usually, one of her minions is in charge of the portals, but her latest administrator, a Succubus by the name of *Drexsala*, has a poor reputation of not doing her duty. Her *Alu Captain of the Guard*, *Ankhkus*, constantly whispers to Mania of Drexsala's ineptitude. Mania's personal guards consist of 300 *Alu* who reside in her pyramid abode. They serve as guards on the portals, as well as around the city as needed. The double pyramid also has the ability to open a massive dimensional Rift 1000 feet (305 m) wide and tall. This portal always appears on the outside between the pyramids. There are a number of steps leading to this exterior level of the pyramid, where thousands of troops can be sent through if needed. Mania plans to employ her pyramids when Charun makes his move. She will be able to back him up by sending thousands of her minions to wherever they are needed to bolster his forces and help his coup attempt.

The Orchards

The lands surrounding the city are very fertile and produce a variety of produce. This is one of the only areas in Hades to be capable of sustaining crops. It's attributed to the fact that the only dangers are from the occasional sand storm. Fire Rain and Acid Rain don't fall over Allvice and the temperature in the orchards seldom rises above 93 degrees F (33.8 C), so the crops are safe. It is also suspected that there is an underground river, but Mania will neither confirm or deny this. Slaves who draw water from a well near Mania's palace and an aqueduct system keep the orchards watered. Slaves bring the water to the fields and water the crops as needed every day. If this activity ever ceased, the fruit trees and other crops would wither and die in a matter of 1D4+2 days, and millions would die of starvation.

Three major kinds of food crops are produced from the orchards surrounding Allvice. The first is called **water fruit**, a large, blue, gourd-type fruit that holds in water very well. Most people bore a hole in it and drink the liquid contained within (3D6+20 ounces), then crack it open to eat the sweet, moist meat of the fruit. Each fruit holds around a gallon (3.78 liters) of water. Each short, sprawling tree (a tall bush, really) bears about 5D6x10 pieces of fruit. The gourds are sometimes scraped out, dried, specially prepared and used as water containers (has 2D6+6 S.D.C.).

The second item grown is called a **Sand Melon**. It grows under patches of sand within the oasis (as well as grows wild in small patches in the desert, especially along the foothills of the mountains). They are a large melon about the size of a watermelon, but have the taste and texture of a juicy apple. The melon is very nutritious, provides sweet juice and can provide all the necessary sustenance a person needs to survive. Sand Melons grow on vines that sprout out of the sand. Each plant yields 1D6 melons, but in the wild they grow in patches of 3D6 plants.

The third crop staple is the yellow cactus. The **yellow cactus** grows like a weed around the city (and along the base of most mountains), and one of the chores of slaves is to constantly chop down and dig out the plant where it is not wanted. Succulent,

thick, leaf-like appendages bloom every four months. A single leaf can provide as much as 18 ounces (0.5 liters) of water (2D4+10), and the leaves are edible, and taste good, like a mildly sweet, overripe peach. However, the fruit has an intoxicating effect. Each leaf is two or three times the size of a man's hand and just as thick. Drinking the clear, cool fluid contained within is refreshing and rejuvenating, tastes like fresh spring water, but is also the equivalent of drinking six shots (six ounces) of vodka! Eating a pound of the meat fills the belly and is the equivalent of drinking 16 ounces (0.47 liters) of vodka. Boiling the meat first reduces the toxic effect by half but also reduces the size of the meat by half and turns the meat into a mushy paste with little flavor (still edible and nutritious). Boiling the fluid for an hour reduces it by half, but negates the alcohol like effect completely. Many slaves use the yellow leaves as trade goods amongst themselves and others as food, water and alcohol. The leaves can also be drained of their fluid, dried, cut into strips and the strips can be eaten or chewed on to get an alcohol-like buzz.

Those who get drunk on Yellow Cactus suffer the following penalties and modifications: Tend to be loud, happy and uninhibited, stagger when they walk, -2 attacks per melee, -5 on initiative, no Perception Roll bonus, reduce all other bonuses by half, -25% to perform skills, and reduce Spd by 30%. Lasts until they sober up 1D4+2 hours later. Yellow Cactus does not leave a hangover.

Drexala,

Succubus, City Administrator, Quick Stats

Hideous in her natural state, Drexala is a Succubus who prefers her human guise, and appears as an attractive redhead with curly, short hair and hazel colored eyes. She is also very shapely, with a beautiful hourglass figure and an exceptional bosom.

Drexala answers directly to Mania and administers to the city. She resides in Mania's pyramid and also acts as her major-domo. Anyone wishing to speak with Mania usually has to go through Drexala first.

Drexala is the type of demon who will do anything to obtain power, and she killed her predecessor, an Incubus who had grown too lazy and complacent. She has become very bold and has even tried to gain Charun's affections when he visits. Ever having a backup plan, Drexala has also been courting a Splugorth High Lord in Splynn. So far, he has been kind and the two struck a deal for her to receive an enhancement in a Bio-Wizard's vat. The one treatment has doubled her M.D.C. (S.D.C. on S.D.C. worlds).

Her extra-dimensional excursions have been unnoticed, as every time she goes to Splynn, something important always seems to come up and she is nowhere to be found. Ankhkus, the Captain of the Guard, is especially suspicious and wary of her, and doesn't understand why Mania hasn't replaced her yet.

Race: Succubus.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 13, M.A. 16, P.S. 27, P.P. 22, P.E. 22, P.B. 4 (20 in human form), Spd 15.

M.D.C.: 200. (On S.D.C. worlds Drexala has 60 Hit Points, 100 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 12.)

Disposition: Greedy and conniving in the extreme, and obsessed with power. She is willing to walk over anyone she has to in order to get to the top. While she kisses Mania's royal behind (which is why Mania keeps her around), Drexala secretly despises her for not elevating her to Duke. For now, she remains a lowly Task Master.

Natural Abilities: See Succubus description.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 80%, Impersonation 69%, Seduction 80%, and Disguise 98%.

Experience Level: Fourth.

Weapons and Equipment: Through her High Lord contact, Drexala has come into possession of a *Living Whip* (see **Rifts® World Book 21: Splynn Dimensional Market** for details), but she is really pushing for an Eylor weapon.

Ankhkus,

Alu, Captain of the City Guard Quick Stats

Ankhkus is an Alu demon with brown fur that has shades of black and silver. He wears a purple sash indicating his rank of Task Master in the city, and master of all the Alu it holds. He is the lead Alu in Allvice, and as the Captain of the Guard, he is responsible for protecting the city. He likes his position and has benefitted greatly from it as all manner of beings try to bribe him for favors and information. He is more than happy to comply for the right price, so long as it doesn't compromise the city, Lady Mania or his position. He and his top lieutenants are trying to undermine Drexala's authority and make her look like a fool to get rid of her. They have a running betting pool on the duration of the city's overseers and how long they will last before being replaced by Mania.

Race: Alu.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 12, M.A. 4, P.S. 31, P.P. 20, P.E. 20, P.B. 10, Spd 15.

M.D.C.: 120. (On S.D.C. worlds Ankhkus has 41 Hit Points and 54 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 12.)

Experience Level: Seventh level Alu Assassin.

Disposition: Arrogant and cocky, but also skilled at "playing the game." He likes having power and enjoys commanding tens of thousands of Alu, but his ambition has its limits.

Skills of Note: Detect Ambush 60%, Intelligence 56%, Prowl 65%, and W.P. Battle Axe.

Weapons and Equipment: What has kept Ankhkus in charge for so long is his Dragon Thunderer Rune Battle Axe. He is challenged at least once a month by one of his younger Alu vying for power.

City of Shek'Ra

Land Area: Shek'Ra covers approximately a 200 mile area (320 km). This includes the shanties and tent city that has popped up around the city walls.

Shek'Ra Demon Population: Approximately 3 million demons.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 10,000

Gargoyle - 50,000

Gurgoyles – 30,000
Gargoyle Lords – 2,000
Gargoyle Mages – 1,000
Taursis – 1,000

Lesser Demons

Alu – 1,100,000
Aquatics – 5,000
Banshees – 90,000
Demon Bats – 40,000
Demon Flies – 50,000
Ghouls/Nasu – 150,000
Lasae – 25,000
Mares/Nightmares – 70,000
Shedim – 50,000
Succubus/Incubus – 50,000

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs – 800,000
Demon Locusts – 2,000
Brek-Shall – 40,000
Death Demons – 1,500
Gallu Demon Bulls – 100,000
Magots – 5,000
Night Owls – 100,000
Raksasha – 200,000
Soul Catchers – 2,000

Shek’Ra Slave Population: There are approximately 5 million slaves.

Humans – 3 million
Non-Humans – 1.5 million
Supernatural Beings – 500,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D4x100,000 travelers in the city. This includes the numerous caravans that come and go daily.

The city of Shek’Ra is located in the southwestern corner of the Desert of Taut, just a short three day walk from the southwestern tip of the Infernal Crown. The city also happens to be only a week’s travel from the borders of the Death Mire.

The city is exceptionally large, covering a 100 mile area (160 km), with a shanty town around the outskirts extending several more miles. **The city proper** is also surrounded by a unique wall that is concave and deflects many of the sand storms that hit the city on a monthly basis. The city inside the walls is only a third of the total area, however. The remaining city is shanties and tents pitched outside the walls. At the center of the city is a rather large ziggurat that stands 350 feet (107 m) tall. It dominates the skyline and is adorned with numerous demonic depictions around its base.

The city is noteworthy because it is Hades’ only *dimensional market*. Slaves, exotic animals and trans-dimensional livestock (including people) are constantly being brought in and sold as well as other goods and items. The market pales in comparison to the Splynn Dimensional Market, but that’s because few beings want to travel to Hades. The climate in Splynn is far more temperate and appealing to vendors and customers alike. Still, the market has its buyers for rare and unusual goods, including demon (and outside) made magic weapons and items. Several merchants actually travel between Hades and Splynn, buying goods from each market and selling them in the other.

Shek’Ra is also known for its caravans. Numerous caravans come and go to the city on a daily basis, and a large section in the southern portion of town is reserved for them. Only a select few can actually bring in their goods beyond the walled city and set up shop. It all depends on who you know and how favored you are.

The ziggurat provides for all the dimensional transportation needs. It sits right on a dimensional nexus and is able to channel

the P.P.E. to open the various dimensional gates. The ziggurat is a primitive version of the dimensional pyramids created by Stone Masters and offers few of the amenities that an actual pyramid could provide. For example, the ziggurat cannot control the weather or dimensional anomalies such as Ley Line Storms, and is pretty much limited to dimensional travel only. The ziggurat is also the Duke’s residence, and it’s his personal guards who administer the building.

Demons who use the ziggurat must pay a fee (arrival is free, of course), and it can vary greatly from one individual to the next. Most merchants make some kind of deal with the Duke. Usually a commission or flat fee, but sometimes a piece of the profits is expected. Others who can provide exotic goods or certain kinds of alcohol, or rare foods may only have to give the Duke a small percentage of their merchandise.

A Brief Note on Hades Currency. For as long as anyone can remember, there was no trade, commerce, or currency in Hades. The demons pretty much took what they wanted or fought over it. With the discovery of Rifts Earth and events leading up to the Minion War, the Demon Lords had to think ahead and develop some sort of commerce. Still, business practices are rudimentary and primitive. Most business done these days in Hades is good old-fashioned *bartering and trade*.

To provide something that could be used as a common item for trade, the first gold coins were minted. *The currency is called a Modeus*, or simply a *Mod* or *Mods*, after Modeus the Lord of Hades, of course. These are large coins, for a human anyway, about the size of human fist. They all look the same, with the visage of Modeus on both sides. The various denominations are denoted by the amount of rubies in the coin. No rubies is a single Modeus, while a single ruby indicates five Mods, three indicates 10 Mods, four is 50 and a giant ruby in the middle means it is worth 100. Slaves are not permitted to own currency and are pretty much killed on the spot if they do have them. Most of the common trading markets in Hades use the Mod which is transferable in Splynn at a rate of *one hundred credits to one Mod*, or trade goods for goods.

Notable Businesses in Shek’Ra

Merchants in General. Like the Splynn Dimensional Market, there are permanent vendors, semi-permanent vendors, and transient sellers. Permanent vendors usually have a building and seem somewhat reputable. The semi-permanent and transient vendors are either con men or charlatans who travel to the various market places, stay for a few days or weeks, make a quick profit and get the heck out of Dodge. Most set up tents, or tables, and even a few will rent out a building or shop if available. However, they rarely stay for long and often the quality of their merchandise is questionable. Below are a few notable shops in Shek’Ra.

Waylard’s Exotic Finds

The merchant, Waylard, is some type of lesser supernatural being. He is rather disgusting to look at and is mostly a blob on four legs with no neck and six tentacles for arms. His body oozes a slimy substance from little pustules all over his body, and he smells terrible to begin with, and ten times worse with the heat in Hades. He has four eyes centered around where his

head might be, and instead of a mouth he has a fleshly proboscis with which he eats and speaks. By the way, when he speaks he slobbers all over anyone within 5 feet (1.5 m) of him.

This disgusting blob sells second rate merchandise, yet when prospective buyers browse it appears as top of the line merchandise. The problem with most of Waylard's stuff is that it's cheaply made or outright cursed and break down in a matter of days. Most beings don't recognize the curse for days or even weeks, and the shoddy merchandise lasts just long enough for the buyer to think it was fine and that he must have broken it. Waylard counts on his low prices, first-time customers, and fools who come back and buy more. Those who complain always get Waylard's standard response, "Well, it's exotic, not perfect. What did you expect, a Rune Weapon maybe? Sorry, all sales are final." That's when his slew of Gargoyle bodyguards step forward to quell any further debate about quality or defects. Waylard prefers to sell to non-demons (they don't tear your tentacles off when angry) or to Lesser Demons off to war. The following are just some examples of Waylard's latest junk for sale:

Lord Koth, a Rune Sword: Lord Koth is a Rune long-sword created long ago by a Splugorth. Few enemies gain such enmity with the Splugorth that their very soul is in jeopardy. Vampire Intelligences are the exception as they have long been enemies of the Splugorth (and demons), and once, long ago, they captured one. It was a young Vampire Intelligence who was overpowered by the Minions of the Splugorth. Death was too good a fate, so the monster's life essence was forever locked in this Rune sword. So was born the blade known as Lord Koth. He has had numerous owners over the eons and always tries to corrupt them to forsake their mortal life and become one of the *Undead*. Koth himself yearns to be free, but failing that, he continues to lead people toward Undeath or astray down some other evil path.

Sword Stats of Note: Mega-Damage: 4D6+6, but does double damage to vampires (part of Koth's curse is that he's a vampire slayer). Twice per day the sword's owner can turn into a bat with a duration of 40 minutes. The owner is impervious to the gaze of a vampire, and on command, Lord Koth can be ordered to fight the Undead, floating through the air and attacking vampires. (The sword is +3 to strike and parry and has three attacks per melee. It cannot be killed or destroyed but can be trapped, locked away or held down.) The Curse: Owners of Lord Koth are first assailed by horrible nightmares, night after night. Most nightmares seem unrelated to the ownership of Koth and seem to recount past events and battles, but they always have bloody endings with either the owner covered head to toe with gore from a comrade or an innocent, or the owner dying in some horrible way. After several months the nightmares become less frequent, but that's when the hunger begins. Lord Koth's new owner finds himself eating more meat, and having it prepared very rare. Soon he'll crave raw meat, drink blood and may eventually become a cannibal. The owner also becomes sensitive to light and can't go out into the light of day without sunglasses. Eventually, the sword owner prefers being active at night, finds himself feeling superior to others, and enjoys killing and hurting others. If the owner was of a good alignment, it drops down and down until he becomes Miscreant or Diabolic. About half the owners eventually (after much prompting from Lord Koth) seek out a Master Vampire to become one of the Undead. The rest die gruesome deaths. When either one of those happens, the

sword vanishes and reappears at Waylard's to be resold. Cost: This "vampire slaying sword" is an incredible bargain and only goes for four million credits, or 40,000 Modeus coins. Waylard can even be convinced to go as low as 2.5 million credits or 25,000 Modeus coins. "What? Something wrong with it? Cursed? Of course not! I give all my customers great product at affordable prices."

Blood Rifle. This is a Techno-Wizard rifle that Waylard came across in one of his many dimensional excursions. The rifle is very large and for most normal-sized humans, requires two hands to hold. When the weapon is gripped and activated (by just touching the trigger), several needle-like appendages extend out of the stock and sick into the user's arm, and blood begins to flow right into the weapon! It then powers up and is ready for use.

The catch is, the blood of the owner serves as the ammunition! For every two Hit Points drained, the Blood Rifle has enough energy for 10 shots. The problem is, during the heat of battle, after the first 10 rounds has been expended, the weapon wants to draw more blood and pumps the user full of endorphins, giving him one hell of a euphoric high that makes him feel invulnerable. It then becomes difficult to let go of the weapon as it continues to drain the user of his Hit Points! The rifle doesn't stop till the user has less than five Hit Points left, and by that point the character is weak (reduce P.S., P.P., P.E., Spd and all attacks per melee and bonuses by half). The evil thing is willing to take all the remaining life of the character (Hit Points) if the user so demands it. When zero points are left, the user falls unconscious and needs to roll a successful save vs coma/death. On a successful save the weapon's user lives, but is too weak to fight until back up to at least 10 Hit Points. If the Blood Rifle is used within 24 hours of the coma, it will drain him until he is at his P.E. attribute number below zero Hit Points, at which point the character has a massive heart attack and dies! No save is possible.

Weight: 22 pounds (9.9 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 M.D. (3D4x10 S.D.C. in S.D.C. settings).

Rate of Fire: Single shot only.

Effective Range: 3,500 feet (1067 m).

Payload: Draws blood at a rate of two Hit Points per 10 shots (S.D.C. can *NOT* be used).

Cost: 200,000 Splynn Credits or 2,000 Modeus coins.

Note: Does not work on the supernatural or creatures of magic, and the needles can't penetrate M.D.C. hides or any creature with a Natural A.R. higher than 9, nor M.D.C. body armor, so the shooting arm must be bare and accessible to the needles. The Blood Rifle is very alien in design and may not be from Earth, or it may be a weird Necromancy inspired TW weapon that, for obvious reasons, never became popular. Heck, it could be a one of a kind prototype. (Waylard actually has about a dozen of these weapons and he is hoping to unload them on outsiders, so long as they can meet his price.)

Faerie Weapons. Select Splugorth Bio-Wizard weapons powered by lobotomized Faeries seem to make their way from the Splynn Dimensional Market (Rifts Earth) to Waylard's on a regular basis. The Splugorth being rivals and enemies of demons means the weapons are a) illegal in Hades, and b) usually

Splugorth factory rejects, and for some reason or another there was an error in the manufacturing process or a flaw in the weapon. Waylard has a connection in Atlantis who is able to get them for a song, and sends them to Waylard to sell in Hades for a huge profit. The weapons appear to work fine at first, but after 1D6 months, the range drops by 30%, 1D6 months after that, damage drops by half, and 1D6 months after that the payload drops by half. 2D6+6 months after that, the item stops working completely and the little Faerie trapped within looks to be dead and shriveled up, rendering the weapon useless. Cost: Half of what they'd sell for in Splynn, which is half too much.

Bone Weapons. Even though it's illegal, Waylard sells any of the demonic and magical Bone Weapons he can get his hands on. Under the table, of course. Typically sell for 1,000 to 4,000 Mods or 100,000 to 400,000 Splynn Credits per item. The more powerful the Bone Weapon, the higher the price.

Alien Technology. Completely mercenary, Waylard will sell any technology that comes from other worlds, like Earth, Rifts Earth, the Palladium World or Phase World, etc., he can lay his hands on. Prices are half of what they usually sell for in their respective world of origin, but they may be slightly damaged and are usually illegal in Hades.

Waylard, D-Bee Merchant Quick Stats

Waylard's store is one of the semi-permanent shops in Shek'Ra (and the Splynn Dimensional Market). He rarely sells reputable merchandise, and when he does, you can be sure the price is top dollar.

Race: Unknown. He looks like a brown blob on four legs, with no neck, making it hard to tell where the head starts and his body ends. He has four green eyes in the center and located under them is a fleshy proboscis. Oozing all over his body is a smelly mucus that oozes out of white pustules. They also conceal six tentacles that can extend up to 20 feet (6.1 m).

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 8, M.A. 24, P.S. 12, P.P. 6, P.E. 28, P.B. 2, Spd 12.

M.D.C.: 84. (On S.D.C. worlds Waylard has 54 Hit Points and 30 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 8.)

Effective Level: Tenth level merchant/con artist.

Disposition: A snake oil salesman and confidence man who could sell a plasma rifle to a Naruni! He has no scruples at all, and is only out to make money.

Skills of Note: Streetwise 60%, Lore: Hades 65%, and Find Contraband Weapons & Cybernetics 66%.

Weapons and Equipment: He doesn't use any. Instead he employs several beefy Gargoyles who act as laborers and bodyguards armed with Bone Weapons and concealed Faerie weapons.

Note: He is sitting on a fortune (at least 100,000 Mods) but wants more. Much more.

Drake's Weapon Emporium

Drake is another merchant who travels between several worlds selling weapons and related gear. His primary focus is demon Bone Weapons from Hades. He has several contacts from whom he buys reasonably large quantities of Bone Weapons at a premium. He usually sells them in Shek'Ra, but

has found a bigger profit to be made in the Splynn Dimensional Market (Rifts Earth), so he often divides his time between his two permanent shops, one in Shek'Ra, the other at Splynn.

His weapons are top notch and he has several employees who can enchant them with a variety of magical powers, but he charges at least 50% over market value, and if the buyers seem like they have money, he'll go as high as 70%. The only redeeming value Drake's has is that he guarantees his work, and it is always top quality merchandise. He is often noted for saying "Well yes, it's expensive. Quality goods always are." And may add, "Of course, you can always choose to shop at Waylard's."

Drake, Cernun Merchant Quick Stats

Drake is always accompanied by his two Giant bodyguards. He has several employees as well as slaves who do a variety of work in his shop, and has a deal with a local Baal-Rog who offers him protection. Drake does allow his slaves to pay off their debts, and a few have stayed on as paid employees. Drake has red and gold scales and is often seen wearing fine silks and exotic clothes.

Race: Cernun (see **Rifts® England** for details).

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 16, M.A. 19, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 18, P.B. 9, Spd 20.

M.D.C.: 67. (On S.D.C. worlds Drake has 47 Hit Points and 20 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 12.)

Experience Level: Sixth level Cernun Mystic.

Disposition: A businessman at heart, Drake is always out to make the almighty credit. However, he does have integrity and pride in his work and feels that having a positive reputation will bring in more business.

Skills of Note: Streetwise 50%, Lore: Hades 75%, Lore: D-Bees 70%, and Lore: Magic 85%.

Weapons and Equipment: Drake has access to any of his fine weapons, but chooses not to carry any. That's what his bodyguards are for.

Little Splinter

High Lord C'lar is the owner of this new, growing franchise that is beginning to pop up all over the Megaverse. He already has three businesses in *Phase World* and a handful elsewhere in the *Three Galaxies*. The one in Hades is his latest. For now, he is overseeing the business start-up, but he plans to eventually turn it over to one of his underlings. They sell numerous products and services that would be available in the *Splynn Dimensional Market* (Rifts Earth). The biggest sellers are microbes and parasites, and one of the more expensive services offered is Bio-Wizard augmentation. Finally, a side business which is proving to be slightly more profitable now is as a money exchanger. They can trade just about every currency and credit for Modeus coins or Splynn Credits. Lord C'lar is making a killing, as he charges a 10% commission on the amount being exchanged. Repeat customers can expect to see a discount of 1% to 4%, depending on the amounts being changed. This is the main "service" he is known to provide in Hades, as Splugorth goods, including Bio-Wizardry, are illegal. On the other hand, there are slave owners who secretly use the symbiotes to augment their slaves to get more work out of them. High Lord C'lar

usually has several Baal-Rogs and a quartet of Staphra slaves as guards. C'lar plans on having a permanent business in Shek'Ra, but he'll have to be careful.

Corag's Caravan & Goods Emporium

Possibly one of the most successful of the caravan leaders to frequent Shek'Ra, Corag is a Za who has business dealings all over the Megaverse. He primarily does business in Splynn, but has been known to go to *Phase World* and other exotic dimensions for rare goods. He primarily deals in slaves, and has a High Lord contact in Splynn who can get him pretty much any kind of slave or symbiote he desires. Mostly he looks for slaves who can fight or be useful in the arena. They seem to fetch the most profit in Hades, so the occasional Cyber-Knight or Juicer may end up in one of his pens.

Corag has a regular circuit that starts in *Shek'Ra*. Here he usually picks up a full load of slaves, and perhaps a few other goods to trade. His first stop is in the south at Zaglore Bog. There he stays for a few days making sales and may pick up some items, but mostly he goes for the gossip and happenings around Hades. He then ventures north towards *Glacier Peak*. If he hasn't already sold all his slaves earmarked for the arenas he does so there. He spends several weeks there until he sells off most of his remaining wares, then he loads up on water and fire wine and heads back to Shek'Ra. With contacts in three major cities, he does pretty well for himself and his staff.

Corag employs several demons to help guard his wares as well as his caravans. His top lieutenants are three Baal-Rogs. They are in charge of the remaining demons and also serve as Corag's muscle to handle problems. There are also 12 Alu and 12 Ghouls on staff, but he may hire others on an as-needed basis. Hired hands may get paid in Mods, or more likely, in the opportunity to travel and the supplies they consume en route. Those who prove to be excellent and loyal workers or fighters protecting the merchant caravan may be sold trade goods at a 60% discount and/or given some trade goods as a reward, or even a cash bonus.

Corag's standard caravan usually consists of six large wagons, each pulled by a Hades Netherbeast. The lead wagon is Corag's and it carries the most valuable of his trade items. If he's recently been to Splynn, he may have anywhere from 10-20 assorted Fairies in magic cages that prevent them from using their magic. His wagon also carries a small assortment of magic goods that may have been picked up as well as any weapons or armor. The remaining wagons usually haul a load of miscellaneous monsters and animals and common trade goods. Among his menagerie of monsters are likely to be Demon Runners, Panthera-Thereon, Dragonsaurus, various small to medium dinosaurs, Drakins, Wing Tips, Drakes and similar creatures. One wagon is usually full of people to be sold as gladiators and the remaining two wagons will have an assortment of common slaves, which are considered "top quality," which means they are not Hades slaves, but brought in from some other dimension. This allows demons the pleasure of breaking the spirits of those they don't often see, or may have never seen before (they command top dollar).

Shek'Ra City Politics

Before Duke Diso entered the scene, Shek'Ra was just another trading city and really had little to offer. Dimensional travel was limited to only a few select individuals known to the previous Duke. When Diso became Duke, he saw many opportunities that needed to be explored. The first was opening up new markets. Little by little, Shek'Ra grew until it exploded beyond its walls. Caravans that once passed by, now began to stop, and almost overnight, Shek'Ra became a boom town.

Things have been going very well and Duke Diso has managed to line his pockets and extend his contacts. Most beings that make the journey to Hades usually offer something to Duke Diso, while those not in the Duke's favor must pay a "tariff" on goods coming in. Still, Duke Diso is no fool, and often it's a one time fee or charge after so many trips. He also makes quite a bundle from those wishing to leave Hades. Most authorized merchants pay a one time fee, or bring "gifts" to the Duke who is, then, more than happy to waive the fee. However, those who are brought to Hades against their will, or don't have a means of their own to leave, can try to negotiate a price for transport to another world. The price is likely to be steep, and may include trade of valuable (to Duke Diso) information or a service (like get him X, kill so and so, and so on). He'll consider the request of anyone, including enemies of Hades, for a price.

The Shek'Ra Ziggurat, the means to Dimensional Teleportation. At the center of the city is a massive ziggurat, 500 feet (152 m) tall, which dominates the city skyline. It is as ancient as the city and dates back to a time before Modeus ruled Hades. It seems that the previous Lords of Hades tried dabbling in the art of Stone Magic and failed. They clearly tried to duplicate the Atlantean technology and were unsuccessful. Inside the base of the structure are various depictions of the ziggurat's construction and the massive labor force needed to create it. With no Stone Masters available, they were unable to enchant it fully, but through various magicks, the main chamber of the ziggurat was made to open and close dimensional Rifts. There is even a crude stone control panel with various crystals that slide in and out that an operator uses to activate the various dimensional links. There can be six preprogrammed destinations that, with the flip of a switch, can be instantly activated (takes half of a melee or about seven seconds). The ziggurat is connected to the Atlantean ley line grid that all pyramids use. However, to access the Hades ziggurat, the sending pyramid must do all the work and spend a total of 750 P.P.E. Essentially, the Shek'Ra ziggurat is a *P.P.E. hog* that does not run as efficiently as an Atlantean pyramid, but it does work. Sending from Hades requires 1000 P.P.E. This is usually achieved through the use of sacrifices, because the ziggurat can only hold 500 P.P.E. at a time.

The problem is Duke Diso's activities have caught the attention of *Andras, Marquis of Hell*. He sees the city and Diso's enterprises as a dangerous security risk to Hades. So Andras, on his own authority, has relieved the city guard (all 1,000 plus Alu!) and replaced them with Baal-Rogs and some members of his own trusted *Brass Guard*. Diso is not pleased by this interference and it has put a damper on his illegal activities, especially dimensional teleportation. As if this weren't bad enough, his fired city guards feel betrayed and are up to no good them-

selves. Without Duke Diso's patronage, several groups have gone into illegal businesses themselves, a few have threatened to contact Andras and disclose what they've seen (for a price), and others are looking for other ways to get back at the Duke. They all blame him for their troubles. To top it all off, Graxon, head of the Brass Guard contingent in the city, is vying for control and hoping to oust Diso as the Duke! There is much tension and skullduggery in city politics. So far, this has not changed much in Shek'Ra. In fact with so many Baal-Rogs to provide security in the city, many business are booming, only the Duke and his associates have fallen on hard times.

Hidden Agenda

Diso has been the Duke of Shek'Ra for some time. He somehow managed to replace the last Duke of the city through trickery and backstabbing. The former Duke happened to be the last appointee of Mantus, and feeling that the Demon Lord's days were numbered made Diso bold enough to eliminate the last Duke and declare himself Duke. It was only a short time later that he was visited by Charun and the appointment was made official. No doubt Charun had his own plans, but he has never returned to the city and has been in the north ever since. That saga is not over, however, as shortly after Diso's appointment, large numbers of his Gargoyles arrived to take up residence in the city. They've yet to make a move, but they are there, watching. And waiting?

The escalation of the Minion War by Modeus has put a number of schemes into play. For Andras, securing Shek'Ra is nothing more than his bid for power and putting his troops at key locations. The threat of a security leak and possible counterattack through Shek'Ra is indeed very real, but Diso's forces were more than sufficient to deal with any threat until reinforcements could be called in. And even Deevil spies would have a hard time trying to get through the Alu. No, Andras has other motives. In his preparation to take the throne of Hades from Modeus (see Andras in the **Demon Lords** section for details), he wants to station as large a contingent of his Baal-Rogs as possible as close to *Zaglore Bog* as he can. The goings-on in Shek'Ra were the perfect excuse to do so, and since Mantus wouldn't dare object, he all but put his own administration in charge of the city.

Andras will eventually rid himself of Duke Diso and put his own man in charge of the city. However, he's found the Duke to be a potentially useful pawn in his scheme to take the throne of Hades, and is setting him up as a scapegoat, should he need one. After all, the Duke's many dimensional transit operations are questionable at best, and who better for the Deevils to work with for sending spies and assassins against Modeus than this weasel? It's not true, but it sounds plausible, and with the right amount of fabricated evidence, it is a story Andras knows he can sell. In the meantime, the Marquis of Hades has just over 3,000 *Brass Guard* (his elite and loyal henchmen) in the city and he can marshal his remaining Baal-Rogs and another 20,000 various demons and lesser minions within 24 hours should the need arise. For now, Andras bides his time and works his game pieces.

Duke Diso – Fire Jinn Quick Stats

Diso is your typical Fire Jinn, hot tempered, ambitious and scheming. He wears flashy robes and seems to have one for each day of the week. He also likes to adorn himself with rubies and gold. Diso is nobody's fool and knows just about every merchant who comes and goes through the dimensional portals at the ziggurat. New merchants are personally interviewed by the Jinn and some kind of mutually beneficial arrangement is often made. At the moment, he gets along with all the various merchants and criminal kingpins in the city. In their own way, each has helped Duke Diso build his empire and likes things under his rule. If the opportunity(s) presents itself, they would be happy to undermine and oust Andras, though not openly. This could be Diso's ace in the hole.

As for Andras, the arrogant Jinn has no idea the Marquis has plans to kill Modeus and seize the throne of Hades. Diso has assumed that Andras knows a good thing when he sees it (i.e., Shek'Ra) and has used his power to take it for himself. Diso is angry about that, but can understand and appreciate that kind of ambition, greed and treachery. Of course, he doesn't plan on taking any of this laying down, and is working on keeping his various operations going as criminal underworld enterprises. That fits Andras' needs to use Diso as a scapegoat, so he is allowing the Jinn to build his illegal, criminal network.

Race: Jinn demon.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 19, M.A. 20, P.S. 37, P.P. 20, P.E. 16, P.B. 6, Spd 90 (ground), 200 flying.

M.D.C.: 800. (On Hades Diso has 96 Hit Points, 50 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: Eighth Level Jinn.

Disposition: Diso is a greedy opportunist who can usually make any situation work. For the first time in a long time, his life has become complicated by politics between the Demon Lords and the Minion War. In the end he will do what's best for himself and set up shop elsewhere if he has to.

Skills of Note: Streetwise and Prowl 70%, and Intelligence and Gemology 80%.

Weapons and Equipment: Diso has an assortment of magic items that he has received over the years and has about 15 to 20 million Mods in treasure which contains gold, gems, scrolls and magic items. His favorite weapon is a *Draining Blade* from Rifts Earth.

Graxon,

Captain of the Guard Quick Stats

Graxon is as mean as a pit bull and has little respect for anyone. He wants to see some action in the Minion War, but has wound up with this assignment! It's not only boring as hell, but it has all kinds of beings coming and going and any one of them could be a Deevil in disguise. He'd just as soon put a stop to it completely, institute marshal law, and run things his way. He's made no bones about this to his superiors and can't understand why Lord Andras is not taking a harder line. As far as Graxon is concerned, that weak fool Diso should be replaced, the ziggurat shut down, and off-worlders driven off, and he is waiting for the command from Andras to do so. Furthermore, if he can't get to the battlefield, he hopes Andras will turn the rule of Shek'Ra over to him.

Graxon is dark skinned for a Baal-Rog, almost a dull bronze color. He wears the armor and banner of the Brass Guard and always totes around a bone halberd that has long since been stained in blood.

Race: Baal-Rog demon.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 35, P.P. 20, P.E. 27, P.B. 7, Spd 30, 90 flying.

M.D.C.: 600 (On S.D.C. worlds Graxon has 97 Hit Points, 70 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14).

Experience Level: Seventh level Baal-Rog.

Disposition: Mean, suspicious and vengeful! He's a bully to everyone, even his own troops.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 88%, Detect Ambush 70% and several W.P.s including Heavy M.D. Weapons. He has a TW Nova Rifle that he's been dying to use on the Deevils.

Weapons and Equipment: A Demon Bone halberd: Damage is 6D6+4 M.D., and special features include giant-size, extra damage, and super sharpness. He also has a TW Nova Rifle with four clips.

Dogma – Quick Stats

Alu, the Former Captain of the Guard

Dogma is one of the sloppiest and unkempt demons in Shek'Ra. Blood and pieces of flesh always dangle from his fur around his face and neck. He only wears a simple loincloth with a belt to hold a few items. His fur is a light tan color that often looks dirty.

Under Duke Diso, Dogma lived the good life. He rarely worked, often kicked back and collected numerous gratuities from Diso, and he was content. Now he is out of work, afraid he'll get shipped off to the Minion War, and he and his remaining Alu have been ordered to report to Gamora, where he is almost certain to be sent to the front. This has made him angry, bitter and defiant. He plans to ignore orders to go to Gamora and is remaining in Shek'Ra, where he plans to work for Diso's criminal network and/or exact revenge on somebody (he doesn't really care who).

Race: Alu demon.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 14, M.A. 5, P.S. 28, P.P. 21, P.E. 19, P.B. 5, Spd 15.

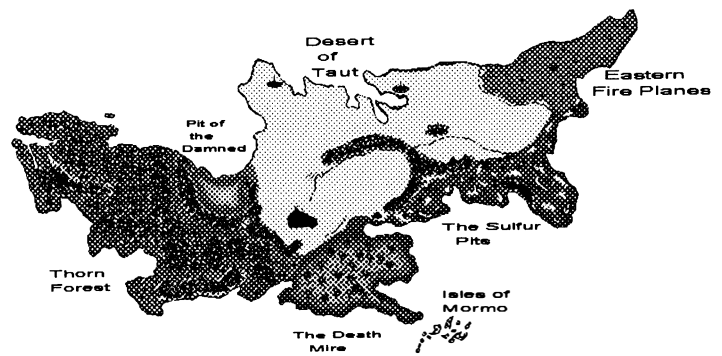
M.D.C.: 100. (On S.D.C. worlds Dogma has 41 Hit Points and 36 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 12.)

Experience Level: Fifth level Alu.

Disposition: He used to be laid back and easy going. So long as his pockets were lined, he was happy. Now he is bent on revenge and taking out Graxon to get his position back. If it comes down to it, he and his Alu will strike at every Baal-Rog in the city if they have to.

Skills of Note: Palming 50%, Pick Locks 60%, Pick Pockets and Prowl 55%.

Weapons and Equipment: He has a giant-sized Demon Bone dagger that returns to the owner when thrown, and a giant-sized Demon Bone spear that spits lightning three times per day and does 3D6 M.D.



Glacier Peak & Glacier Falls

Land Area: Glacier Peak is contained within a massive cavern within the mountain and it is probably a 20 square area (32 km). However, there are numerous caverns below the city and they can add at least an additional 50 square miles (128 sq. km).

Glacier Peak Demon Population: Approximately 700,000, a third of which are probably in the caves below the city that extend to Glacier Falls.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 5,000
Gargoyles - 35,000
Gurgoyles - 10,000
Gargoyle Lords - 1,000
Gargoyle Mages - 500
Taursis - 3,000

Lesser Demons

Alu - 40,000
Aquatics - 100,000
Banshees - 30,000
Demon Bats - 120,000
Demon Flies - 75,000
Ghouls/Nasu - 10,000
Lasae - 45,000
Mares/Nightmares - 20,000
Shedim - 35,000
Succubus/Incubus - 5,000

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs - 30,000
Demon Locusts - 300
Brek-Shall - 7,500
Death Demons - 2,500
Gallu Demon Bulls - 50,000
Magots - 100
Night Owls - 15,000
Raksasha - 5,000
Soul Catchers - 7,000

Glacier Peak Slave Population: There are approximately 1 million slaves.

Humans - 250,000
Non-Humans - 600,000
Supernatural Beings - 150,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D4x1,000 travelers in the city, mostly from caravans coming and going.

No place in Hades so dramatically demonstrates the switching of the elements like Glacier Peak. The two peaked mountains dominate the landscape in the southwestern section of the Desert of Taut. Like a volcano, steam constantly rises from the mouths of the mountains. However it is only steam, as within

the bowels of the mountain is one of the largest sources of fresh water to be found in Hades. Over the centuries the well within Glacier Peak has become polluted and unusable, and has become home to thousands of Aquatic Demons. But they are not the only demons in Glacier Peak. The upper rim is hollowed out and full of caverns that circle around a massive basin of water.

Inside these caverns, a small city has developed, and both the caves and the city have become home to an assortment of demons. The city's main purpose is to *mine the water* in the adjoining mountain called *Glacier Falls*. There thousands of slaves tirelessly collect water, which is distributed all over Hades. Via underground tunnels it is funneled into Glacier Peak, where slaves pack it into barrels, making it ready for transport around Hades. The city also imports many items from the *Thorn Woods* such as wood and Orange Orchids. This allows them to transport water as well as fire wine all over Hades, and because of the source of water, they have become rich off of this natural reservoir.

1. Main Road: Getting to Glacier Peak is no easy task for the majority of ground dwellers. There is a road that twists its way around the mountain going up at least 4000 feet (1219 m), but with all the twists and turns, the 8 mile (12.8 km) long road takes the better part of a day to get to the city. The road is uneven and narrow in some points, providing excellent places for rogue demons, bandits and runaway slaves to launch ambushes. The city guards often try to discourage this, however most are on the take and let it happen anyway. Gargoyles and winged demons avoid the long, winding journey and the potential for bandit attacks.

2. City Gate: The city has a huge steel gate as its entrance. Six Alu and six Gargoyles are charged with defending it from raiders. Nothing has happened in decades, so most of the gate guards are lazy and complacent. Rather than be on the lookout, most spend their day harassing caravan leaders, and trying to shake them down for a few gold coins, gems or anything of value. Only well known caravan leaders are unmolested. Corag, who often frequents from Shek'Ra, is one such notable figure and his caravans pass freely all the time.

3. Caravan Square: Just beyond the city gate is a large, open chamber in the covered city. It is Caravan Square, and all caravans set up shop here while in town. It is always a busy place and there are at least a half dozen caravans at any given time. They peddle all kinds of goods, from slaves to food and supplies. One of the more frequent caravans to come through is Corag from Shek'Ra. This is where he picks up water and fire wine to take back to Shek'Ra, as well as consults with his various contacts.

From here the city has an office from which to purchase water. Since water is rare in Hades and essential to most mortal slaves, there is tight control around it. Once the buyer has been questioned on his intent, or shows the proper documents, water is delivered to his caravan by mortal slaves and Gurgoyles. Pretty much the only reason why caravans stop at Glacier Peak is for the great profit they make on buying and selling the water.

4. Common Rest Caves: Caravan leaders and their minions need a place to stay and rest. Caravan Square is where they go, but it is usually a 24 hour event and getting any sleep is nearly impossible. For a Modeus coin a day, anyone can rest in one of the dozens of caves in this area. There is no privacy and no uri-

nal, so the place stinks of filth, feces, and decay (garbage and dead bodies, among other things). Even those who don't need to rest come here for a place to have some privacy. Sleeping is unadvised unless you have a large group from which to post watch, otherwise there's a good chance you could get jumped, robbed, beaten or worse, as aggressive demons and bandits come looking for easy prey.

4A. Private Rest Caves: Unlike the common rest caves, the private area actually has walled off sections that have locking doors. Conditions are better and the smell more bearable, but it's still noisy and not all that safe. Cost is 5 Modeus coins per night per person.

5. Private Housing: Private housing is homes built in the caves and caverns, owned by demons and other supernatural beings. Each house varies in size and some are even protected with walls and stalactites. Houses are mostly for the permanent residents found in the city as well as housing for the multitudes of slaves who toil away each day collecting water.

6. Governor's Residence: Duke Ezkel has ruled the city for several centuries and also happens to occupy the largest house found in Glacier Peak. He is very rich, as a portion of all profits from water sold goes directly into his pockets.

Duke Ezkel, Quick Stats

Duke Ezkel is your typical Night Owl. He wears several magical rings on his talons, and has an unusual tattoo on his skull that appears to be more like a brand of some sort.

Duke Ezkel is cruel in the extreme as is exhibited by the way he treats his slaves and runs his gladiatorial arena. It is a place nicknamed the Slaughterhouse because slaves and other "contestants" are regularly cut to ribbons for the entertainment of the Duke and his demonic audience. In addition, the Duke has an obsession with spell magic and has several tomes that tell of certain magic devices used in ancient times on various worlds, including Earth and the Palladium World. He also collects magical torture devices, and is glad to pay handsomely to get his claws on items to add to his collection.

Race: Night Owl demon.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 22, M.A. 16, P.S. 31, P.P. 15, P.E. 16, P.B. 10, Spd 21, 110 flying.

M.D.C.: 150. (On S.D.C. worlds Duke Ezkel has 76 Hit Points, 50 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 11.)

Experience Level: Fifth level.

Disposition: Very cruel and sadistic. He loves to maim and torture, and loves the entertainment of the gladiatorial arena and other blood sport.

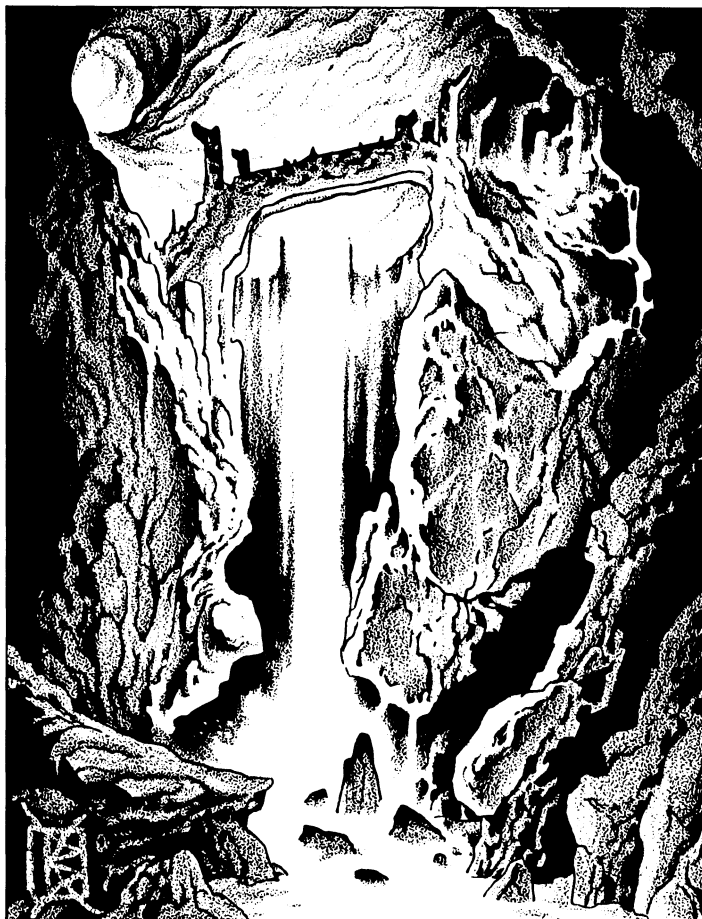
Skills of Note: Lore: Demons and Monsters 90%, Lore: Hades 80%, and Lore: Magic 70%.

Weapons and Equipment: As Duke of Glacier Peak he has access to just about anything he needs. He rarely uses Bone Weapons, but has access to a full armory. He wears a ring of Metamorphosis: Human which can be used three times per day for two hours at a time. He also wears a ring of armor that grants the user the *Armor of Ithan* spell three times per day for 20 minutes at a time; 200 M.D.C. (or 200 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 18). Another ring makes him *impervious to Horror Factor*, another to *sense traps*, a fourth to be *impervious*

to cold, and a fifth that enables him to *shrink to six inches* three times per day.

7. Gladiatorial Arena: Glacier Peak has a small arena to provide local entertainment. There are two large buildings for gladiators and monsters. Giant bleachers carved out of stone surround the rest of the arena, which is sunken in the ground. The arena has no back and goes straight back to the center of the city, where there is a 400 foot (122 m) vertical drop right into the polluted reservoir of water that is full of *Aquatic Demons* waiting for a snack. The bodies of those slain in the arena are also tossed into the reservoir for the Aquatics.

8. Reservoir: At the center of the city is a massive cavity full of water. It is fed from several underground sources. As it rises to the surface, volcanic heat begins turning the water to steam and it vents out of the top of the mountain. At one time the water was so pure and clear that you could see down into its depths. Over the millennia, as refuse and bodies began to be tossed in the water, it slowly became tainted and now smells like raw sewage. In addition, several thousands of Aquatics have made this reservoir their home.



Glacier Falls

Southeast of *Glacier Peak* rises another volcano, however, its interior is hollow. Flowing from several natural springs is some of the freshest and purest water found in Hades. In addition, much of the water condenses and rises out in massive clouds of steam. As water makes contact with the cavern walls the steam turns back to water and trickles back down into a giant basin as

a light rain or mist. Little droplets of water collect in the various nooks and crannies within the mountain and they eventually run over. The results are beautiful, with several waterfalls within the interior shaft of the hollowed out mountain. It is one of the few places on Hades where natural beauty can be found that has not been twisted into some grotesque mockery. If not for the constant crack of the whip and the thousands of human slaves busy at work harvesting water day and night, and the grunting Gargoyles and bellowing Shedim overlords who work the slaves, Glacier Falls could be a tranquil paradise. **Note:** The Falls is recognized as being strategically important and is heavily guarded and protected by the demons, but personally, most demons hate the place.

City of Saddum

Land Area: 50 mile area (80 km).

Neighboring Demon Population: Approximately 2,000.

Outside of the City: Less than 2,000, as the city is officially off limits to demons unless special permission is granted. The following live in small clans outside of the city limits. They are charged with keeping intruders out of the city and are to report any trouble from within or without that might arise. Otherwise, they are to stay out, but be available to defend the city or quell any trouble when called upon by Duke Femus or Demon High Priest Maliki.

Sub-Demons

Gargoyles – 300
Gargoyle Lords – 6
Gargoyle Mages – 3

Lesser Demons

Aquatics – 100
Alu – 100
Demon Bats – 300
Ghouls/Nasu - 200
Lasae - 100
Mares/Nightmares - 100
Shedim – 291
Succubus/Incubus - 500

Greater Demons: None, “officially,” but there could be 1D6x10 prowling the streets looking for a little fun at any time and another 1D6x10 hanging outside of town trying to work up the courage to go into town for some decadent pleasure, fun or unauthorized food.

Saddum Mortal Population: 6.9 million currently, ranges between 3-7 million most of the time.

The Current “Free” Mortal Population: 5.7 million demon worshippers.

Humans – 3.6 million.

Non-Humans – 2.1 million.

Saddum’s Slave Population: About 1.2 million (also potential food stock for demons).

Humans – 780,000

Non-Humans – 430,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 3D6x10 travelers in the city, but they usually consist of authorized caravan merchants who bring in supplies, slaves and trade goods.

The city of Saddum is the only *non-demon city* to be found in Hades. It is located on a peninsula that juts out from the *Desert of Taut* and borders the *Bloody Gulf*. Among demons it is jok-

ingly referred to as “the Cattle Farm.” Little do the inhabitants know their fate is to end up on a demon’s dinner plate someday.

Gorging on the flesh of a living being is a pleasure most demons in Hades enjoy, and in Hades, the majority of demons feast on slaves who have spent years doing backbreaking labor. When they can no longer work, they are eaten. If the quality of work is low and unsatisfactory, they are eaten. Likewise, new “slaves” (or more like food) are brought in from the outside, and consist mainly of mortals (humans and others) who have lost a conflict with the demons and are now a living part of their spoils, earmarked for consumption.

However, the tastiest “food” is raised in *Saddum*, where the populace is encouraged to live an easy life of gluttony and carnal bliss. Thus, *Saddum* is a place of music, revelry, constant parties, street parties, festivals and good times throughout the city. Food, water, booze, drugs and vice flow freely, and the people, the majority of whom are *demon worshipers*, believe this is “their reward” for dedicating their lives to the worship of their infernal masters. Indeed, these pleasures are provided by the Demon Lords, so the happy people of *Saddum* live stress free lives and propagate like rabbits.

The only rules are: no human may leave the city, and they are required to attend a weekly service at the city’s church. Other than those two laws, anything goes and usually does. Most of the populace is content to stay because everything is provided for them. Most wouldn’t last long in the desert, and few even consider it.

The majority of older folk, starting at around 40 years of age for humans (varies with other races), are eventually “relocated” to other cities or given “special assignments,” but young people are also taken away at regular intervals. These residents of *Saddum* leave willingly, because they are told they are going someplace where their prayers, force of will and P.P.E. can “help” their demon masters. From time to time, Great Demons, Dukes, Princes and Lords visit to walk among the city to hand-pick worshipers (like lobsters), supposedly to join them in their palaces or to help a specific Demon Lord, Prince or Duke. “The chosen” sees this as a great honor and happily accepts. Nobody is the wiser, and everybody lives on in blissful happiness. When it’s the next person’s turn to go somewhere, they hop right into the carriage to the slaughterhouse, not realizing they are going to their doom!

These assignments, trips to palaces, service to a Prince, etc., are all convenient cover stories. The truth is, the people of *Saddum* are regularly culled from the herd to be slaughtered and eaten. Since they were never expected to return, none of the other elite, “free” people are any wiser. And so it goes, on and on for generations.

Though it is discouraged, some demons also disguise themselves to look like a human or D-Bee to partake in carnal pleasure, drunkenness and debauchery. Others sometimes stalk the streets and kidnap or kill one or more for pleasure, and food. The succulent and tender meat provided by the populace of *Saddum* is a favorite among demons. Once in a while a person or group of people goes missing from the city, but they are usually quickly forgotten. The society is pretty much one of avarice and lawlessness. Anything goes, including murder, though violence is discouraged. Thus, when someone is found dead or goes missing, no one questions it. Like a cattle farm, the demons re-

stock the city and nobody questions that either. Living in *Saddum* is a privilege and newcomers must have done something to win the favor of their demonic master.

The rest of the non-demons in Hades have all heard stories about the city of *Saddum* being a paradise and a place for loyal devotees, servants and worshipers to retire. Stories are told of how only the most worthy get the privilege to live free at *Saddum*. And though some rumors have suggested the inhabitants are living a lie, few believe any of it, especially those living in *Saddum*. The rare person who might learn the truth is hunted down and go missing (killed and eaten).

The city has what would be considered the largest population of (allegedly) *free humanoids* in Hades. There are roughly 4-7 million residents in *Saddum* at any given time. The city is constructed from sandstone, with massive walls forming a circle around the city. The wall is strictly for protection from the elements and nothing else. The remaining buildings are constructed of stone or brick and house families of various sizes. Supporting the walls and peering into the city are various statues of the Demon Lords.

While *Saddum* is a city of decadence, dark pleasures and even darker secrets (i.e., the people are cattle living a lie in a gilded cage), it is not without its workforce. Only the most opulent families don’t have to work at all, though they may own and operate any number of service and sales oriented businesses dealing in various items from food, clothing, and jewelry to drugs, booze and pleasure. There are garbage men, repair people, waitresses, police and many of the other work and services you would expect to find in any big city. Being what it is, outsiders are kept away and only select merchants are allowed to visit the city and sell their wares. In turn, the workforce is primarily service oriented (saloons, restaurants, nightclubs, gambling halls, drug palaces, and every den of iniquity you can imagine) as well as a thriving manufacturing business producing Demon Bone Weapons for their demon masters.

Note: *Saddum* is not the demons’ only source of humanoid cattle. Demons eat worn out slaves, criminals, captives, defiant worshipers, troublemakers, unwanted visitors, people from cattle pens, and the list goes on. *Saddum* is different. It is the source of *premium meat* from (humanoid) cattle raised lazy and made plump to be soft, juicy, and delicious. The equivalent of premium Kobe beef vs ordinary beef. It’s cruel, deceptive, terrible and gross, as one might expect from demons in hell. And the people, fat and lazy and selfish, really are ignorant of their true purpose or how little the demons care about them. They are pawns and meat, nothing more, making them the epitome of “ignorance is bliss.”

Saddum City Administration

Any city or kingdom in Hades is always administered by a demon. In this case, it is the reclusive Duke Femus living on the *Isle of Skull* in the *Channel of Blood*. However, he has other pursuits and lets *Demon High Priest Maliki* run *Saddum* in his extended absence. The priest’s office is on the eastern side, at the temple to Modeus, the largest building in town. It is his responsibility to keep the city running smoothly and the population as content and stress free as possible. (This is the key to making them delicious when eaten.) While the people are allowed to live a carefree life, they are expected to thank their



Demon Lord for the wonderful life they lead and required to attend weekly services. Maliki's lectures are focused on faith and commitment, and service to "the masters" no matter what fate might await them. The people are lazy, complacent and arrogant in what they perceive as their elite status, and listen halfheartedly.

The Arena

The city has a huge, coliseum style arena. Entertainment ranges from concerts to blood sport, to orgies, to religious ceremonies.

Pleasure District

The part of town that caters to illicit and carnal acts. It is street after street of brothels, nightclubs, dance halls, gambling halls, drug dens, and other places that offer carnal pleasure and other types of sexy entertainment. Decadence and depravity reign here, and this is where demons in disguise (or not) are likely to come to join the action.

Merchant District

The part of town that caters to shops, markets and the buying and selling of most anything one can imagine in the area of retail. Drugs, sex, and slavery are all legal and popular.

Demon High Priest Maliki, Quick Stats

Maliki is a sick and perverted man who knows the true purpose of Saddum and the fate of its people. He sees nothing wrong with it, keeps the secret, and defers to the wisdom and needs of his evil, demon masters. He is, himself, a skinny weasel of a man with long, greasy, black hair and a hawk-like nose. Maliki's beady black eyes always seem to be darting around. He assumes as long as he does a good job, he will be spared becoming a meal, and enjoys his position a little too much. He has his choice of women, booze and whatever he wants. As a Demon High Priest he is expected to teach the populace of the Demon Lords and preach of their strength and superiority. For the most part, he does that well enough and does a good job managing the city.

Race: Human.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Alignment: I.Q. 13, M.E. 21, M.A. 14, P.S. 7, P.P. 8, P.E. 14, P.B. 9, Spd 10.

S.D.C.: 20. **Hit Points:** 39.

Experience Level: 5th Level Demon High Priest.

Disposition: Arrogant and overconfident. He feels secure in his position and relishes the power at his disposal, yet remains nervous and worried.

Skills of Note: Lore: Religion 55%.

Weapons and Equipment: Maliki has a Demon Bone Staff.

Note: Duke Femus is detailed later under the Isle of Skull.

Gamora

Land Area: Gamora covers approximately a 375 square mile area (960 sq. km).

Gamora Demon Population: Approximately 10 million. Keep in mind this number goes up and down by as much as 50% when troops are being moved in Hades and shipped out to Demon's Gate.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 1 million
Gargoyles - 1 million
Gurgoyles - 1 million
Gargoyle Lords - 250,000
Gargoyle Mages - 50,000
Taursis - 1 million

Lesser Demons

Alu - 500,000
Aquatics - 30,000
Banshees - 50,000
Demon Bats - 200,000
Demon Flies - 1 million
Ghouls/Nasu - 1 million
Lasae - 1 million
Mares/Nightmares - 40,000
Shedim - 2 million
Succubus/Incubus - 30,000

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs - 300,000
Demon Locusts - 200,000
Brek-Shall - 5,000
Death Demons - 1,000 (contained and away from the general demon population)
Gallu Demon Bulls - 350,000
Magots - 40,000
Night Owls - 100,000
Raksasha - 30,000
Soul Catchers - 10,000

Gamora Slave Population: There are approximately 5 million slaves. Humans - 3 million

Non-Humans - 1.5 million
Supernatural Beings - 500,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D6x100 travelers in the city. They can be anything from Deevil spies to Temporal Raiders on business.

The last of the major demon cities in the Desert of Taut is Gamora, and is a cross between a metropolis and a military base. What started out as a single staging area has turned into a walled, fortress city overnight. The city's walls are the heaviest walls anywhere in Hades. Black Granite was shipped in from the north specifically for this purpose. The walls are 100 feet (30.5 m) tall and 50 feet (15.2 m) thick. Hundreds of demons walk the walls and every 150 feet (45.7 m) is a weapon emplacement for a Soul or Hell Cannon or watchtower filled with demons. Most of the buildings within are also constructed of black granite as well. Only the War Council Chamber is different.

Behind the walls, demons and other minions from all over Tartarus meet on orders from the Demon Lords. Modeus' top generals also meet here to divide up the troops and provide for various assignments. The majority of demons and the lesser minions must march to **Demon's Gate**, while special units and greater demons get transported via the unholy **Demon Transports** (see the section on *Bone Weapons* for details on the latter). These massive military transports are beginning to see

much more use in Hades, and the Demon Lords are manufacturing them as fast as they can. Gamora is also the final assembly location of many of the new artillery weapons being devised. Here slaves do the final assembly and the weapons are rolled out and made ready for use in the field.

Slaves toil away in the two war factories that have sprung up overnight. Andras has taken charge of security, over the protests of Charun and Mania. Thousands of his *Brass Guard* act as security for the city and the factories. Some of the *Brass Guard II* are used here as well. He fears this is the perfect place for a Deevil spy or saboteur and wants to prevent any acts of sabotage or outright attack.

Notable Places in Gamora

Twin War Factories

Two huge buildings, each over a mile (1.6 km) in length, can be found in the south section of the city. They are the first of their kind and a shaky step towards industrialization. Each belches out plumes of black and gray smoke as the demons' human lackeys churn out weapons for the Minion War. One factory manufactures the new Demon Bone Weapons via Soul-mancy, while conventional steel weapons are churned out for the masses of non-demon cannon fodder. The other building manufactures Soul-mancy siege weapons/artillery and Demon Transport Ships.

The Arena

The city does sport a huge, coliseum style arena. Entertainment is often provided by promoters from Fire Dome. If this entertainment was not shipped in, there would be grudge matches between various demon factions. The Demon Lords want fresh troops, not half beaten ones.

Slaughterhouses

Gamora also has some of the largest slaughterhouses in Hades. Demons like to indulge in their basic instincts and consume raw flesh, even from those still alive. Mortals are often hung from a rotating pulley system that transports them through the large buildings. For a fee of five Modeus coins, demons come in and dine like at a buffet. When they see a tasty morsel pass by, all they have to do is reach up and grab the person, usually ripping their arms out of their sockets in the process. Blood and gore are everywhere and the smell of death is constantly in the air. Those not near death often wail and scream pleading for their lives. This is music to the demons' ears. All slaves know that to be brought to a slaughterhouse means an agonizing death.

Some demons like to play with their food, and often torment mortals for hours. Demons like to soak up the fear these poor people have as they know these last hours of their life will probably be the worst they've ever faced.

Pleasure District

The part of town that caters to illicit and carnal acts. It is street after street of brothels, nightclubs, dance halls, gambling halls, drug dens, and other places that offer pleasure and entertainment. Decadence and depravity are welcome.

Merchant District

The part of town that caters to shops, markets and the buying and selling of most anything one can imagine in the area of retail. Drugs, sex, and slavery are all legal.

The War Council Building

At the center of the city is the War Council Building. It is a huge building of unusual design. Four massive spires climb 1,000 feet (305 m) into the air and at the center is a dome 200 feet (61 m) in height. The four spires are made of black granite, while the massive dome is Blood Marble. Adorning the round building are statues of the various Demon Lords all posed in battle gear, ready to make war. There is an incredible amount of demon activity in this building. Flying demons come and go from the various spires and ground troops march in formation on its massive parade ground outdoors. Here the Hades War Council meets to discuss and determine strategy and troop movement. The War Council is headed by *General Zukel* and a cadre of Greater Demons all assigned by Modeus, plus the council of Andras. These days, Modeus spends much of his time being briefed on recent enemy activities, military operations and the latest turns in the Minion War.

The building was specifically built for the purposes of the Minion War and it bustles with activity as reports come in and orders are relayed. The war room is enchanted to give the council a firsthand glance of what's happening in the war in real time. A round table at the center of the room is inlaid with a variety of magic symbols. With but a command, the Demon War Council can see events unfolding at specific battlefields, almost like a holographic projection of a video transmission. This gives these leaders a bird's-eye view of the whole battlefield. The problem is they can't relay real time orders and must rely on couriers to deliver them. Even with the power these demons wield it usually takes 2D6 minutes to bark out an order or instructions and have a Greater Demon messenger Dimensional Teleport to the battlefield with them. Dimensional Teleports are automatic because the demon can actually see where he is going, however, even a delay of minutes may be too late, and the battlefield may have changed by the time the messenger arrives. Furthermore, certain magicks can disrupt this view. Anti-Magic Cloud, Circles of Protection, and even certain Banishment spells all block or obscure portions of the battlefield or hide a particular General from view. Nor can it zoom in on a specific individual or location. It is an impressive yet imperfect magical device, but one that serves the War Council reasonably well.

The War Chamber is also a place to develop long term strategies and tactics, and generally assess the war and position troops, meet and debrief commanders and assign and redeploy troops.

The Black Spires of the War Council building are the housing area where Demon Lords and field commanders can retire. Each Demon Lord who does come to Gamora has his or her own massive chamber and several floors above and below for his or her selected minions, private meetings, and entourage. Each spire has several balconies too, so the Demon Lords and other high ranking demons can look out upon the troops. The building is impressive and frightening to behold, because it represents the combined power of the Demon Lords of Hades.

Hades War Council

The following demons have been hand-picked by the various Demon Lords to serve as their military commanders in the Minion War. All are relatively loyal to their respective Demon Lord despite alignment and personality differences. **Note:** Deific powers are described in the **Dragons and Gods** sourcebook for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®.

General Zukel, Quick Stats

The General is old even for a Demon Locust, and looks every bit his age. His once green carapace is now a dull grey-green with hints of white showing up in various places. He has a scar from a powerful holy sword over his left eye. It will not heal and he is lucky not to have lost his sight completely in that eye. As a sign of authority he wears a Rune crown given to him by Modeus; it assures obedience from his troops.

General Zukel has seen many campaigns and has been with Modeus since his earliest days. The two are often seen discussing matters in private, and the General always seems to have Modeus' ear. The General is battle hardened and very experienced in the matters of war. He has been appointed the overall leader in the council and has final say and judgement in all matters, even if the majority disagree. General Zukel is the equivalent of a Demon Prince and he has a strong following among his own kind. As a result of his position and contingent of followers, he has been given the deific power of *Mobile Sphere of Destruction*. He very rarely uses it, as it costs three times the norm for Zukel to use. The General was appointed by Modeus and answers directly to him.

Race: Demon Locust.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Alignment: I.Q. 23, M.E. 23, M.A. 18, P.S. 46, P.P. 23, P.E. 23, P.B. 2, Spd 30, 200 flying.

M.D.C.: 1200. (On S.D.C. worlds General Zukel has 60 Hit Points, 120 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 17.)

Experience Level: Thirteenth.

Disposition: Analytical, to a fault. He is often measuring things up and trying to see the problem from every angle. He knows brute force won't always win the day, which is why he was a supporter of the various demon weapon programs going on around Hades. Like any demon, Zukel hates failure, but he does recognize when there is not a winning chance in Hades. So on more than one occasion, he has ordered retreats which have not been popular.

Skills of Note: Camouflage, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Intelligence, Military Etiquette, and Military Fortification, all at 98%.

Special Weapon: Crown of Command: It is the ultimate status symbol in Hades, and General Zukel has had it for several thousand years now. It is a Rune crown made of gold and silver and covered in gemstones. The crown has four points that rise up and within each is a very valuable Hades ruby. The crown grants the user the following: Command all demons: Any order given by Zukel must be obeyed, or else the demon suffers the effects of the Agony spell. (This applies to what the owner considers as his army and can't be used on enemy troops, the minions of Dyval or any other supernatural being that is outside the Pantheon of Hades.) Lesser Demons don't



even get a saving throw. If they disobey they go down suffering from Agony. Greater Demons can try to resist, but need a saving throw of 18 or higher. *Demon Dukes* only need a 16 to save, *Princes* a 13, and of course the *Demon Lords* are immune. The spell's potency is that of an eighth level spell caster.

The crown further allows the owner to summon 1D6x10 Sub-Demons, 4D6 Lesser Demons (any), and 2D6 Greater Demons three times per day; all instantly obedient and loyal to the General.

The crown grants the wearer a Horror Factor of 15 or adds +3 to his existing Horror Factor, whichever is greater, the wearer is, himself, immune to possession and mind control of any kind, and +5 to save vs illusions.

Plus, the crown has all the usual abilities of a Rune Weapon; I.Q. of 16, calls itself *Battle Master*, and is said to have been part of many wars in a 30,000 year period in the Palladium World before becoming the property of Hades.

Weapons and Equipment: As the General of the army, Zukel has access to any weapon normally available in Hades, magic or otherwise.

Prince Zorba, Quick Stats

Prince Zorba is a golden bronze colored Baal-Rog with black wings that have streaks of bronze through them. He wears a suit of black and gray scale mail armor that allows his wings to stick out and provides him with additional protection.

Prince Zorba has a long and established career leading thousands of troops. He has done battle in the dimensional divide known as the Great Rift on five occasions, and each time was able to force the Deevils back on their heels. He is a formidable field commander with a head for strategy and tactics, and he thinks fast on his feet. His superior intelligence allows him to see the bigger picture and utilize his troops to their maximum potential. He is very vocal in his opinions and often spends long hours arguing with General Zukel, who he sees as old, tentative and out of touch. Sure it may have been wiser to retreat in certain situations, but when you can inflict mass casualties on the enemy and open a hole in their line, the sacrifice of tens of thousands is worth it, at least to Zorba. These two rarely see eye to eye on anything and it's only because of Pollux and Raja that they even manage to get anything done. General Zukel also has that damned crown which he uses quite freely, which upsets the envious and ambitious Zorba all the more.

Zorba has his own select followers from his days of leading troops in the Great Rift. More than just another Greater Demon, the Prince has the deific power of *Create Deific Portal*. As usual, this power costs the Prince three times the normal cost to use. Zorba answers directly to his lord Andras, who hand-picked him for the job.

Zorba can't understand why he isn't in charge of the war effort, and Andras uses that jealousy to make Prince Zorba one of his pawns and an enemy of Modeus. He was appointed by and is loyal to Andras, who he considers to be his confidant and friend. In truth, Zorba is just another pawn in Andras' many schemes.

Race: Baal-Rog.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Alignment: I.Q. 20, M.E. 18, M.A. 18, P.S. 36, P.P. 19, P.E. 24, P.B. 8, Spd 30, 110 flying.

M.D.C.: 800. (On S.D.C. worlds Zorba has 104 Hit Points, 70 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: Ninth.

Disposition: Cocky, arrogant, and hungry for power and fame.

He feels he is above most other demons and lets his ambition get the best of him. Though a natural leader, he is not highly respected or trusted by his men, because they know they mean nothing to him but a means to an end. Zorba likes his position in the War Council but feels slighted that he is not the supreme General. He feels he is smarter and better than Zukel and that Modeus is a fool for not recognizing that fact. Indeed, Prince Zorba's greatest flaws are his blind ambition (at the expense of those who serve under him) and his jealousy of General Zukel and dissatisfaction with Modeus because he hasn't fully recognized his genius. This makes Zorba a rival to the General, a disgruntled leader and pawn in Andras' many schemes to eliminate Modeus. He's setting the Prince up to hate Modeus and want to launch an assassination attempt or a coup.

Skills of Note: Prince Zorba was trained as part of the Brass Guard II under the Military M.O.S. and has all skills at 98%. His career was short with the Brass Guard II. He proved himself to be an effective leader and he was moved to an elevated position, one where Andras could observe how a Brass Guard II Baal-Rog could use his discipline and training to lead large groups of Demons.

Weapons and Equipment: A suit of magical scale mail that provides protection against cold based attacks and cold in general. In cold environments the user suffers no ill effects or even a chill in the air. In addition, cold based magic attacks do half damage to the wearer of the armor. The armor has 180 M.D.C. (or 180 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 15 in S.D.C. settings) and regenerates lost S.D.C./M.D.C. at a rate of 2D6+6 per hour. Zorba wields a Sword of Atlantis which he claims to have taken off of a dead High Lord. The sword has an I.Q. of 15 and is of Miscreant alignment. The sword likes to revel in bloodshed, and on more than one occasion it has been the sword that has prompted Zorba to get into a fight with Zukel.

Prince Pollux, Quick Stats

Always armed and armored, this pitch black Gallu wears a suit of bronze armor and has an assortment of weapons at his disposal. He also wears what looks to be an unusual cowl that fans behind his head and has a strip running over his head and ends just by the eyes. It has several white spikes protruding from it and radiates with magic. Prince Pollux was appointed by Belphegor, and reports to him.

Pollux rose through the ranks of the Gallu Demon Bulls and has proven himself to be a good leader and relentless warrior. He had to kill several rivals to get where he is today, and has his fair share of rivals and enemies within the demons of Hades. Pollux finds the chaos of the Minion War intoxicating, and is excited about invading and conquering Dyval and making it part of Hades. The only problem he sees is getting Prince Zorba and General Zukel to agree on a course of action, or get out of his way. He is not above making his own decisions while they

bicker and exchange ideas on strategies and tactics. As a Demon Prince, Pollux has gained the ability of *Create Deific Portal*, which costs him three times the normal cost to use.

Race: Gallu Bull, Greater Demon.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Alignment: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 11, P.S. 42, P.P. 18, P.E. 22, P.B. 11, Spd 120.

M.D.C.: 1050. (On S.D.C. worlds Pollux has 44 Hit Points and 80 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 15.)

Experience Level: Ninth.

Disposition: Enjoys war, chaos and carnage, and is often at the center of various invasion plots. He is honorable, if in a twisted way, and will keep his word, but usually only gives it to those he feels are worthy of it.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 92%, Track Humanoids 65%, Military Etiquette 85%, Wilderness Survival 80%, Detect Ambush 70%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 90%, W.P. Chain, W.P. Sword, and W.P. Heavy M.D. Weapons.

Weapons and Equipment: Pollux has a suit of *alien armor* that fits his massive frame. It has 200 M.D.C. (or 200 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 17) and is resistant to fire and cold (half damage). He also came across an unusual symbiotic creature that feeds on P.P.E. as well as his demonic blood. The creature is actually the fan around his neck and over his head. It provides an additional 400 M.D.C. (Hit Points are doubled in S.D.C. dimensions) and increases the user's strength by 10 points. However, there are some drawbacks. First, the thing is pretty obvious being wrapped around the neck with part of it fanned out (the cowl), and second, it hampers bio-regeneration. Instead of regenerating 2D6 per melee, it's per minute. Also, long term as it grows, parts of the symbiote will invade the brain, making it impossible for the two to be separated without killing them both.

Pollux also has a fondness for Techno-Wizard weapons and has a Flaming Sword, a TW Fire Bolt Pistol, a TW Force Cannon and an assortment of Goblin Grenades. Eventually, he plans on obtaining a TW suit of armor.

Princess Raja, Quick Stats

Princess Raja served Abdul-Ra faithfully for many years, and prior to her master's imprisonment in Dyval, they were lovers for a time. She has always been faithful to her lord, and continues to serve him faithfully. Her work is top notch and her reports filled with valuable details that any other operative would miss. She actually feels honored to have been chosen for this position and ensures that her lord receives the most current and up to date intelligence. After Abdul-Ra has reviewed it, it is then passed out to the council and other Demon Lords as needed. Princess Raja is the representative of Abdul-Ra in all matters regarding intelligence and espionage. Her elevated status and power gives her the ability of *Manifestation* at three times the cost to use as a true deity.

The Princess is a very lithe and feminine looking demon with a gold and brown coat of fur. She prefers to wear silk robes, but does have a suit of armor when it is needed.

Race: Raksasha.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Alignment: I.Q. 19, M.E. 17, M.A. 18, P.S. 35, P.P. 18, P.E. 23, P.B. 22, Spd 40.

M.D.C.: 1000. (On S.D.C. worlds Princess Raja has 73 Hit Points, 90 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 10.)

Experience Level: Twelfth.

Disposition: Very cunning and extremely resourceful. She rarely asks a question that she doesn't already know the answer to, and is strong willed and determined. She lets the others prattle on or argue, then when there is an interlude, interjects some of her well thought out points and research based observations, always backed up by intelligence reports which ultimately settles the rest of the council and enables them to decide on a plan of action. For the most part, she is quiet and reserved, preferring to observe and watch, speaking only when she has something to contribute. However, she does have a voice and few on the council are willing to argue with her when she raises it.

Skills of Note: Disguise, Intelligence, Interrogation, Impersonation, Undercover Ops, I.D. Undercover Agent, Tailing, Lore: Demons and Monsters, and Lore: Magic, all at 98%, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Find Contraband and Streetwise at 80%, plus W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Knife and W.P. Energy Pistol.

Weapons and Equipment: While rarely worn, she does have a suit of Leather of Iron with 150 M.D.C. (an A.R. of 16 and 300 S.D.C. in S.D.C. settings). She also has a pair of Rune daggers. Both have an I.Q. of 11. In addition to the basic powers of Rune Weapons, one has Temporal Magic with D-Phase, Remote Viewing, and Time Warp Slow Motion. Each can be used three times per day. Duration is equal to a 5th level spell caster. The other dagger is a soul drinker and has the super sharpness property. Damage is 4D6 and 4D6+4 respectively.

Prince Whisp, Quick Stats

Whisp is a humanoid shaped demon who looks transparent most of the time, except when he gets angry. When perturbed, he looks to have mini tornadoes spinning around inside of him. He is here at the behest of Charun and answers directly to him. Prince Whisp is part of a group of Jinn to approach Charun when they heard rumors that their brethren were being sacrificed by the Demon Lords for the sake of their deific powers. It was not his intention to be drafted into this particular circle, and he hates doing it. It means he has to work with these other fools and then report to Charun. The only good thing was the promotion and boost in power. However, he'd rather try out his *Mobile Sphere of Destruction* on the battlefield instead of being cooped up in some demon command center. He has no love for Modeus and it is Charun's hope to eventually get the Jinn to attack Modeus for him.

Race: Air Jinn.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Alignment: I.Q. 12, M.E. 16, M.A. 21, P.S. 33, P.P. 19, P.E. 17, P.B. 8, Spd 50, 180 flying.

M.D.C.: 900. (On S.D.C. worlds Whisp has 97 Hit Points, 40 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: Eleventh.

Disposition: Laid back, lazy, hates to work, and generally whines about everything. He is cruel and sadistic and gets much pleasure from tearing apart mortals.

Skills of Note: Lore: Magic and Lore: Demons and Monsters at 80%, Intelligence 90%, and Streetwise 75%.

Weapons and Equipment: Only a Demon Bone Whip and nothing else appreciable, yet. Charun took everything he and his fellow Jinn had as tribute. This is another reason for his resentment toward the Demon Lords and Modeus. (Charun told Whisp that he had to take all valuables under decree of Lord Modeus to support the war effort.)

Prince Ma'Kal, Quick Stats

Prince Ma'Kal was one of the few Soul Catchers to get Succor-Bemoth's attention when they were confined to his fortress. Having the Demon Lord's ear, he acted quickly, informing him what he and his people were capable of doing and how they could contribute to the war effort. Succor-Bemoth saw value in what these demons had to offer and, perhaps by keeping them busy and giving them a cause to fight for, how they would prove useful to Modeus in the Minion War.

Since his elevated appointment, Ma'Kal has become the unofficial spokesman for the Soul Catchers as a people, and answers directly to Succor-Bemoth. He certainly relishes the power and position, and is often intoxicated by it, sometimes forgetting his position in the council. He has little to offer the council in the way of strategy and military matters, so he has been relegated to logistics and supplies.

For some reason he has not developed any deific powers. Ma'Kal knows there is supposed to be a boost in power upon becoming a Prince, however he has yet to see any. He is not saying anything to anyone for fear of being usurped. Pretty large for his kind and covered with many agonized faces, Ma'Kal always makes sure to fill up on his quota of souls, and may have inadvertently obtained some demon souls in the process.

Race: Soul Catcher.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Alignment: I.Q. 15, M.E. 19, M.A. 14, P.S. 36, P.P. 24, P.E. 23, P.B. 6, Spd 26.

M.D.C.: 630. (On S.D.C. worlds Prince Ma'Kal has 69 Hit Points, 100 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: Ninth.

Disposition: Arrogant and sure of himself. Ever since his elevation in rank he has become an insufferable pain for the other council members. He prefers to give orders rather than take them and is beginning to insist his ideas be heard in the Council.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 92%, Interrogation Techniques 85%, Tracking 70%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 75%, and W.P. Sword.

Weapons and Equipment: Ma'Kal felt he needed some kind of impressive weapon and somehow managed to swindle a High Lord in Atlantis for an Impaler; he and the sword have much in common.

Desert of Taut Tables

These tables (and the rest that follow in each section of Hades) have been designed to provide for a range of challenges, from relatively minor to ones so fierce that the bravest warrior will feel the weight of despair, fear, and hopelessness that permeates Hades. At the very least, they should make the player characters think twice before charging into a battle just to reap some experience points. Each section will have three tables.

Terrain. Presumably, the player characters are trying to get somewhere in Hades. This will help you, the G.M., present some challenges to your players that aren't just combat in nature.

Weather conditions for the region. While weather is not normally much of a factor in conventional fantasy or sci-fi settings, it is in Hades. Mortal characters could be easily killed by what falls from the sky or rolls across the land. This table can be used independently or in conjunction with the Terrain table.

Encounters. Likely run-ins with regional monsters, demons and inhabitants. This is where combat may be necessary. Again, this table can be used independently, or in conjunction with the other two tables. Keep in mind, however, that combining more than one table will certainly make for a bigger challenge to the player group and might be too lethal for some groups. G.M.s should use common sense in what they feel their players' characters can handle. It might be wise at first to gauge how the characters react to different situations and then, perhaps, throw something new into the mix. I've always found that straight up combat can get boring rather quickly. So in an effort to spice things up, I (Carl Gleba) like to include other factors such as terrain and weather. Both of which have proven to make for memorable encounters in my many play-tests. Game Masters may also wish to adjust the experience points they hand out, as well. Perhaps the characters choose to talk their way out of a battle, because their backs are up against a river of lava, or there is a narrow ledge to pass and they have several flying Gargoyles to contend with. This definitely merits extra experience points, especially if it's clever or gets the Gargoyles to help them in some way. Keep that in mind as a simple battle encounter may turn into a life or death struggle.

Terrain Tables for the Desert of Taut

For the most part, the desert is one huge sand pit. As far as the eye can see, there is sand everywhere. Very little changes from mile to mile so it is advised that Game Masters roll on this table once every week while in the Desert of Taut.

01-20% Sand, as far as the eye can see, just sand. This area of the desert is relatively flat and offers no major obstacles. Due to the sandy conditions, speed is reduced by 10%.

21-40% Sand dunes. This part of the desert is like a rolling sea, and the characters find they are constantly climbing up and down huge sand dunes that can be up to 120 feet (36.5 m) in height. Because of all the up and down climbing, speed is reduced by 25% and people fatigue three times more quickly.

41-50% A river of lava blocks the path and a way around (or across) is needed. The river extends 2D4x10 miles (32 to 128 km) in either direction and is 4D6 yards/meters wide.

51-60% Field of Glass Plains. There are 2D4 to negotiate around and this can take several hours or days depending on the size and numbers.

61-70% A field of Fire Geysers blocks the characters' path. Going around might be an option, but it will no doubt add at least a day or two to the journey.

71-80% A patch of rocky desert. The ground is rough and broken with shards of rock jutting out from it. This looks like some kind of scene from outer space. Speed is reduced by 25%. The stretch of desert is 1D6x10 miles (16 to 96 km) in size.

81-85% A combination of rocky and sandy desert. The land is difficult to cross and the terrain uneven and broken. Speed is reduced by 45% and the patch of desert is 2D4x10 miles (32 to 128 km) in size.

86-90% Sand Pits. They are difficult to spot as they are mixed in with the rest of the desert, especially sand dunes. There are 1D6 to negotiate.

91-95% A canyon stretches before the characters! The surrounding desert is considered rocky so travel should be easier. There is a choice of travel, through the canyon, which is easier, but possibly more dangerous, with several places where a monster or demon bandits or slavers could be hiding or waiting in ambush, or try and follow the rim of the canyon if possible.

96-00% A Bone Yard! 1D6+2 giant skeletons dot the landscape. This could be a good thing or a bad thing depending on whether or not any demons are around. If no demons are found, the skulls of the giant beasts can be used as a temporary shelter.

Taut Desert Weather

The Desert of Taut has the least variety of weather found in Hades. However, whether this is a good or bad thing is up to those traveling. Conditions can vary greatly from day to day, but for ease of game play, roll every 1D6+1 days. Given the size of the desert, things can remain static in one area for up to a week at a time.

01-30% A fine, clear day (for Hades) with little if any wind.

31-50% A brief sand storm that only lasts 1D4 hours.

51-70% An ash storm! It only lasts for 1D4 hours.

71-80% A huge sand storm that lasts for 2D6 hours.

81-90% Ash storm, only this one lasts for 3D6 hours.

91-00% A Hades Lightning Storm. They are very rare and happen mostly at night. Not a good time to be out in the open with no shelter to fall back on.

Encounter Tables in Taut

Given the size of the desert, it is entirely possible to go weeks without seeing a soul. There are some specific caravan routes, but they are not like roads, so it is possible for two caravans to leave at the same time, but never cross paths. The same is true for encounters. Roll once a week for an encounter, or at the Game Master's discretion.

01-10% All is quiet, no encounter.

11-15% A pair of Demon Flies or Demon Bats are buzzing around and may see mortals wandering in the desert as fun playthings, spies to be captured or food to be eaten before somebody else sees them.

16-20% 2D4 of Murmur's Black Vultures have been following and circling overhead for hours. It's an ominous sign, because it means they think the character(s) are not long to live. Whether that's true or not, the darn birds may attract nosy demons to come and investigate. Is there a way to chase them away? **Note:** If the character(s) stop to sleep or rest, a few of the Black Vultures will come down to bite and see if they are alive!

21-25% 1D4 Gargoyles or Gargoylites see the characters and decide to fly over to harass and/or question them. They may be on patrol and all business, playful and looking for cruel fun at the player group's expense, or see our heroes as food to be slaughtered and eaten or spies to be captured (and hopefully win them a reward for their vigilance). If captured, the player group is taken to the nearest city.

26-30% One of the Fallen, probably a Tauris or an outcast individual (any type of demon). He may see the player group as a threat (or food) and attack, or see them as a potential ally and help them so they will do something to help him.

31-35% A lone Couril or Gargoylite with a damaged wing. He's been in a recent battle and hasn't healed yet. If left alone, he is certain to fly off and tell a Greater Demon he's seen mortal intruders in the desert. If captured, he'll cause mischief and trouble. If attacked, he fights back the best he can. Then there's the question of what attacked him and is it (or are they) on his trail. Whatever it is, he's not likely to appreciate finding other people around and a battle is likely.

36-40% Worms of Taut! Most call the desert home and can be found slithering anywhere! Since this is their home turf there are likely to be 2D6 found at any given time. Most go out hunting for prey, or just lie in ambush. Game Masters can include a variety or roll on the following table. *01-20%* Fire Worms, *21-40%* Tomb Worms, *41-60%* Nippers, *61-80%* Tri-Fang, *81-100%* Serpent Beast.

41-45% A full blown caravan! The characters probably crossed one of the caravan trade routes. The response from the caravan will vary. Most owners of caravans are not demons, but greed is always present and if they feel they can capture the characters without much effort they will endeavor to do so. Or they might try to trick the group into protecting them from bandits or rivals, or doing/getting something that will make the caravan merchant money. On the other hand, the caravan owner might be willing to give them passage to the next city or a dimensional portal, provided they can pay the price. Or he may be willing to trade with them or sell food, water, supplies and/or information to make a buck. Of course, our heroes need to worry that he might inform the authorities at the next city (weeks away or nearby?) of their presence.

46-50% One of the predatory Netherbeasts, probably a Serpent Lion or Desert Howler, on the prowl – maybe a mated pair or mother and young, if the group can handle the challenge – and mortals always look like easy prey. However, the beast will give up if the group puts up too much of a fight. Will fight until the Netherbeast loses half its M.D.C.

51-60% 1D4+2 Ant Lions! Hidden in the valleys of sand dunes are hungry Ant Lions. Unless the characters spot them ahead of time they'll be surrounded and attacked.

61-65% Sand Worm looking for dinner. Tag, you're it!

66-70% 1D6+1 other monstrous beings from another world. Are they friend or foe? It is possible they are looking to loot

supplies from the characters and if they feel they can take them they will attack. Otherwise, if the characters appear powerful or well armed, or outnumber them by 3 to 1, they may opt to parley and see if trading is an option.

71-75% Gargoyle Patrol. 2D4 are scouting the area and spy the characters. Since they are in the south they may be content to just rob and bully the characters or even take a bribe of alcohol, food, or gold and leave them alone. Of course, even under the latter circumstance they aren't likely to help mortals, and if anything, will deliberately try to send them into danger.

76-80% Slavers! Probably a mixed group of 1D4+1 Lesser Demons or Sub-Demons, one Greater Demon and 1D6+2 mortal slaves/henchmen (no special powers or weapons, but loyal to their demonic masters). They are only too happy to add the player characters to their slave stock.

81-85% 2D6 Alu or Shedim. They could be nomads who live in the desert, or scouting ahead for a caravan. On the other hand, they could be on patrol or sent on a mission by a Demon Lord for some purpose. The question is, are they looking for a fight? If they can take the group, then maybe, otherwise they may just ignore them and go about their business.

86-90% Band of Lesser Demons. This can vary but probably consists of 2D6 Lesser Demons or a mixed group of Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, Gargoylites and a Gargoyle Mage or Lord. They could be bandits, outcasts or on a mission, and just happen upon the characters by chance. Not being the wisest of demons, the player characters might be able to talk or bluff their way out of trouble. Otherwise, the demons will probably attack.

91-95% 1D4 Greater Demons and 1D6 Lesser Demons. Who spots who first? Do the demons ambush the characters, or vice versa? Or can our heroes hide and escape their notice? If not, the demons are likely to question them, size them up, determine if they are friends, foes, neutral or misguided, and then figure out a way they can use them to their advantage. In the alternative, the demons may have heard there are Deevil spies or assassins hiding in the desert and are trying to find and liquidate them before they can cause any harm. Thus, the infernals might mistake the player characters as the enemy agents or offer them safe passage (or a reward) if they help them find the Deevils.

96-00% 1D6+1 minions of Dyval (could be mortal agents, Lesser Deevils or Greater Deevils; but at least one is a greater menace). They are up to no good, and they don't need some stupid mortals alerting the demons that they have snuck into Hades on a mission of reconnaissance, sabotage or assassination. "Sorry pretty humans, you must die."

The Sulfur Pits

The Sulfur Pits are a desolate region of Hades devoid of just about everything. Nothing grows here, save for the occasional patch of mold or fungus, and even few creatures call the Sulfur Pits home. The variety of vicious weather that constantly pelts the region has a lot to do with that. What the Sulfur Pits are really known for is their vast *underground network of tunnels and caverns*. There is an enormous network running under the whole region. Despite the dangers of traveling below the surface, they far outweigh traveling above. Firestorms and acid storms take turns ravaging the surface. There is little in the way of a reprieve, despite having the moisture soaking *Desert of Taut* to the



north and west. The *Infernal Crown* acts as a natural barrier preventing the desert from absorbing the excess moisture created there. Of all the regions in Tartarus, the Sulfur Pits are the wettest and least desirable place for demons, which only makes this section of Hades even more desolate.

The Surface

The Sulfur Pits are generally split between the surface and the subsurface. The surface looks like a pitted and scarred wasteland. The ground is pitted, volcanic rock. Scattered all over the place are pits that vary in size from a yard/meter to a couple hundred yards/meters across. All are filled with something. The small pits are usually filled with boiling *acid water*, though some catch rainwater and are suitable for drinking. The larger and deeper pits are usually filled with tar or lava. Medium-sized pits (under 50 feet/15.2 m in diameter) may be tar pits or lava baths, or belch forth a sulfurous steam. Some of them are Steam or Gas Vents, and others are surrounded by Fire Geysers or Fire Jets, spewing forth the flaming liquid or fire at regular intervals. Only a few are empty, and some are even filled with a disgusting *phlegm-like* substance, its origin unknown and presumed to be from the only permanent resident of the Sulfur Pits, the Demon Lord Belphegor, or possibly one of his numerous minions who stalk the caves.

The average depth of a pit is 10-60 feet (3 to 18 m; roll 1D6x10 to determine). At the bottom of the pits is always some type of liquid like tar, acid water, etc. The depth of the liquid varies as dramatically as the depths of the pits, but usually fills 1D4x10% of the pit.

The pits are everywhere, so running blindly on the surface is likely, to result in falling down and into one of the pits. They are climbable, with many nooks, crannies, and handholds to grab onto. This would normally provide a bonus to climb, however the walls are usually wet or slimy, making the climb slow (and -10%) to climb out without falling.

The few creatures who do inhabit the region make homes of the various pits and are rarely pleasant to encounter. Pit Vipers are a prime example, and when they find a suitable location they become quite aggressive at defending it as their lair.

Lord of the Region

Blood Pit. In the middle of the Sulfur Pits resides the *Demon Lord Belphegor*. He occupies one of the largest pits to be found in the region and often wanders the caverns to feed. His lair is

called the *Blood Pit* because it and the area around it are bloody and littered with bits of skull and bone fragments from Belphegor's numerous victims. Over the eons, countless victims have lost their lives to the brutality and gluttony of Belphegor. The lucky ones are eaten quickly, the rest suffer a horrible death, torn apart, piece by piece, by the evil Demon Lord. Most don't die right away either, and may be left for hours, even days, before Belphegor finishes what he started.

Like the rest of the Sulfur Pit, the area around the Blood Pit is pitted and scarred. His home is a pit 300 feet (91.5 m) in diameter. Surrounding his pit are seven other, smaller pits varying in size from 20-80 feet (6.1 to 24.3 m). Each is connected to the main pit by an underground tunnel, and Belphegor can extend his long tentacles through any or all of them to get his prize. If he falls under attack, these pits are used to his advantage and provide an obstacle course to overcome when facing Belphegor.

The Blood Pit is the most likely place to encounter the Demon Lord. If he's not there, he's roaming the underground tunnels and chambers, or visiting with his monstrous neighbor and friend, *Mictla, the Devourer*. Belphegor considers the entirety of the Sulfur Pit his domain, and if any other beings of power (like Dragons, Demigods, etc.) enter it, he expects a worthy tribute (payment) as right of passage or a gratuity for his time in a consultation. If he doesn't receive any, the intruder must face his wrath.

While few creatures and fewer demons live in the Sulfur Pits, a few thousand of the hideous demons known as Magots live here and serve as minions to both Belphegor and Mictla.

Other Dangers

In addition to the numerous pits are massive **seas of tar** and **Acid Pools** the size of *lakes*. The tar comes from the mountains along the coast, aptly named the Tar Mountains. Acid rain is regularly collected in the numerous pits, and with the frequent storms, there is a never ending supply of it. Part of what makes this part of Hades so environmentally hostile are the numerous rivers of lava that flow under the entire region. They heat the surface and this keeps the majority of the gooey liquids at or near boiling. Large bubbles are always breaking the surface, releasing tons of sulfur and other *toxic gases*. This makes the entire region reek of rotten eggs/sulfur, and the toxic atmosphere is wretched to breathe and a constant danger to mortals.

Although the Sulfur Pits are the wettest region in the south, most of the "rain" is acid rain, and all water from the sky is turned back into steam, which helps to keep the cycle of storms going, from ordinary rain to acid rain and all the other weird weather. What liquid falls on the hard surface runs into the pits and underground caverns or evaporates in a short while (1D6x10 minutes). Of course, rain that hits lava evaporates immediately. The rest runs into the fiery sea along the coastline of the peninsula. This, in and of itself, is a spectacular site as the liquid makes contact with the lava and flames, creating an ever constant source of steam along the coast.

The more dangerous types of weather like *Fire Rain*, *Lightning Storms* and other phenomena common to Hades manifest every day or two, with *Fire Tornadoes* and *Fire Walls* appearing at least twice a week to tear up the surface. Most storms seem to start in the south and work their way north. There is nothing on the surface that can provide adequate shelter, and any mortal be-

ings traveling in the Sulfur Pits end up going through the underground network of caves and tunnels to survive.



Below the Surface

Under the Sulfur Pits lies a vast network of subterranean tunnels. It is an underground highway that connects the whole region, but it's not much safer traveling in the tunnels than it is on the surface. The only advantage is being out of the weather and facing a foe you might be able to fight it out with.

The tunnels all have some type of liquid running through them, be it tar, acid water, or some type of disgusting phlegm. The depth is never more than a few feet with the average being about 2 feet (0.6 m) deep. However there are small pockets where it becomes several feet deep, and either a way around it must be found, or you just have to trudge through it. Some of the more commonly used tunnels are actually dry, clear and *marked*, making for easy navigating. However, the markings mean the presence of demons and are unreadable to ordinary people. Someone with Tracking skills should be able to recognize the markings as a signpost or trail, and be able to use them, but others are likely to miss them entirely (roll for Perception).

Tar in the caverns usually mixes with the acid water to form a murky liquid that has an oil and vinegar consistency. In most places, it just runs a few inches above the surface, making all the caverns slick and difficult to travel through at a fast pace (reduce Spd by half or be slipping and falling all the time). The up and down contours of the caverns means there is a constant sound of trickling water and in some places, the tar-liquid can reach depths up to six feet (1.8 m). In the larger caverns there are actually small underground lakes of the stuff that are hun-

dreds of feet/meters deep. Tar pits and acid pools are also a danger in the underground, though they can usually be detected before one steps into them.

Mold

The only vegetation to grow in the Sulfur Pits are a variety of molds. All seem to stem from the original *Green Mold* from the *Palladium World* that can eventually devour a man. It is very resilient and actually thrives pretty well in the Sulfur Pits. It is not affected by any of the conditions common to the region, like acid rain or fire, and over the centuries it has mutated into several different deadly strains. The common Green Mold can be encountered anywhere in the Sulfur Pits.

A variation is **Yellow Mold**. Centuries of absorbing the sulfuric acid and water have turned the mold yellow and given it acidic properties. Areas with Yellow Mold release acid vapors that can scorch the lungs. Damage for being in an area with Yellow Mold is 1D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points per melee round unless wearing environmental body armor, a gas mask or air filter. Making direct contact with flesh scorches the skin for 1D6 S.D.C. points of damage every time it is touched.

Blue Mold spores, set loose by brushing against or walking across the stuff, cause confusion and disorientation in mortals when they are breathed. Those exposed to it must save vs non-lethal poisons at 16 or higher. Those who save, feel light headed and are -1 on all saving throws and combat bonuses for 1D4 melee rounds, after which they feel fine.

Those who failed to save lose one melee attack, are -1 on all saving throws, and feel light headed for 1D6 melee rounds. After which they need to roll to save a second time. If the save (16 or higher) is good, they recover and are fine. Those who fail to save a second time find that they are dizzy and suffer the following penalties: -2 on all saving throws, -5 on all combat bonuses, they lose two attacks per melee, are -15% on skill rolls and reduce Spd by 20%. These penalties and wooziness last for as long as they are within 50 feet (15.2 m) of the mold and for 2D6+2 minutes after leaving the area. Worse, spell casters find it hard to focus and must spend an extra 20% of the P.P.E. required to cast their spells.

Red Mold grows in and around various pits. Any contact with Red Mold causes a paralysis effect. A saving throw vs non-lethal poisons, toxins (16 or higher) is needed whenever flesh touches Red Mold. A successful saving throw means the mold has no discernable effect. Failing, on the other hand, causes a limb to immediately go numb. Any other contact needs an additional saving throw. If the victim is able to move away from the mold the effects last for 1D4 minutes. Red Mold grows around the rim of various pits and on the surface of water and acid pools, so if a mortal or animal falls into it, he may become totally paralyzed within a few seconds (two melee actions). With any luck, he will have gotten out of the acid before that happens.

Weather Encounter Table

The pockmarked, moon-like surface is pretty much the same throughout the region. The pits can't be missed and all one needs to worry about is the weather. Due to the nature of the rocky surface, all travel is reduced by 30% as it is uneven,

cratered, and always slick from moisture, making traction on the surface difficult. As such, there is no need to roll for terrain on the surface, just roll for weather as indicated below.

Game Masters, only roll for the weather if the characters' party is traveling on the surface. Otherwise, no rolls are needed if traveling via the subterranean caverns. While traveling on the surface, conditions change daily, so roll once for every 12 hours of travel.

01-10% Torrential downpour. Don't worry, it's only rain. Real rain, and it's drinkable. As you thank the gods, you understand why fresh water rain is called Heaven's Tears in Hades.

11-20% Lightning Storm! Find a dry pit and lay in it to avoid getting blasted by bolts of lightning.

21-30% Clouds of gas. Various pits in the area are venting toxic clouds of gas. Go around the funny colored mist or cloud.

31-40% Clouds of steam. Various pits in the area are spewing forth plumes of steam.

41-50% Acid Rain. Take cover. Duration is double that of normal storms.

51-60% Fire Rain. Possibly one of the few reprieves from rain one might get is before and after Fire Rain. 1D4 hours before and after a storm, there is a relative calm period of no precipitation. Of course, the fire raining down from the sky can kill you.

61-70% Fire Rain Storm. It lasts 50% longer in the Sulfur Pits than elsewhere and is bad news. Leaping into a pit lets it roll overhead without much chance of getting hurt. Unless there's something bad, dangerous or evil in the pit! Did you look before you leaped?

71-80% Fire Tornadoes spring to deadly life after a short bout of Fire Rain. Reduce the duration of the rain by half, but double the usual number and duration for the Fire Tornadoes. Again, a pit or better yet, an entrance to the caverns below, offers safety from the storm, but may offer its own dangers.

81-90% Fire Wall. If you survive it, there is an unnerving calm for 2D4 hours before and after it appears.

91-95% Roll again, and add some Hades Lightning to the mix.

96-00% An eerie calm! What is going to happen next? Nothing, this is just a small break from the constant storms, and for the next 12 hours there is no bad weather. However, these rare periods of calm often bring out winged demons and predators. Is that 2D4 Demon Flies, Demon Bats, Gargoyles, Couril or other menace on the wing?

Underground Terrain Table

Below the surface is different. The tunnels are filled with all kinds of twists and turns, and you never know when you might run into a dead end, hole in the floor, a giant cave chamber, underground river or lake, or find yourself trapped in a gooey tar pit struggling to get out. When traveling underground, roll for every four hours of travel or at the Game Master's discretion.

01-10% Relatively smooth travel. There are no major obstacles blocking the way, allowing for easy passage.

11-20% Waist high sludge. Speed is reduced by 50% as the characters have to trudge through a combination of tar and acid water. Fortunately, the water is thinned out enough not to cause

any damage. Fighting in these conditions is difficult, imposing -1 melee attack and -2 to all combat bonuses to all combatants.

21-25% A tunnel leading up above their heads. The path the characters are on runs into one of the numerous tunnels that leads to the surface. First determine the diameter of the tunnel by rolling 2D6x10 feet (6 to 37 m). Then roll to determine the length of the tunnel to get topside; 3D6x100 feet (91.5 to 548.6 m). The passage also continues to run horizontally, so they can continue forward, underground, go back or go up.

26-30% A pit in the floor of the tunnel. First determine the diameter of the pit by rolling 2D6x10 feet (6 to 37 m). Then roll 1D6x10 feet (3 to 18.3 m) to determine the depth of the pit. Lastly, roll to determine what's inside the pit. *01-20% Sludge*, same as runs through the tunnels, depth is 2D6 feet (0.6 to 3.6 m). *21-40% Tar*. This could be difficult to traverse as the depth is 2D10 feet (0.6 to 6.1 m) deep. *41-60% A hungry Pit Viper!* *61-70% Acid Water*. Runoff from the storms has filled this pit with 2D10 feet of boiling acid water. *71-80% Lava*. Though rare in the sulfur pits, lava does run under the whole region, heating up the terrain. *81-90% Steam or gas* is collected in the bottom or venting out from an opening at the bottom of the pit. *91-00% Nothing* and it's dry. Easy passage, just climb down and then back up. Hmm, did anyone bother to look up? Is that 1D4 Demon Bats (or Flies, or Gargoyles?), or just shadows playing tricks on the eyes?

Note: At the G.M.'s discretion, there may be one of the following means to cross a pit rather than fly, rig a rope or go down into the pit and climb back up. **01-20%** somebody before them has rigged a rope bridge, swing cord or even a solid bridge made from wooden planks or bones. Get walking and hope it's a) sturdy, and b) not a trap. **21-40%** A narrow ledge runs around the perimeter of the pit. Average width is 1 to 4 feet (0.3 to 1.2 m). Roll 1D4 to determine, cross carefully (half Spd) and hope you don't get attacked while crossing because you need both hands to hug that cave wall! **41-60%** The pit is filled with stepping stones! Hop from one to the other and keep your balance. (Roll for balance as per Acrobatics or Gymnastics skill). **61-80%** The walls have deep pitting with plenty of handholds and footrests to scale the side of the wall to get across. **81-00%** There is no way to cross without extraordinary means (magic, flying, power armor, bionic leap, etc.). The characters either have to find another way around, or climb down into the pit and wade through the stuff.

Finally, at the Game Master's option, to make things really interesting, you can opt to roll on the Encounter Table for a pursuing monster or other trouble.

31-40% A vertical drop or climb. Roll of 01-50% is a vertical climb, 51-00% a vertical drop. The tunnel either climbs up or drops down and it presents an obstacle that the characters will have to deal with. Slippery conditions impose a -15% Climbing/Rappelling penalty.

41-50% An underground lake or sea of 1-25% Tar, 26-50% Acid Water, 51-70% Phlegm (thick and stinky), 71-90% Lava, 91-00% Fresh water. It may be possible to traverse via magic, or with a Thorn Tree wood boat. Whatever the choice, the body of fluid only extends for 1D6 miles (1.6 to 9.6 km). Several days of travel could be saved by going over it, otherwise it will take 2D4 days to find a way to go around.

51-60% The tunnel the characters are in opens into a massive cavern that is 1D10 miles (1.6 to 16 km) across. It is riddled with stalactites and stalagmites. The terrain is pretty easy to cross, but there are dozens of places for an ambush!

61-70% *Fire Jets* riddle the passage ahead. Each blows at different intervals and if the characters don't time it right, they can get roasted. Fire jets either appear out of the ground, or blowing out of the sides of the cave, like some evil dungeon trap.

71-80% A good size cavern, but it has a field of *Fire Geysers*. There are also 1D4 small Rivers of Lava, but not anything that the characters can't jump over.

81-90% Underground Pits. They are essentially the same as the open pits listed above, however these do not connect to the surface. Roll on those tables to determine what kind of pit the characters are dealing with that goes down, deeper into the underground tunnel network.

91-95% Underground River of: 01-25% Sludge, 26-50% Tar, 51-75% Acid Water, 76-95% Lava, 96-00% Water.

96-98% Chasm. The path the characters are on turns into a massive chasm. There is only a small ledge for the characters to traverse. Roll 3D6 feet (0.9 to 5.5 m) to determine the chasm's width.

99-00% Dead End. Several hours have been wasted as now the characters must turn around and retrace their steps. Dead ends can lead to all kinds of encounters. They could be the lair of some monster or demon, end at some type of impassible obstacle like a sea of lava, a bottomless pit, or cave-in, or just stop.

Encounters in the Sulfur Pits

The majority of creatures seem to travel through the numerous caves and tunnels *below* the surface of the Sulfur Pits region. As a result, encounters down there are more likely. However, given the nature of the underground, it also makes for great places to hide. Game Masters should keep this in mind, as smart players can use the environment to their advantage and possibly avoid a dangerous encounter, or even ambush an unsuspecting foe.

01-10% Nothing! That noise you heard was just the dripping of water or the howling of the wind.

11-20% 1D4 Pit Vipers block the way. They're waiting in ambush, ready to pounce on any who cross through their domain. Characters with the Detect Ambush skill might be able to spot them at -20%.

21-30% A hungry Magot, as in the big, ugly mouth on elephant legs of a Greater Demon. Hide or run if you can, combat will be rough, but it's the only other alternative.

31-40% An Aquatic demon (may substitute other aquatic monster, D-Bee or Faerie Folk from other worlds). The wretched creature has managed to survive in the dark, wet Sulfur Pits region. Most can be found in areas where the sludge is several feet deep or near rare, fresh water pools miraculously not contaminated by the environment. It is startled and attacks to defend itself from what it sees as invaders of its home. The question: is it alone or are there 1D4 others who hear the commotion and join the fight?

41-50% Mold, roll the type. 01-25% Green, 26-50% Yellow, 51-75% Blue, 76-100% Red. Careless characters may not even suspect there is danger.

51-55% A Palladium World transplant and a creature that does well in this region is the Melech (so do Kelpies and Toadstools). They are restricted to the larger caverns under the Sulfur Pits. Rumor has it that Belphegor brought them here some time ago and they proved too mindless for his needs. Ever since, they have been left to wander the underground caverns of the Sulfur Pits. One or two are likely to be encountered at a time.

56-60% 2D6 runaway slaves who thought nobody would come looking for them in the Sulfur Pits. They were right, but this isn't what they thought freedom would be like here. 01-50% they want the player characters to lead them out of the region to a safe/better place. They'll even accept being turned over to their old slave masters. 51-00% they've adapted and do okay in the tunnels. They know parts of the underground network better than anyone and will help the player group, for a price.

61-65% Entities (any) roam through the caverns. Haunting, Syphon and Possessing Entities are the most likely encountered, but there are a few Tectonic Entities as well. They are likely encountered in groups of 3 to 8 (roll 1D6+2).

66-70% 1D4+1 Gargoyle or Gurgyle bandits (may substitute with Lesser Demons, or mortal beings).

71-80% Scattered on the walls ahead are 1D6 Nippers or Tomb Worms. The cavern walls are perfect for these creatures and they typically wait in ambush for a passerby.

81-85% 1D6+1 Demon Bats on the prowl. They are looking for prey to bring to Belphegor and their goal is to capture, not kill. They may be flying through the underground tunnels or hanging from the ceiling at an ambush site (-15% on Detect Ambush skill), waiting for prey to walk by.

86-90% 2D4+2 Ghouls gnawing on the corpse of some unfortunate victim of the environment. It's theirs and they'll fight to keep it. If they outnumber the player group, they may consider adding them to the menu, but will back off if they prove to be strong combatants.

91-95% 1D6 Lesser Demons are encountered passing through the region usually at the behest of one of the Greater Demons or even possibly one of the Demon Lords.

96-00% 1D4 Greater Demons. Possibly on a message run to Belphegor, or even summoned by him. Whatever their purpose, they are not happy to be in this damp environment and take their frustrations out on any outsiders or runaway slaves they may encounter.

Eastern Fire Planes

Located on the eastern coast of Tartarus is the Eastern Fire Planes. A relatively flat expanse of land rising up out of the lava sea, several hundred feet (meters) above sea level. The entire coast is nothing but vertical cliffs varying in height from 200-600 feet (61 to 183 m) above sea level. Even the border between the Fire Planes and the Desert of Taut is raised, and one must scale a cliff wall to get up or down.

Tartarus



Eastern Fire Planes



There are at least a dozen spots along the coast and down into the Desert of Taut where a passable trail can be found, but finding one that is *unguarded* is not likely, at least during this time of war. Most trails have one or more demons or monsters standing guard to collect fees of passage from caravans and travelers, and to stop enemy spies, or warn of enemy troop incursion.

The surface of the Eastern Fire Planes is hard packed earth and rock that has a blackish- red hue. Small rivers of lava, Fire Geysers and Fire Jets dot the land, and while the Desert of Taut always has a sweltering breeze, the air on the Planes seems heavy. Not with humidity as one would normally expect, but hot and oppressive in such a way that the air is hard to breathe and mortal beings have a hard time catching their breath. The average temperature is between 100 degrees and 120 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 to 48.8 C) and the sulfur content in the Fire Planes is higher than elsewhere in Hades.

The Planes are riddled with thousands of Fire Geysers, as if the very heart of Hades is pumping underneath this land. They blow at regular intervals and are the source of many of the rivers of lava that cut across the surface of the land like veins and arteries. There are even a dozen *Super-Fire Geysers*, which are triple the size of a typical large geyser and inflict double the damage when they erupt. Around these Super-Fire Geysers are always a few dozen smaller ones. In addition, there are Fire Jets, Steam Vents, Gas Vents, Fire Storms and other bad weather that makes the Eastern Fire Planes a hostile environment to cross and a difficult place for mortals to survive.

The Cliffs

The peninsula that is the Eastern Fire Planes seems to have risen right out of the fiery lava sea surrounding it on three sides. This makes for an almost impenetrable barrier from beings vulnerable to Mega-Damage fire and heat. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why **Andras** chose to make this part of Hades his residence. Tactically speaking, even infernals find travel across the lava sea difficult, the tall cliff walls an impediment, and the hostile environment annoying. Against mortals, it is quite literally, Hell. Likewise, the overland route through the Desert of Taut is equally difficult and unforgiving.

Once one reaches the cliff walls he must climb up the sheer wall or find one of the few roads or trails guarded by the minions of Andras. The cliffs also have many caves scattered across their surface where winged lookouts and defenders can hide. The majority of the caves are simply abandoned, others have wild animals or monsters living in them, and one persistent rumor claims a mated pair of Fire Dragons call the area home as well as an exiled Baal-Rog lord. It is also said that some bands of Dimensional Raiders sometimes use cliff caves to hide their treasure, like pirates from Earth's past. The northern cliffs are considered prime real-estate and are home to hundreds of thousands of Baal-Rogs! Other locations along the cliffs are spectacular lava falls, Steam Vents and Fire Geysers. Whatever the case may be, the cliffs serve as a natural barrier wall to the Fire Planes.

Environmental Tables

Weather on the Planes

The Eastern Fire Planes are perhaps one of the harshest locations in Hades. Not only is the very ground coursing with danger, but the skies are too. Sulfur is constantly being pumped into the atmosphere adding fuel to an already volatile mix. With the dense atmosphere and high heat, all that is needed is a spark. Conditions are always right for simple heat lightning, giving black storm clouds a red or orange glow. The lightning acts like a spark, igniting the storm clouds, frequently resulting in Fire Rain, a Fire Storm or Lightning Storm. These storms are wildly unpredictable and can turn into Fire Tornadoes or a Fire Wall with little warning. Even their timing is unpredictable, with storms occurring every day for several weeks at a time, to no storms for just as long.

Mortals have the most difficult time on the Fire Planes. There is no shelter to speak of, and a storm always seems to be imminent. The few who have traveled on the Planes have actually sought shelter in one of the numerous Fire Jets or Fire Geysers. With lava constantly flowing under the Planes, new Fire Geysers and Fire Jets are created all the time, so it is possible to find a jet or geyser blowhole that is *no longer active*. They are difficult to identify and it's always a gamble. Even jets and geysers that are inactive could all of a sudden reignite with little or no warning. Anyone caught hiding in a Fire Jet or Fire Geyser automatically takes double damage when it blasts to life.

Unlike the Sulfur Pits, no moisture can be found here at all. The only weather to frequent the Eastern Fire Planes is Fire Storms. Fortunately, they are not as regular as other places on



Hades. Oftentimes, they can brew for weeks at a time, but when they do come, they are literally like a demon unleashed. Roll once for every week in the Fire Planes.

01-50% No weather this week. The clouds are churning and threatening Fire Rain, but nothing comes.

51-60% A single bout of Fire Rain. It lingers for the usual duration.

61-70% Multiple bouts of Fire Rain plague the area. 1D6+1 occur throughout the week.

71-80% A full blown Fire Storm hits the area. Good or bad, it's the only weather that week.

81-90% Multiple Fire Storms hammer the region. 1D4+2 strike throughout the week.

91-98% Fire Tornado or a Fire Wall. 01-50% Fire Tornado, 51-00% Fire Wall.

99-00% Roll again, and double the occurrences for the week.

Eastern Fire Planes Terrain

Travel through the Fire Planes will not be an easy task. Yes, the ground is flat, but lava flows, Fire Geysers, Fire Jets and other deadly volcanic phenomena are very active in this region. Some of the smaller rivers of lava can be crossed by jumping over them, while others will require some type of magic or other means to cross them. It is suggested that Game Masters Roll for every 6-12 hours of travel in the Fire Planes.

01-10% Flat, featureless ground with no obstacles.

11-20% A field of Steam Vents lays ahead. Go around or watch, time them and dodge through the two mile (3.2 km) area.

There is a hidden danger, one in ten of the steam vents are really Gas Vents and a deadly toxin, not just hot steam, is unleashed.

21-30% Only a small river of lava to overcome. Its width varies 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m).

31-40% A river of lava flows through a deep chasm and there is only a natural rock formation for a bridge. The rock bridge is 2D4 feet (0.6 to 2.4 m) in width.

41-50% Multiple small rivers of lava are scattered around the area ahead. As above, the width only varies 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m), however there are numerous lava rivers all over the place spread out like a grid maze. Reduce travel Spd 50% to avoid a tragic accident.

51-60% A massive river of lava blocks the path of the player characters. However, scattered throughout the river are small islands and stepping stones that will aid in the crossing.

61-70% A field of 1D6x10 *Fire Geysers* lays ahead of the characters for the next mile (1.6 km).

71-80% The characters have stumbled into a region of *Fire Jets*. 1D4x10 are scattered about for the next mile.

81-85% A *Super-Fire Geyser* is ahead. It looks like a small volcano and surrounding it out to about a half mile (0.8 km) are scores of *Fire Jets*.

86-90% From bad to worse. The ground ahead has a mixture of both *Fire Jets* and *Fire Geysers*. They are spread out for the next 1D4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km).

91-95% *Fire Geysers* and *Fire Jets* are ahead. However, just about half are dead and don't blow anymore.

96-00% Cliffs. The characters have either traveled too far

and come along the border of the Fire Planes, or have come across one of the small chasms that cut through the Fire Planes. Numerous caves are likely to be found along the cliff walls, and who knows what is dwelling inside?

Encounters in the Eastern Fire Planes

The weather in the Eastern Fire Planes means death to most mortals. To demons it is an annoyance, with the only real possible threat being a Fire Tornado. The majority of demons found in the Planes are Baal-Rogs, Demon Bats, Demon Flies and Gargoyles, pretty much in that order, with Baal-Rogs dominating. This region suits them best and it has little effect on Baal-Rogs. The other flyers can take shelter in the cliffs when threatening weather comes. Other demons are also found here, but most are nomads, part of a caravan to Magma, running an errand for one of the Demon Lords, or outcasts. Mortals traveling in the Eastern Fire Planes are more likely to encounter one of the numerous monsters that call this part of Hades home. It is suggested that Game Masters roll on this table for every day or two of travel, or at their own discretion.

01-10% No encounters, the area is desolate and devoid of anybody.

11-15% *1D4+1 Demon Bats* (or *Lasae!*) on the prowl and looking for some action. The player group may represent spies, invaders, playthings or food.

16-20% *Pit Viper* (or *a Worm of Taut*). They aren't all that common in this part of Hades, but they are around. It's hungry or feels threatened and attacks, fighting to the death.

21-25% *Gargoylite* or *Gargoyle Mage* outcast. He may trick or attack and rob the group, or try to get them to do something for him (get supplies, booze, revenge, etc.).

26-30% *Succubus* (or *Incubus*) in disguise as a beautiful runaway slave. She has an elaborate story of woe and pleads for their help. In reality, she is the selfish concubine of a Baal-Rog. They've had a lover's spat and she's run away from him, for the time being. Odds are the Baal-Rog or *1D4+1* of his Gargoyle or Demon Fly minions are looking for her. Of course, by the time he or they find her, she's convinced them that he/they are the evil monsters out to get her. ("Help, save me!") In the alternative, this could be any shape-changer or infernal deceiver, including a spy or assassin from Dyval.

31-35% *Night Owl* or *Baal-Rog* mad at the world (who cares why, really), and lucky her, she's found mortal vermin to take her frustration out on. The demon will fight until down to her last 15% of M.D.C. before surrendering or trying to escape. If the creature escapes and recovers, the player group has earned an enemy for life.

36-40% *A Desert Howler wild Netherbeast* on the prowl. It is half starved and sees the player characters as food and salvation. A cunning predator, it will try to pick off one of the group members, incapacitate him and run off with him in its mouth to finish off and eat away from the rest of the character's "herd."

41-45% Swarm of *2D4 Demon Flies* (or *Shedim*) on patrol or just looking for some sport to break up their day. They will fight until they take significant losses (all are down half their M.D.C. or they've lost half their numbers, etc.) and then fly off, too ashamed to tell any of their Baal-Rog masters for fear of an even worse beating. Demon Flies may be substituted with Demon Bats, Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, or Couril.

45-50% A flock of *2D4 of Murmur's Black Vultures* or one or two *Psi-Hawks* looking for food, and someone in the player group (could be an NPC) has caught their/its attention.

51-60% *Fire Worms* are common in the Fire Planes and are always aggressive and territorial. They are most likely found in or around a Fire Jet or Fire Geyser; *1D4+4* are encountered (can be double that number the if group can handle it).

61-70% Double trouble. Not only do the characters come across *1D6+1 Ant Lions* (or *1D4 Desert Howlers* or *Serpent Lions*) feasting on the remains of some large animal (Netherbeast?), but *1D4 Psi-Hawks* (or *2D4 Black Vultures* or *1D4 Demon Flies*) are flying overhead, looking for a meal too. Both sets of monsters see the player characters as rivals or food, and some numbers of both groups attack them. First one set, and then the other when the first is done with them or the group looks like it is about to fall prey to them. Sometimes it is not good to be wanted.

71-75% *1D4 Hades Netherbeasts* or *Worms of Taut* (G.M.'s choice in both cases) are on the prowl and the players look like easy pickings.

76-80% Bandits composed of *1D6+4 Lesser Demons* (all the same type or a mixed group; any). Even if the player group doesn't have much in the way of possessions, they are valuable as slaves or food stock and worth capturing for resale at one of the cities in the region.

81-90% Demon Caravan traveling to or from the city of Magma. There are *3D6+6* wagons and *2D4x10* slaves working for the caravan leader. There are another *2D6* assorted monster races from *Rifts Earth*, the *Palladium World* or the *Three Galaxies* who also work for the caravan leader, but are free men, not slaves. Finally, there will be *2D6 Lesser Demons* and *1D4 Greater Demons*. The caravan leader is either one of the Greater Demons, or one of the more powerful monster races. 20% of the wagons carry drums of water, the rest could be carrying anything from *Thorn Tree* lumber, to supplies or slaves.

91-95% *1D6+2 Lesser Demons* or *Gargoyles*. They are either stragglers from a caravan or on some mission from a Greater Demon. Whatever the case, if they spot the player characters they'll attack and try to capture (at least some of) them in the hopes of winning favor with their master.

96-99% *1D4+2 Greater Demons* (any, from Baal-Rogs to Magots) come across the characters. The demons may be stragglers from a caravan, on a special mission, or just passing through; Baal-Rogs are the primary inhabitants of this realm.

100% The Brass Guard! *1D6+1 Baal-Rogs* out on patrol from Magma. They will stop and harass anyone they come across, even caravans. Usually, they're looking for a bribe, or just to cause trouble.

City of Magma

The Domain of Andras

Land Area: Magma covers approximately a 25 mile area (40 sq. km).

Magma Demon Population: Approximately 3.1 million.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 10,000
Gargoyles – 100,000
Gurgoyles - 8,000
Gargoyle Lords – 10,000
Gargoyle Mages – 5,000

Lesser Demons

Alu – 50,000
Banshees – 10,000
Demon Bats – 20,000
Demon Flies – 11,000
Ghouls/Nasu – 10,000
Lasae – 25,000
Mares/Nightmares – 5,000
Shedim – 70,000
Succubus/Incubus – 15,000

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs – 2 million
Demon Locusts - 500
Brek-Shall - 1,500
Gallu Demon Bulls – 100,000
Magots - 1,500
Night Owls – 40,000
Raksasha – 10,000
Soul Catchers – 6,000

Magma Slave Population: There are approximately 1 million slaves.

Humans – 750,000
Non-Humans – 200,000
Supernatural Beings – 50,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 2D4x100 travelers in the city.

Nothing is safe on the Fire Planes, save for the demons who are generally immune to such conditions. As a result, the flat land plateau has few long term inhabitants other than some monsters. There is only a single city located in the Eastern Fire Planes, the city of Magma; home to **Andras, the Marquis of Hades**. The city is more like a military base, than a proper city. It is surrounded by walls 100 feet (30 m) tall and magically reinforced to endure the harsh elements of the Eastern Fire Planes.

The walls all look as if they are made out of obsidian, and when the elements strike them, there is not so much as a blemish on them. The wall surrounds the whole city and there are only two gates, one in the east and the other in the west. The gates rise 50 feet (15.2 m) above the wall and each houses a large guard station that is always manned by at least a dozen demons. Half of the security force is always members of Andras' **Brass Guard**, while the others are a mixed assortment of Lesser Demons or Sub-Demons such as Alu or Shedim, Gargoyles or Gurgoyles.

Surrounding the outside of the city is a river of lava 300 feet (91.5 m) wide that serves as a moat. It completely surrounds the city, with three tributaries branching off to the east, west, and south. It would seem that the natural lava moat is fed from an underground source. It helps to make a formidable defense for the city. Beyond the moat is a field of Fire Jets and Fire Geysers. They are densely packed, making any approach from other than the east and west trails (or by air) a difficult trek. The trails leading to the city are relatively clear and devoid of many obstacles. This makes it easy for the caravans who arrive to sell their wares to the various demons of Magma.

Along the roads are thousands of pikes impaled with the skeletal or fresh remains of enemies slain by Andras' minions. He displays them in a grim mockery, like a trophy room, and a warning to those who might consider crossing him. It's a re-

minder to all who enter the city that they are dealing with the Marquis of Hades, second only to Modeus. Outsiders (non-Hades demons, but infernal beings in their own right) who seek an audience with Andras may be slain if they displease the Marquis or waste his time. He has little patience for such beings, and Andras chooses his allies very carefully.

Magma Castle

Beyond the wall is the city of Magma, organized more like a military compound than a true city. The streets are surprisingly clean, the buildings well kept and the number of mortal slaves kept to a minimum.

Andras' residence is located at the center of the city. It is a large structure constructed with the same obsidian material as the walls. It resembles a castle, with spires that end in sharp points like shards of glass pointing towards the sky. There are several balconies from which Andras can observe the city. Each is magically guarded with wards and enchantments, as well as guards, to keep out assassins and intruders. The castle has approximately ten floors above ground and several below. Since Andras and his Baal-Rogs can all fly, there are no ground level entrances. Anyone on the ground must get permission to have an audience with Andras and be carried aloft by two or more Baal-Rogs (or teleported). Intruders need to climb 60 feet (18.3 m) to access the first available balcony. This was done by design. It serves both as a defense tactic and a way to demean non-flying visitors.

Within the castle stronghold is the **sanctuary of Andras**. Only his personal guard and a select few are afforded the privilege of access to these top three floors. The lower levels are where the majority of the castle guard resides. A few Brass Guard II live in the levels above them. Halfway up is the huge throne room/audience chamber where Andras typically greets any visitors. Above the throne room are a vault of his personal possessions and treasure, a laboratory, and his personal quarters. The very top of the castle is a huge balcony from which he can survey the whole city, give orders and deliver speeches.

One of the subterranean hollows below the castle houses numerous dimensional portals. They are permanent Rifts that Andras is able to manipulate with but a minor amount of P.P.E. (it only costs him 100 P.P.E., but a Shifter could control these portals with a mere 50 P.P.E.). These portals are used to send his Brass Guard One and Two to anyplace he needs. Several of the portals go to various locations around Hades. One is always open to his apartment in Gamora. The rest are used as needed. In all, there are a dozen portals that can be used to both send and receive troops as needed.

The remainder of the city is built around the castle stronghold. A dozen concentric circles form roads that go around the castle. On the outlying side of the city are **barracks** that house the thousands of troops Andras keeps on hand. Going in towards the center of the city are **armories** and **forges** for making the equipment of war. After them are large storehouses that hold the equipment, with a few containing magical creations.

In the outmost part of the city are a few commercial shops, inns and merchants. The shops cater mostly to supernatural beings and sell products such as slaves, weapons, alcoholic beverages, and drugs. Some of the inns are more like fight houses

where the supernatural beings will brawl at all hours of the day and night. Most just sleep where they are knocked unconscious.

With the relative mass production of Demon Bone Weapons, Andras was quick to procure several shipments for his own elite guard. The Brass Guard and the Brass Guard II have first choice of whatever they need and even have a few items not normally available to others. Andras has built a small Demon Bone Weapon factory in Magma, and while it can't churn out weapons and equipment like the factories in Gamora, it can help equipt his own, considerable force and develop new, more powerful items unique to his Baal-Rog troops.

The Brass Guard

Only a few of the Demon Lords possess a keen military and tactical intellect. Modeus clearly has a range of military knowledge and skill with strategies and tactics. It doesn't hurt that he has won over one of the most powerful of the Greater Demons, either, the Demon Locusts. Not only do these demons respect power, but the ability to wield it effectively.

Andras, the Marquis of Hades is cut from the same stuff as Modeus, however his military thinking is not quite as acute or effective. Ironically, Andras is the ideal second-in-command. Sadly, he seeks to be top dog. It was not until he became Modeus' second that he began to realize the value of subtle manipulation, subterfuge, preemptive strikes and skullduggery behind the military scenes. Modeus, while he had command of the entire legion of Demon Locusts, only utilized small groups in his own rise to power. Andras was quick to see that were they not only effective, but drained little in the way of resources. In addition, these teams were the most experienced, loyal, ruthlessly calculating, and won about 70% of their engagements. It was from Modeus' example that Andras created the *Brass Guard*.

Scores of handpicked Baal-Rogs were incorporated into the ranks of the Brass Guard, and at their height, Andras' Brass Guard numbered into the thousands. This elite army was charged with protecting the city and dealing with special assignments in surveillance, scouting, sabotage, rescue, seek and destroy, and assassination. For the most part, the Brass Guard were successful and proved their worth to Andras time and time again. Strong discipline and strength of resolve made his Brass Guard more effective than any fighting force in Hades, and helped teach similar discipline to other Baal-Rogs by their positive example, and the recognition, respect, fame and glory that came with success. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the Brass Guard have been enlisted in the *Minion War*, and while they report to Andras before Modeus, and answer to the Marquis alone, they are not at his immediate disposal. Worse, their numbers will most certainly be depleted by the war. That leaves 1,000 Brass Guard in Magma and a force of 4,000 ordinary Baal-Rogs recruited to assist in the protection of the city. Of course, as a military compound, there are always thousands of other Baal-Rogs and demon troops present as they are being prepped for the Minion War, but none of them are the caliber of the Brass Guard.

The Brass Guard is easily identified by their brass colored armor, consisting of plate and chain armor (200 M.D.C. or A.R. 15 and 200 S.D.C. in S.D.C. settings). Incorporated on the chest of the armor is the symbol of Andras. The armor is only worn

when heavy combat is expected and on ceremonial occasions. Baal-Rogs dislike the heavy metal armor, especially since it interferes with their magic (reduce range and duration by half). However, sometimes the protection is worth the sacrifice. Plate and chain are the standard armor, but since the Brass Guard answers directly to Andras, they have access to any type of weapons and armor available. When not wearing armor, they wear a bronze colored sash and/or toga-like garment. Andras' personal weapon of choice is the sword, and all Brass Guard are trained in its use as well as the whip, pole arm, paired weapons and others.

Andras' city of Magma is a staging ground and command center for Baal-Rog troops and the Brass Guard, as well as other forces utilized in the defense of Hades and in the Minion War. It is here that the Brass Guard meet and report to Andras. Before the Minion War, Andras' elite army numbered 15,000 troops, with as many as 4,000-6,000 Brass Guard on site at any given time. Today, most are engaged in operations in the Minion War and Andras feels more than a little naked and weakened.

A good thing, then, that he had been secretly building the Brass Guard II. Baal-Rogs in the Brass Guard who prove to be exceptional are secretly noted, observed and considered for recruitment into a secret order, the Brass Guard II. So while most don't know it, they are quietly scrutinized by senior members of the Brass Guard II and Andras himself for possible recruitment in the future.

The Brass Guard II

One of the best kept secrets in Hades is the **Brass Guard II**. Through careful selection, Andras has picked the best and brightest of his Baal-Rog minions from the Brass Guard and elsewhere to create a secret and super-elite commando force he calls the Brass Guard II. The Baal-Rogs of the Brass Guard II are even more specialized, driven, and skilled in the art of war than their predecessors. They have become the elite of the elite, a secret sub-team who work as a cohesive group. They have mastered team operations and the implementation of precise strategy, tactics and surgical strikes. Nine out of ten times they are in and out before anyone realizes what they've done. The few times they are discovered, they still succeed with their mission, the body count is just higher and there may be some questions to deflect. Plausible deniability means, at worst, Andras can blame their covert actions on rogue Baal-Rogs (or outsiders) serving an unknown master or personal agenda. After all, the Brass Guard II do not, officially, exist and only Andras and those in the Brass Guard II know they do!

One of their first missions was for the Minion War, in which the team was able to slip into Dyval and assassinate a *Deevil Sovereign* before the war was officially launched. It was as much a test of his super-elite team as anything else. Of course, as far as Modeus is concerned, the clever preemptive strike was handled by a team within the famous Brass Guard.

Ever since, Andras has utilized the Brass Guard II on specialized operations that strengthen his power and put him in a better position to seize the throne of Hades for himself. Of course, with all things there is always a drawback. Andras is no fool, so he realizes the skill and power of his Brass Guard II could one day challenge him. He's done his best to cherry pick the most loyal of his minions, but times change and one never knows

how people's feelings change with them. As a result, the Brass Guard II were never intended to be a new army, but a specialized team. He decided, at least for now, that only one Brass Guard II group would exist at any time. A squad of 20 Baal-Rogs that could be divided into smaller squads of 10 and even five members each. They are used only on the most sensitive of missions and to keep them in top fighting form, he does dispatch them on missions that serve the Minion War.

The rest of Andras' Baal-Rog combat forces are ordinary Baal-Rogs, formidable in their own right, but without special military training like the Brass Guard or Brass Guard II. Thus, they lack true military discipline and function on a more visceral level. They too, are loyal to the Marquis of Hades and serve him well. All respect the Brass Guard as elite warriors and some Baal-Rogs even fear them. Others give them their nod but underestimate their abilities until they see them in action.

The Brass Guard II appear to be a squad within the Brass Guard and are able to work with little fear of being discovered. Andras' Brass Guard are well known throughout Hades, so when their colors are seen, little is thought of it. What better way to hide a secret than in plain sight?

Training of the Brass Guard II

Among of the key qualities Andras is looking for are experience, resourcefulness and a cool head under fire, not blind obedience or fierce bravado. While Andras does expect loyalty and obedience from his minions, the Brass Guard II must be capable of making life and death decisions in the field, on their own. And the right decisions. They can't let themselves be ruled by emotion or circumstance, they must use strategies, tactics and teamwork to get a job done.

Expert teamwork is what really makes the Brass Guard II so effective. It's just not expected from demons, even Baal-Rogs, and Andras loves to prove his enemies wrong. The team has an experienced leader, who takes input from the other team members to form a cohesive plan to execute the mission quickly and efficiently. That means with minimal casualties (if any) and maximum result. Teamwork is something that the Brass Guard has also learned, but not on the same level or unity as the *Brass Guard II*, who fight as one. The team constantly practices maneuvers working together, watching each other's backs, and handling covert ops and surgical strikes in all kinds of environments and adverse conditions.

The Brass Guard II wear the same garb as the Brass Guard, because they are a secret unit concealed within the Brass Guard. However, when they are summoned by Andras for a secret mission, they have access to superior equipment and any special gear, disguises, clothing, and magic they might need.

Special Training of the Brass Guard II

All members are taught W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Whip, one W.P. of choice (any, ancient or modern), and Hand to Hand: Expert. Only a few can learn Martial Arts or Hand to Hand: Assassin as per an M.O.S. Over the years, training has focused more on Expert mostly in part, because it takes less time to learn than the more advanced Hand to Hand types. Each member is also trained in what is, in effect, a set of M.O.S. skills.

Average Level of Experience: 1D6+5, so adjust the skill proficiencies accordingly. Also, when calculating bonuses, add all Hand to Hand bonuses, the Baal-Rog's Physical Prowess bonus, and all R.C.C. bonuses granted to them. **Note (an exception to the rule):** Hand to Hand skills do NOT add all the usual number of attacks: Expert adds only one attack to the Baal-Rog's base, and Martial Arts or Assassin adds two.

Available M.O.S. for the Brass Guard II

Unless stated otherwise, each skill gets a +10% bonus and improves per level of experience same as skills, not like some slower R.C.C. Skills.

Surveillance

Camouflage	Find Contraband (+20%)
Computer Operation	Prowl
Detect Ambush	Surveillance (includes Tailing)
Detect Concealment	Tracking (people; +20%)

Espionage

Identify Undercover Agent
Impersonation <u>or</u> Seduction
Intelligence (+30%)
Interrogation
Locate Secret Compartments/Doors <u>or</u> Detect Concealment
Pick Locks <u>or</u> Palming
Prowl
Undercover Ops

Military

Military Etiquette (+20%)	Track Humanoids
Intelligence <u>or</u> Demolitions	Trap/Mine Detection
Recognize Weapon Quality	W.P.: One Modern of choice.
Strategy and Tactics	

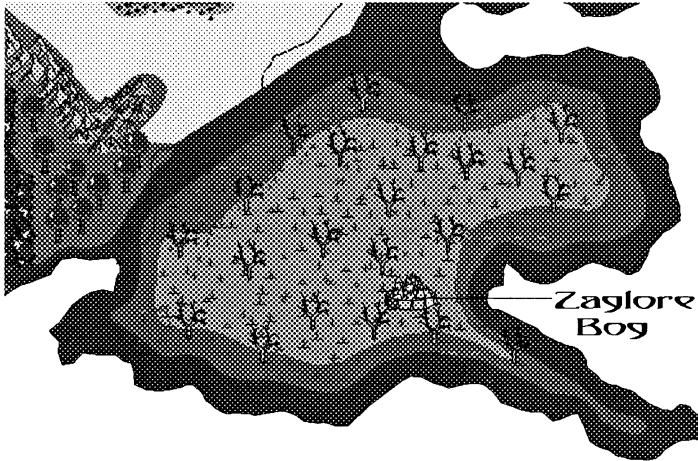
Assassin

Computer Operation
Hand to Hand: Assassin <u>or</u> Martial Arts
Prowl
Tailing (20%)
Tracking (people; +25%)
Use and Recognize Poisons <u>or</u> Brewing
W.P.: One Modern S.D.C. weapon <u>and</u> one Modern energy/M.D. weapon of choice.

Standard Equipment for the Brass Guard and Brass Guard II: All Brass Guard are issued a set of brass colored Plate and Chain Armor (200 M.D.C. or A.R. 15 and 200 S.D.C.), Demon Bone Long Sword that does 4D6 M.D.C. (or S.D.C.), and basic gear they may need for their mission.

All members of the Guard have a set of barracks in the city of Magma. Only the Brass Guard II is housed in the personal palace of Andras. It is there that they have access to numerous magic portals that can instantly take them to anywhere in Hades, or even other dimensions if Andras deems it necessary.

Tartarus



Death Mire

The Death Mire is the realm of Modeus and the *capital of Hades*. The area is one large swamp with hundreds of rotting trees, numerous orb-shaped plants and trees that drip blood. The land is the color of mud, but is surprisingly dry. The swamp is superheated but the humidity levels are relatively low, except around the lakes in the region. Many of the lakes are composed entirely of super-concentrated sulfuric acid that even demons avoid. Other lakes are a mixture of water, sulfur, and tar. Many appear to be near or at the boiling point and some, where natural gas bubbles to the surface, even appear to be on fire. Many of these fires burn permanently and have done so for eons. Others are sporadic, set ablaze from a spark that could come from anywhere, including Fire Rain.

If the burning lakes weren't bad enough, the region is covered in Fire Jets. They are almost everywhere and range in size from as small as a candle to pillars of fire. All this fire and heat constantly dissipates the moisture from the swamp and lakes, leaving the air relatively dry but filled with an omnipresent acrid stench.

Scattered around the swamp are thousands of low hills or mounds. Encased within each hill are 4D6x10 hibernating Demon Locusts. They are waiting for destiny to call, and are massed here in the event that the end of the world is coming. Some do, occasionally, leave their slumber to feed or engage in other activities. However, the majority sleep until summoned by the *Lord of the Demon Locusts*, Modeus.

The Demon Highway

One of the newer projects underway by Zaglore slaves is the creation of paved roads across Hades, or as the slaves call them, "the Demon Highway." The plan is to build a highway connecting Shek'Ra and Zaglore Bog for the convenience of demons relegated to travel on foot and the caravans that bring many goods between the demon cities. The construction has been underway for some time and the road stretches several miles outside of the Death Mire. It is being constructed with simple, hand-laid bricks. Portable kilns that make use of the many Fire Jets in the area are used to make the bricks.

The road is roughly 1000 feet (305 m) wide and winds for several miles through the swamp, right to the front gate of Zaglore Bog. Slaves toil away for 12-14 hours before being allowed to rest, and many are being worked to the point of dropping from exhaustion. As a result, the city of Zaglore is beginning to run low on slaves and is looking for cheap slaves to add to its labor force.

Unfortunately, the bricks are made of a poor quality construction material, and the road is already showing signs of deterioration. It appears that it will require regular and continued maintenance by slaves in the future. It doesn't help that the heat and terrain are not very favorable for a road, so there are some locations where the road needs to be elevated. The height of elevated roads and bridges varies from 10-60 feet (3 to 18.3 m).

Mortals who travel the Demon Highway can count on running into other people, mostly demons! Demons love to take the road for their convenience as well as to harass slaves and eat those who have collapsed and are near death. If demons are not encountered then there are always groups of slaves (usually 10 to 40) working at various locations, and they will have a slave master or Lesser Demon as their supervisor. Then, of course, one might encounter a caravan, slavers, traveling merchant, demon worshipers or an other-dimensional visitor.

Notable Death Mire Flora

Despite the heat and pools of acid, the swamp does grow a variety of different plants. Plants as frightening and murderous as the demonic beings who inhabit Hades.

Blood Weepers

Blood Weepers are a kind of deciduous tree found in both the Death Mire and the Northern Fire Bog. They are not huge trees, and grow no more than 50 feet (15.2 m) tall. The trees have small, black leaves shaped like a spade, with dark red veins that run from stem to leaf tip. The branches droop and almost touch the ground, like those of a Weeping Willow. A blood-like substance drips from leaves, turning the ground red, as if stained by blood. The substance that drips from the leaves has a metallic smell and taste, like that of real blood, and creatures who can smell blood are likely to be attracted to a Blood Weeper. The dripping liquid is a powerful paralytic that instantly immobilizes whatever body part is touched even by a single drop of the blood-like liquid/sap. It paralyzes by direct contact with the skin or by ingestion (don't taste the sap!). The "blood" from the leaves drips like a wet tree does after a rainfall, so even brushing against a leaf or a branch can be dangerous and send dozens of

drops flying. If it touches bare skin, the toxin will take quick effect.

Characters splashed by Weeper's Blood roll to save vs non-lethal poisons (16 or higher). A save means no paralysis. A failed roll means the limb or body area touched by Weeper's Blood becomes paralyzed. So if just an arm brushes up against the tree then just the arm is affected. Ingesting the substance paralyzes the whole body. The effect of the paralysis poison is cumulative, which is how the plant survives. Failed saving throws mean the limb or body is paralyzed for 1D6+4 minutes. People and animals who fall under the tree are doomed as the blood continues to drip, increasing the overall extent of the paralysis as well as keeping the individual frozen in one spot, unable to move or speak. The drops keep dripping, and when the victim is completely covered in Weeper's Blood, he has complete cardiac failure and falls into a coma. Without being removed from under the tree, the paralytic poison washed off, and the victim given medical attention, 24 hours later, the victim begins to hemorrhage, bleed out and dies. The blood of the victim is absorbed by the tree through its roots. Moreover, the still dripping Weeper's Blood acts like a digestive enzyme, breaking down the dead body and causing it to decompose and liquify in a matter of days, not weeks or months. The liquified body is also absorbed by the roots (close to the surface) and feeds the monstrous tree.

Note: Not that anyone could get to it if they wanted too, but the wood of this tree has no value. It does not burn, does not float (sinks like a rock), and it has a slate grey bark as hard as steel, but becomes brittle and fragile when dried. Weeper's Blood can be used as a paralytic poison mixed in food or drink, but it has a strong odor and taste, and becomes impotent after it dries (dries in 1D6+2 minutes).

Pod Plants

Pod Plants grow in small clusters all over Hades, but they are most prominent in the Death Mire and Northern Fire Bog, where they grow in large patches. A single plant can bear 1D4x10 pods. A number of plants can grow to cover an area with hundreds, even thousands of pods. Each plant grows one type of pod determined by its location. Acid pods are often found near acid pools and places where acid rain is prevalent, and gas pods where there is an abundance of natural gas.

Pod Plants look like thick, or giant-sized, grape vines and may climb up the side of rocks, dead trees, the skeletal remains of large, dead animals, or spread out over a bush or across the ground. The sizes of the pods vary considerably and often determine the age of the plant. *New plants have fewer and smaller pods* roughly the size of a baseball. Larger plants can have pods the size of basketballs.

Acid Pods: In the Death Mire, sulfuric acid is common and concentrated. Pools of it are everywhere in the realm. The ground is also highly acidic and it is absorbed by Pod Plants.

The pods have only a thin membrane (like a grape), so they can be easily punctured, and when punctured the acid spurts out up to 6 feet (1.8 m) away. Damage: 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Point damage for 1D4 melee rounds unless washed away with water or some other solution. Stepping or falling on a pod is also likely to cause it to puncture or crack open and spurt acid. Falling on several inflicts accumulative damage. Since they often grow along

the ground or on weeds and bushes, brushing against them and stepping on one or more is likely. This also means it is the feet/shoes and lower body that are most likely to suffer the worst damage, although spurting six feet (1.8 m) it may hit another person or two close by. S.D.C. to Pop a Pod: Small 1D4+2, Large, two points.

Gas Pods: They look like large green bulbs ranging in size from a grapefruit to a soccer ball. The larger the pod, the more transparent and thin the membrane, and the more easy it is to pop. The bulbs grow rapidly and are filled up with gas. Given the nature of the Death Mire and Northern Fire Bog, the type of gas can vary, but the bulk of it is sulfur followed by methane, hydrogen and natural gas. The latter three are highly flammable and explosive. When the bulbs become large enough they pop easily and explode and ignite when hit by a torch or Fire Rain or other fiery phenomena. Likewise, fire and electricity based spells may set them off and when one goes off, the entire vine is likely to ignite (01-95% likelihood) in *one giant explosion*. This may, in turn, spread across an entire field of them in a matter of a minute or two, inflicting considerable damage as well as setting the field on fire and possibly attracting demons to come investigate. Damage from Explosive Pods: 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Point damage from a single, small pod, 2D6 S.D.C. by a single large pod; damage is concentrated to an immediate 2 foot (0.6 m) radius. When an entire vine network goes up, multiply the damage by the number of pods (typically 1D4x10). Every 100 S.D.C. points is the equivalent of one M.D. so Mega-Damage beings may be hurt by a large explosion. The blast radius is one yard/ meter per pod. 12 pods = 36 foot (11 m) blast radius. S.D.C. to Pop a Pod: Small 1D4+1, Large, one point. Duration: Fire blast is instant. Unless there is fuel to burn (i.e., wood, dry grass, clothing, people, etc.) that's the end of it.

Damage from Stench Pods: Sulfur and other stench will cause everyone within a 10 foot (3 m) radius to cough and gag. Roll a 16 or higher to save. A successful save means the character loses one of his melee attacks and initiative for that melee round as he gags and recoils from the stench. Damage: Failure to save means the stench literally takes the character's breath away, and he chokes, gags, eyes burst into tears, and the stench fills the senses. Penalties are similar to having been exposed to a powerful tear gas: Loses half of his attacks per melee and initiative, fights as if blind (-10 on all combat rolls) for as long as he is in the gas zone and for 1D6 melee rounds after exiting the radius of effect. Eyes, nose and throat are irritated and burn for the next 1D4 hours. Duration: The gas dissipates in 1D4 melee rounds, but penalties may linger. S.D.C. to Pop a Pod: Small 1D4+1, Large, one point. **Note:** Popping one has only a 01-15% chance of popping another one nearby. Range: Increase radius of effect 10 feet (3 m) for each gas pod popped.

Other Dangers of the Swamp

The region is called the Death Mire for a reason.

First are the acid pools, then there is quicksand, hot mud pools, and tar pits (quicksand and mud pools work just like a tar pit). Not just the kind of pools of sludge and quicksand you might imagine, but concealed pools of the stuff. The heat of the area sometimes bakes the surface into a thin crust, like that of a pie. The crust looks hard, like ordinary baked and cracked earth, but step on it and boom, you drop through the crusty outer layer

and into the pool. Dust and debris may also collect on the surface of mud pools, quicksand and tar pits, and in the swamp, they may be covered with a thin layer of water. All in all, it is best to avoid even shallow looking pools of standing water or any area that might look like tar or mud.

Numerous types of gasses are vented, and there are Fire Jets, Fire Geysers and Steam Vents everywhere. In some places in the swamp the venting toxins linger as a permanent or periodic gas cloud. Bubbling water is likely to indicate a vent in the swamp.

Zaglore Bog

Land Area: Zaglore Bog covers approximately a 20 mile area (32 km).

Zaglore Bog Demon Population: Approximately 1.5 million; not counting the 3.1 million Demon Locusts asleep outside and around the city.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 30,000

Gargoyles – 150,000

Gurgoyles – 20,000

Gargoyle Lords – 2,000

Gargoyle Mages – 1,000

Taursis – 4,000

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs – 6,000

Brek-Shall – 4,600

Demon Locusts – 897,000 awake

Death Demons - 200

Gallu Demon Bulls – 38,000

Magots – 2,000

Night Owls – 14,000

Raksasha – 3,000

Soul Catchers – 5,600

Lesser Demons

Alu – 58,000

Aquatics – 10,000

Banshees – 25,000

Demon Bats – 50,000

Demon Flies – 97,000

Ghouls/Nasu – 24,000

Lasae – 112,000

Mares/Nightmares – 9,000

Shedim – 4,000

Succubus/Incubus – 2,000

Zaglore Bog Slave Population: Approximately 1.5 million.

Humans – 1 million

Non-Humans – 350,000

Supernatural Beings – 100,000 (may include Deevils)

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D6x100 travelers in the city.

The only city to be found in the Death Mire is **Zaglore Bog**. It is located in the southern portion of the swamp, just before the small peninsula that extends southeast. The city is not walled like so many other cities in Hades. This could simply be the arrogance of Lord Modeus, or the fact that millions of *Demon Locusts* slumber throughout the region, waiting for Armageddon or another good reason to rise.

Instead of a wall, the city is surrounded by dense groves of Blood Weeper trees and Pod Plants. These, in themselves, make for a natural defense. And that does not include the slumbering Demon Locusts who wait for the call to action. At the rate the Minion War is heating up, that call may be soon in coming. Al-

ready several hundred thousand have been called by Modeus for duty and more may be called soon.

The city proper is smaller than many of the cities in Hades, simply because this was Modeus' home town and when he took charge of the dimension. He didn't transfer his banner to a larger city, but decided to stay put and expand his homeland. The Death Mire is also where he has access to the vast legions of Demon Locusts throughout the region.

Modeus' Castle. The city is centered around a very large structure constructed within the bowels of what appears to be a massive, gutted *Millennium Tree*. Nothing else could have been so impossibly large, and even now, seemingly dead, its remains are huge. What's left of the tree is a giant husk of charred wood that must have been the base of the trunk, its circumference that of a mountain peak. A faint network of ley lines cross to create a nexus right in the center where the remains of the tree are located. Gargantuan roots cover the ground, twisted and gnarled, pointing up out of the earth forming crude barriers and pillars that make getting close to the trunk of the structure difficult unless you take the entrance ramp. Curled around the blackened trunk is an ornate ramp that leads to one of the many structures within. The tremendous size of the remains is the only evidence that it might have once been a Millennium Tree. The telltale characteristics seem to be there, but nobody talks about it. How a living organism like the Great Tree of Life might have taken root in Hades is beyond comprehension. It seems that transplanting the trees is not possible. Perhaps one of the gods thought he or she could use the Great Tree to purge the dimension of evil and sanctify it. Or perhaps one of the Demon Lords brought it to Hades for his own evil purpose or to torture and kill it. No one knows, however it is rumored that Modeus has access to a large cache of *corrupted Millennium Tree weapons* such as wands, staffs, and similar items that were gifts from the dead tree.

The structures within the husk of the Great Tree are impressive spires that reach for the sky. There are seven in total and Modeus is said to reside in the tallest of them. Several of the smaller spires have openings used as balconies for the Demon Locusts to enter and leave. Some have compared Modeus' abode to a beehive, where Demon Locusts and other flying demons can come and go with ease.

Within the spire that is his personal abode, the Demon Lord has amassed numerous magical artifacts over the years, as well as an impressive library that is said to rival the *Great Library of Bletherad* in the Palladium World. It is said that there are magic tomes written by the gods themselves, however few have seen such tomes as Modeus keeps his treasures safely locked away.

Below the spires, deep within the bowels of the tree, is a large *dungeon* where Modeus keeps certain individuals. It is said to extend beyond the boundaries of the tree and often muffled moaning and wailing can be heard coming from below the streets of Zaglore Bog. Many prisoners are rebellious demons who thought they could usurp the throne and take Hades from him. Most are tortured on a daily basis and will continue to be made to suffer for eternity.

A Palladium World Crossover Plot: One of the tortured is said to be a rather insane Elf who constantly slips his bonds and escapes from his cell (though never from the dungeon itself). He is a raving lunatic who insists that he is not who he appears to

be and that he must get back to the Palladium World to make sure “his” enchantment over the slumbering Old Ones is still in place. “They must never wake from their slumber,” he rants, and only he can insure that. He is quite mad and even looks crazy, with long white hair, a beard that practically touches the floor and eyes that seem to swim with madness. It’s a wonder that Modeus keeps him around at all. And not only does he put up with his ravings, he seems to enjoy hearing the old man’s ramblings, sometimes listening to them for hours. When Modeus finally gets bored, he smiles, pats the man on the head, and has him confined, yet again. The minions in the dungeon have standing orders to never severely hurt the old man, just to chain him up again, triple chain the cell door, and keep a better eye on him.

People only know about the Mad Elf Wizard and that he is a prisoner in the dungeon below Zaglore Bog, through eons of rumors. Only Modeus knows of his true origin and will not let him leave, possibly for all eternity. This Elf babbles on incessantly about the Old Ones, the Time of Chaos, dark magic, Deevils, demons and the end times. Only most of it is fragmented and run together, and little of it makes sense.

Whatever his true age, the crazy man appears only to be in his sixties. He wears a tattered robe and has a pair of magic manacles that are magically bound to his wrists, the chains are gone. In addition, possibly as a punishment, or a warning, a mark has been branded into his forehead indicating that he is the *property of Modeus*. Any demon who sees this will immediately want to capture this man and bring him to Modeus hoping for some type of reward. Next to the sign of ownership are several unknown symbols. Runes perhaps, though they aren’t any known by most Rune Masters.

The remaining city consists of mostly small to large domed buildings that seem to be made out of adobe clay. Most house a variety of demons and supernatural beings. The former are residents, the latter are guests of Lord Modeus. What business they have with the Lord of Hades is unknown, but it can’t be good. Other buildings are places of entertainment, vice and decadence, along with a handful of businesses common to Hades, such as slaughterhouses, slave market, gladiatorial arena, and recently, Demon Bone Weapon manufacturing shops (all weapons are handcrafted). Other items are brought in via caravans, which set up shop on the outskirts of the city in a large area designated as an open market. The many low hills and mounds across the countryside contain slumbering Demon Locusts waiting to serve Modeus until Armageddon comes. Some believe, Armageddon is Modeus’ goal.

Tables for the Death Mire

Terrain Tables

The Death Mire is hilly terrain reputed to contain hibernating Demon Locusts by the millions. In addition, one part the region is a large, boiling swamp, while another portion is a dried swamp that is a bleak desert of baked earth and Fire Jets.

01-20% Relatively flat terrain with no obstacles. The party can move at its best speed.

21-30% Muddy or swampy and difficult terrain to cross, as the mud is at least knee deep. Speed is reduced by half, and

combat under such conditions has the following penalties: -3 on initiative and -3 to dodge.

31-40% A region covered in scrub plants and Blood Weepers. Beware.

41-50% A field of Pod Plants (one type or mixed) that stretches for 2D6 miles (3.2 to 19.2 km).

51-55% Acid Pools dot the terrain ahead. Going through carefully imposes no penalties, however under combat conditions there is a 01-50% chance per melee of stepping in an Acid Pool.

56-60% A field of 1D6x10 Fire Jets is ahead and may be difficult to go through. Combat in such an area could prove deadly.

61-65% Gas vents are releasing deadly amounts of gas into the air and anyone not in environmental armor or magically protected could be in danger. Go around in a 1D6 mile (1.6 to 9.6 km) detour or die.

66-70% Mud and quicksand! Trudging through a muddy patch that is only a foot (0.3 m) deep quickly turns deadly as people begin to sink into quicksand, sucking mud or a tar pit (all have the same effect as Tar Pits).

71-80% Fire Geysers. A small field lies ahead, roll 4D6 to determine how many.

81-90% From bad to worse, a field of Fire Geysers and Fire Jets covering a 1D4 mile (1.6 to 6.4 km) area.

91-95% Several minor rivers of lava lie ahead. They vary in width 4D6 feet (1.2 to 7.3 m).

96-100% Roll twice on this table and combine the results.

Death Mire Weather

Weather conditions in the Death Mire seem to persist for several days. Be it no activity at all or a torrent of Fire Storms. It is advised that Game Masters roll for weather related events for every three days of travel in the Death Mire, or at the Game Master’s discretion.

01-40% No weather of note at this time, only temperatures between 99 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit (37-48.8 C).

41-50% Acid Rain Storm. Several showers a day fall, however due to the heat, it dries up rather quickly leaving little humidity or steam.

51-60% Fire Rain. 1D4 sporadic showers occur for the next few days.

61-70% Fire Rain Storm! Several storms (1D6) strike over the next several days.

71-80% The clouds twist and churn all day then open up with a Hades Lightning Storm!

81-85% The weather is clear for a few days when all of a sudden either a Fire Wall or Fire Tornado strikes!

86-90% Roll twice on this table, combining the results. They can either happen together, making for one hell of a storm, or can be spread out over the next four days.

91-100% An extended respite of no weather.

Encounters for the Death Mire

The Death Mire is a pretty active place. As the capital of Hades and the home of Modeus, Lord of Hades, there is a lot of traffic coming and going. Everything from demon Commanders

and Generals to entire armies for inspection, to prisoners, slaves, and caravans. Caravans come and go, and Demon Locusts are on the fly, other demons on the march. The region is not an easy place to traverse, and there are few places to hide. If on the main road heading north, encounters are likely at least every 12 hours, elsewhere, once every day or two, or at the Game Master's discretion.

01-10% No encounter! The area is empty for as far as the eye can see, although there has been something screeching in the distance for the last 20 minutes.

11-15% A Demon Locust on the prowl. He is in a nasty mood and hungry. Bow down before him, pay him tribute, or die.

16-20% 1D4 Pit Vipers block the way. They're waiting in ambush, ready to pounce on any who cross through their domain. Characters with the Detect Ambush skill might be able to spot them at -15%.

21-25% 1D6+1 *Demon Bats* (or Demon Flies or Alu) are on patrol and looking for some action. The player group may represent spies, invaders, escaped slaves, playthings or food. Depending on circumstance (and the G.M.), they may be bluffed, bought off or give up on a battle after half of them are slain or near death. Embarrassed and afraid of torture from their master, they will not report the incident.

26-30% A wild Netherbeast (any) is hunting for food and one or more of the player characters look yummy. A cunning predator, it will try to pick off one or two of the group members when they split off from the rest of the team, or attack when one of them is injured (the injured character being the target). In the alternative, this could be a mated pair of beasts. The creature gives up if this meal proves to be too much work and it loses half its M.D.C. in combat.

31-35% A swarm of 2D6+1 *Demon Flies* on patrol or just looking for some sport to break up their day. They will fight until they take significant losses (all are down half their M.D.C. or they've lost half their numbers, etc.) and then fly off too ashamed to tell any of their Baal-Rog masters for fear of an even worse beating. Demon Flies may be substituted with Demon Bats, Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, Alu or Couril.

36-40% A flock of 2D6+10 of *Murmur's Black Vultures* circle overhead. They've found somebody or something sick, hurt or dying and can hardly wait to eat. Brave because of their numbers, 1D6 at a time swoop down, screeching and attacking the player group in an attempt to chase them away from their meal.

The "meal" they are waiting for could be: **01-15%** A hurt and scared dragon hatchling (only 72 hours old) who recently escaped the clutches of demons. **16-30%** 1D6 escaped and injured slaves. **31-45%** A large animal (Netherbeast, a Palladium animal like a Pegasus or Unicorn, or Melech, etc.; or an escaped slave or two) stuck in a Tar Pit and unable to escape. **46-60%** A minion of Dyval (any) who escaped a skirmish with demons but is so hurt, he can barely stand. He can't bio-regenerate fast enough because the Black Vultures keep swooping down and tearing at him enough to prevent recovery. Sooner or later, they'll kill him. **61-75%** A demon (Lesser or Greater, or an outcast) severely beaten, chained to a boulder and left to be eaten alive. If the vultures don't kill him (could take hours, even days as his or her bio-regeneration will keep him alive for a long time), some other local predator will come across him to finish the job. Res-

cue him/her and the demon may repay the group with violence and treachery, provide them with valuable information, or he/she may prove to be a dangerous but helpful ally. (The G.M. can have the demon join the group if he likes. Same with any of the previous rescues.) **76-00%** A lone human is laying next to a rock or tree. She is hurt, seems too out of it to speak or react, and there are the remains of another human only a few yards away from her. She is bait in a trap. 1D6+1 demon worshipers, a Demon High Priest and 1D4 Lesser Demons are out hunting for intruders they heard were out in the area, or they may be hunting slaves to be sacrificed. In the alternative, the hunters could be slavers or demons hunting human prey or Netherbeasts. **Note:** The scent of blood may attract other demons and monsters.

41-45% 1D4 *Psi-Hawks* (or Demon Flies or other winged predator) looking for food, and someone in the player group (could be an NPC) has caught their/its attention.

46-50% Under the shade of a Blood Weeper tree are 3D4+3 Ghouls. Half are devouring a corpse and the other half are about to start on a fresh one when that body groans and begs for help. The Ghouls respond like apes, dropping the body and hopping around it. One hits it with a stick, another kicks at it. Without intervention this unknown person will be killed and eaten. The Ghouls are brave because of their large numbers and will not give up these meals without a fight. However, they will flee if their attackers are too powerful and after one of the Ghouls is killed or several take serious damage.

51-55% A pair of Brek-Shall (or Pit Vipers) are startled to discover the player characters as much as our heroes are startled to have run into them. Can a peaceful parting be negotiated or will a battle ensue?

56-60% 1D6+1 Demon Flies (or Demon Bats or Gargoyles) think it's funny to bomb mortal travelers with explosive and fiery Gas Pods from the sky above. Each has 1D4 of the bombs. Whether the noise attracts anyone else to come and investigate is up to the G.M. If the demons should actually kill somebody, they'll swoop down to loot the body and leave it for the scavengers.

61-65% A Soul Catcher hungry for a couple new souls.

66-70% One or two creatures from the Palladium World; could be almost anything (Chimera, Melech, Za, Adram, Kelpie, Toadstool, Giant, Wolfen, Troll, and many others). In the alternative, it could be a monster or being from the Three Galaxies or Rifts Earth.

71-75% 1D6+2 Gallu Bulls on patrol. They will want to capture the player group and bring them to town, alive, for interrogation and then enslave them as additions to the local workforce.

76-80% 1D6+1 hungry Worms of Taut attack and fight to the death. In the alternative, could be Infernal Mastodon or other Netherbeast.

81-85% 1D6+2 Alu on patrol or out hunting. They will want to capture and bring any outsiders back to town, only they don't mind killing half of them if necessary and will loot bodies and captives before bringing them to town.

86-90% Merchant caravan traveling to the city. There are 2D6+8 wagons and 4D6+10 slaves working for the caravan leader. There are also 1D6x10 human slaves for sale, and another 2D6+4 assorted non-human races from Rifts Earth and/or the Palladium World or the Three Galaxies also in bondage as

“exotic” slaves. Only 2D6 Lesser Demons and one Greater Demon defend the caravan. The caravan leader is either the Greater Demon or a demon worshipping mortal, maybe even a priest. 30% of the wagons carry drums of water, 30% Thorn Tree wood, the rest could be carrying anything; Fire Wine, Gas Pods, basic supplies, etc. **Note:** An attack on a caravan in this part of the county has a 01-50% chance of attracting 1D6 flying demons to investigate within 1D6+1 minutes of the attack, and could bring 2D6 Alu, Shedim, Demon Flies, Gallu, or others to come to the caravan’s defense within 2D6 minutes after that.

91-95% 1D6+2 minions of Dyval on a secret mission against the demons. They may want the player characters to join and help them – offering some potentially great reward or tempting them with the acquisition of something they need or want (like a way out of Hades!). Can they be trusted? That’s the players’ choice. If the players refuse to join them, can the minions allow them to live? That’s the G.M.’s decision.

96-00% Suddenly, 2D4+3 of the small hills start to shake and Demon Locusts begin to crawl out of them. For some reason they think Armageddon has arrived and they are hungry for blood. Still groggy, they may lash out at any non-demons they see, or assume they are part of the Army of Hades and expect our heroes to join them in the battle to end all life.

The Thorn Forest

Dominating the western half of Tartarus is the Thorn Forest. It is so named because all the trees in the forest are covered with sharp, barbed thorns. Even creatures like demons with their thicker hides are not immune to getting scratched and poked. The trees are not unlike coniferous and deciduous trees found in other dimensions.

The Thorn Tree can grow to 200 feet (61 m) in height, with the trunks having a typical diameter of 3-5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) and long, protruding thorns adding an extra foot (0.3 m). The bark of the trees is black with brown stripes, and the leaves are a dark brown with yellow specks. Dangling from the trees are dozens and dozens of vines that vary in length, but the majority reach the forest floor and may even spread across the forest floor up to 10 feet (3 m) away. The vines are covered in thorns and leaves.

Thorn Trees are well suited to their environment and unlike normal trees that require light to grow, they have evolved to survive in twilight, drawing warmth and energy from the immense heat that radiates from the surface of Hades and its molten core. The hotter it is, the better the trees grow. The Thorn Forest is yet another natural mechanism that keeps the southern continent low in moisture. The trees of the Thorn Forest absorb any and all free moisture in the air. In addition, they also suck it out of the ground, leaving the area very dry. Direct contact with the thorns is the fastest way for the trees to obtain their precious water, but they can and do absorb what is available, it just takes longer for them to do so.

Thorn Trees do require water, and they have adapted an ingenious way of obtaining it that is dangerous to mortals. In addition to drawing upon ambient moisture and the occasional rain (acid rain doesn’t harm it), the tree absorbs the liquid and moisture from blood drawn from the thorns. The low hanging branches and vines, and even roots, are covered in long thorns. It is virtually impossible for man or animal to travel through the Thorn Forest without getting a nick here and a scratch there. Blood or any kind of liquid that comes in contact with the tree via its thorns is instantly absorbed. To increase the yield of blood, the trees produce a mild blood thinner. For mortals this makes healing more difficult and wounds inflicted by the thorn, take twice as long to heal. A typical scratch is barely noticed and no bother, 1 S.D.C. point. A nick is a bit deeper and does two S.D.C. points of damage to the character. Stabbing oneself or getting impaled by a thorn does 1D4+1 S.D.C. damage, and getting stabbed by several thorns does 1D6 S.D.C. times the number of thorns with which the character gets impaled. Running through a Thorn Forest does 1D6+1 S.D.C./Hit Point damage per melee round and inflicts scores of little (and not so little) nicks, cuts and scratches. Thorn Trees also derive life giving fluids from wildlife that gets nicked, stabbed and impaled on its thorns as well as creatures that are killed, absorbing spilled blood and the fluids of a decaying body. Furthermore, Thorn Trees can go for years without any liquid by going into a dormant state until a source of water or blood appears.

As annoying as the thorns can be, the leaves of the Thorn Tree are *deadly*. They look like any ordinary leaf that might be found during autumn, brown or yellow with brown speckles. However, they have short, tiny hairs that are really micro-sized thorns. Rub the leaf in the same direction as the hairs and they feel soft, rub against the grain and the minuscule thorns rend flesh like sandpaper or a grater. The edges of the leaves are also razor sharp and can make nasty nicks like stinging paper cuts. Any living creature brushing past will be scratched, nicked, scraped or cut, and might even find they have a few leaves attached to their flesh.

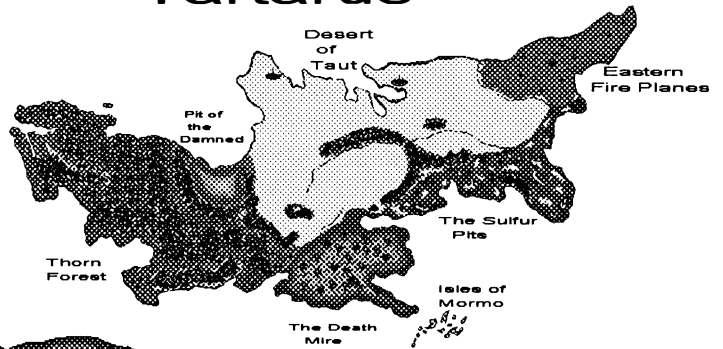
The leaves have a similar texture to autumn leaves, and while the Thorn Tree does not shed its leaves, some do fall off and die. This is yet another adaptation of the tree. Walking over the leaves is like walking over broken glass. This, in turn, cuts barefoot people and animals, causing victims to bleed, at least a little, and while it may not drop on the tree, the blood will eventually be absorbed into the roots and vines on the ground.

Thus, as if the oppressive heat is not bad enough, actually moving through the trees is hazardous for mortals. Even if humans and other mortal slaves try to cut a path in order to move through the forest, this extra effort causes people to sweat, which is another moisture that the trees just suck up through the air. This causes people to sweat more, and brings on dehydration at the same rate as if being in a desert.

Water is not safe, either. While it will evaporate at the normal rate, if left unattended near one of the Thorn Trees for more than a few hours, the barbed vines of the tree will actually *move* (albeit at a very slow rate; roughly six inches/15.2 cm an hour) toward the source of the water and either dip into the container, knock it over to spill into the ground, or puncture it, in order to suck in the fluid. From an open water container a Thorn Tree can absorb as much as a gallon (3.78 liters) every two hours!

Thorn Forest

Tartarus



Western
Mountains

Tower
of
Marmor

The Dire
Mountains

Sanctuary
Mountains

Abdul-Ra

There are also cultists who worship the trees (as well as demons), and they regularly capture intruders, visitors and runaway slaves and sacrifice them to the forest by spilling their blood and leaving the dead bodies impaled on the trunks of the trees. It's a gruesome, but fairly common sight.

Furthermore, anyone sleeping or resting closer than 10 feet (3 m) from a Thorn Tree will awake to find himself with 1D4+1 vines laying across him and at least 1D4 (probably double that) thorns stuck into his skin like giant mosquitoes. When this happens the tree inflicts only one S.D.C. point of damage per imbedded thorn (so sharp their sliding in was hardly felt), but suffers 1D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points per hour of sleep. The thorns can even work their way into the hide of sleeping Mega-Damage creatures, but are barely noticed as they inflict only one M.D. per hour. Most natives know to stay out of the reach of a Thorn Tree, or cut down the vines closest to their resting spot. Any creature with a Natural Armor Rating takes half damage. This is why the forest is so deadly, as it can cut just about anything to ribbons. *Mega-Damage* armors like those brought from Rifts Earth and Phase World can block the thorns, but if the armor is breached, and there is any kind of opening, the vine will find it. Trying to sleep in the armor for protection is possible, but then you run into problems of hygiene and muscle cramps, so armor is likely to come off sooner or later. Flying

creatures or people who fall through the trees will find that they're falling through razor wire. In addition to any damage from falling, the Thorn Trees do an additional 5D6 S.D.C. (1D6 M.D.C. to Mega-Damage beings) to anyone unlucky enough to fall into Thorn Trees. Flying through the forest is impossible without getting cut to ribbons, at least for anything larger than an eagle. The fastest and safest way to travel through the Thorn Forest is to fashion a raft made from the (dead or living) wood of Thorn Trees, chopping off all the thorns, and ride it down one of the numerous rivers of lava that weave through the entire region.

Beauty on the bloom. The general appearance of the Thorn Forest is that of gnarled trees, tangles of vines and dead leaves. Few would think that even a forest such as this could possess any beauty. However, twice a year the trees undergo a miraculous transformation and they bloom. The trees produce orange orchids and they really bring some color to an otherwise drab and monotone place. The demons have an interest in these orchids, and it's not because of their exotic beauty. The flowers can be made into a powerful narcotic that when combined with ordinary alcohol and wine, make for a potent enough drink to give even a Baal-Rog a buzz. The orange orchids are in high demand in Hades, and are used in the production of **Fire Wine**. Slaves in the *City of the Ancients* cultivate the orchids and produce some

of the finest Fire Wine in Hades. It does, however, come at a cost. Thousands of slaves die every year from blood loss while working in the Thorn Forest, but the demons feel it is a small and fair price to pay. Thus, it's not uncommon to see bodies of the dead lying in the vast orchards around the city.

Mage Power Potion

For every million orange orchids, one will be a green mutant called an *Emerald Thorn Orchid*. The green orchid is a rare prize to find and it holds significant value, especially to magic users. They aren't used like the normal orchids, rather they can be used in a secret formula that, when taken by a practitioner of magic, temporarily gives them unbridled power.

To get the most out of an Emerald Thorn Orchid, the flower is dried on a ley line nexus for thirty days after which it is ground into a fine powder. This is when it is most potent. Each green orchid can produce 15 to 20 ounces, or up to four doses, of the enhancement potion and a single dose can sell for 2D6+3 million credits in the Splynn Dimensional Market, or an equivalent in gold on the Palladium World.

The effects of taking a dose don't kick in till after one melee round (15 seconds) after ingesting the powder (can be inhaled, drunk in a liquid, or eaten as a powder, like sugar). After the first 15 seconds, the mage feels a rush of power and for 1D4 hours, temporarily sees his P.P.E. doubled and any spell he casts is at a level of power and potency 1D4 levels higher than his own!

Side effects and trouble. Of course, with a narcotic so powerful there are just as many side effects. First, at the end of the duration power boost, the spell caster feels exhausted and is unable to cast any spells (for that matter anything that has to do with channeling P.P.E.) for the next 24 hours. In fact, there is a 01-10% chance that the mage collapses into a coma-like state at the end of the duration. If so, the coma lasts for 1D6 hours, before he awakens with half his remaining Hit Points drained.

Unfortunately for most mortals, the Emerald Thorn Orchid is instantly addicting! Supernatural creatures, with their superhuman endurance and natural bio-regenerative powers, get a saving throw to save vs addiction (a 15 or higher does the trick), but humans and other mortals need to roll a 20 or higher (bonuses to save vs magic, not poison, apply). Those who become addicted to the Emerald Thorn Orchids feel sick, weak and hot, as if the very magic energy within them is on fire. Addiction Penalties: Reduce the performance of all skills by half! -1 attack per melee, but +1 on Perception Rolls, -1 to parry and dodge, and reduce Spd and P.E. attributes by 20%. Furthermore, trying to draw P.P.E. energy from a ley line or any other source can be accomplished but inflicts 3D6+6 points of damage direct to Hit Points every time it is done. (Mortal M.D. beings take 4D6+10 M.D. when drawing upon magic energy other than their own.)

HOWEVER, the addict's Spd, P.E., attacks per melee, and bonuses are restored to normal, and skill performance is +10% better than they should be, plus the usual benefits of the Emerald Thorn Orchard, whenever the magic potion is taken. Furthermore, even after the heightened P.P.E. and magic abilities fade after 1D4 hours, the restored Spd, skill abilities and bonuses last for another 72 hours before they fade and the penalties all set in. **Note:** The 72 hour afterglow only applies to beings addicted to Emerald Thorn Orchid potions. Something nobody knows is that

each use of the potion reduces the user's life expectancy by 2D6 years! 2D6+10 years for beings with life spans twice that of a human, or greater.

To beat the addiction, the mage must go 2D6+12 months without taking the potion. At that point all his abilities return to normal. However, if he ever takes it again, he is instantly addicted again (no saving throw), and the penalties when not high are double!

Knowledge of the Emerald Thorn Orchid is limited to only a handful of demons (and people) in Hades, and is practically unheard of outside of this Hell. The Splugorth are of those few "in the know among" and the potion is sometimes available in the Splynn Dimensional Market for 5-15 million credits for a single dose. Few Demon Lords know of its existence, either. Modeus knows, and so does his second, Andras. The only other Demon Lords to know of it are Kubera-Loe, Abdul-Ra, and Duke Namlack, Lord of the City of the Ancients. Modeus had anyone else killed, and Namlack is charged with finding any Emerald Thorn Orchids, processing them, and handing the potions over to Modeus.

Palladium Fantasy RPG® Crossover: The most likely source of any knowledge about the Emerald Thorn Orchid would be found on the *Palladium World*, in the *Library of Bletherad* or at the *Citadel* in the Land of the Damned, and possibly in the most secret of magic tomes or Death Cults in the *Land of the South Winds*. Legends and ancient text about ancient times suggest that this potion was forbidden long ago and knowledge of its creation, location and other info destroyed during the Millennium of Purification. However, few secrets are ever completely lost and this is one that can be found if one looks hard enough, long enough and carefully enough.

Beasts of the Thorn Forest

Despite the hostile nature of the Thorn Forest, life has found a way to adapt and flourish. However, the wildlife found within is not unlike the other demonic inhabitants of Hades. Typically found above the forest and along the mountain ranges are flocks of **Dragonductyls**, which originate from the *Palladium World*. They are in the perfect environment to thrive, preying on mortals, slaves, Lesser Demons, and injured Netherbeasts as well as other animals. They are not immune to the effects of the thorns, so most stay high in the branches where there are fewest thorns and attack prey that ventures out into open areas, which is what most people do to avoid the thorns. They mostly prey on other small flying creatures, but when the opportunity presents itself, the monsters will dive into the forest and attack an unsuspecting person. They typically target those who are injured or have wandered away from the group.

Another of the airborne creatures that live in the treetops of the Thorn Forest is the **Drakin** or **Luck Bird**, which also originates from the *Palladium World*. They have a very small population in the forest, and are rarely seen, at least by evil beings. They mostly congregate around escaped slaves and other mortals who radiate of a good alignment who have ventured into the forest. Drakins can sense good versus evil alignments and often try to help, warn or protect people of good alignments. Help may come in the form of fending off any threats that they can handle as well as warning good guys about the approach of demons, monsters and other threats. Drakins are truly seen as

“luck birds” especially in Hades. Most of the escaped slaves know stories that tell how Drakins have led slaves to safety, or helped to confuse demons or monsters chasing after the slaves long enough for the people to make good their escape or hide. Whenever a Drakin is seen by escaped slaves in the forest they are afforded great respect and people may leave them offerings of food, hoping that someday, the Drakin will come to their aid.

Murmur’s Black Vultures are also quite common in the forest, as are Ghouls, Banshees, and Demon Flies. However, the vultures are most abundant in the orchards of the City of the Ancients, and along the borders of the Desert of Taut. They rarely outright attack anything living, but wait until the person or animal is dead or dying. They are natural scavengers who can eat just about anything and are often seen feasting on the remains of dead slaves near the orchards. Demons do not concern themselves with removing the dead because a flock of Black Vultures can devour a human-size corpse in a matter of minutes, and what the birds might miss or leave behind, will be finished off by Ghouls and Nasu; living garbage disposals.

A major predator of the forest is the **Psi-Hawk**. These birds are uniquely adapted to Hades, but are still susceptible to the thorns and barbs of the forest. Thus, like the other winged predators, they stay high in the trees and attack prey out in the open, including people.

One that is a surprise in Hades is **Harpies**. Their smell alone indicates when they are nearby, which is good, because small flocks of 2D6 mated pairs and solitary hunters stalk the Thorn Forest. Their favorite prey: Humans, followed by Sub-Demons and Lesser Demons, especially Ghouls, Demon Flies, Demon Bats and Lasae. These filthy beasts don’t seem to notice their many scratches and cuts and hide in the densest clusters of Thorn Trees. They also compete with the Shedim for prime locations along the mountain ranges and it’s not uncommon for the two to clash. Try as they might, the demons have been unsuccessful in completely exterminating these minions of Dyval, and they have no idea where they come from. Depending on the level and intensity of extermination operations, the number of Harpies wane and rise. Currently, their population seems alarmingly high, with estimated population somewhere around 85,000-100,000.

The forest also holds a variety of animals and insects that one would expect to find in a woodland on Earth or the Palladium World, as well as monstrous inhabitants such as any of the *Netherbeasts* and Worms of Taut, particularly *Fire Worms*, *Nippers*, and *Tri-Fangs*. The remaining Worms of Taut, if found at all, are encountered along the border of the Desert of Taut. Only the massive Blow Worm is NEVER found in the Thorn Forest, and this is most likely the result of its size and that it would be torn to shreds by the trees. The Worms of Taut are kept in check by Psi-Hawks and Harpies. Psi-Hawks subsist primarily on Fire Worms, but have been known to attack other worms as well as people.

Residents of the Thorn Forest

Thorn Forest Demon Population: Approximately 295,000. Although they are more monster than demon, it should also be noted that there are several hundred thousand of various species of *Worms of Taut* living in the Thorn Forest as well as the neighboring mountains and desert.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 100
Gargoyles – 1,500
Gurgoyles – 300
Gargoyle Lords – 100
Gargoyle Mages – 50
Tauris – 1,100

Lesser Demons

Alu – 2,000
Banshees – 6,000
Couril – 7,000
Demon Bats – 15,000 (double that in the mountains)
Demon Flies – 25,000
Ghouls/Nasu – 30,000
Lasae – 160,000
Shedim – 45,000 (triple that in the mountains)
Succubus/Incubus – 1,500

Greater Demons

Few as permanent residents of the woods, maybe as many as 1,000.

Deevils

Harpies (from Dyval) – Estimated at 85,000 to 100,000 (a record high number). Hunted by demons and predators.

Escaped Slaves

Runaway Slave Population: Estimated at 23,000 slaves; could be 30% more than most demons believe.

Humans – 15,000
Non-Humans – 8,000
Supernatural Beings – 200

Dimensional Travelers: None, if they’re smart.

Several types of demons call the Thorn Forest home, the first of which are the **Lasae**. These tiny demons are probably the most at home in the forest and are immune to its effects. In fact, they too are covered in thorns and spikes, as if they were spawned by the very trees they inhabit. These tiny demons gather in small bands of 2D6 and move throughout the forest looking for prey or mischief. They generally live high in the trees and beyond the range of the killer vines. **Couril** also live in the trees, as well as **Demon Flies** and **Demon Bats**, though the numbers of all three of them are only about 10% of the **Lasae**.

Large flocks of the ground based **Shedim** also reside within the Thorn Forest. They live mostly along the borders between the various mountain ranges and the forest. They seldom venture deep into the Thorn Forest, as they are more cliff dwellers than forest demons. They often compete with and hunt the numerous Harpies in the area for both prey and territory. When they do venture into the forest, it’s because they are either hunting prey or perhaps looking for building material for their mountain homes. The Shedim hunt the Dragonductyls and other prey that live along the mountains as well. When a Dragonductyl is too wounded to fly, often the hunt continues within the forest.

The largest and most scattered population found in the Thorn Forest is **escaped slaves**! Despite numerous hazards and predators in the Thorn Forest, it is turning out to be a haven for es-

caped slaves. Initially, the demons cared little about escaped slaves. And some demons would set slaves loose in the forest to hunt them for sport. Eventually some of these “prey” would escape and join up with other escaped slaves. As one might expect, a few would escape here and there and over the millennia, a few dozen quickly turned into hundreds, which eventually turned into a few thousand.

The Thorn Forest probably has the largest population of free, non-demonic beings in Hades. They are scattered all over the forest in small bands of 6-12, because small groups are fastest and can hide better than large bands. However, there are some clans that number a few hundred. Any larger and they attract the attention of the numerous demons or monsters prowling the woods. The various slave tribes consist of a variety of beings. The majority are humans followed close behind by Elves, Dwarves, Kobolds, Orcs and Ogres from the *Palladium World*. However, small numbers of D-Bees from Rifts Earth and aliens from the Three Galaxies can also be encountered in the woods. More than three quarters, however, have no fighting skills whatsoever and they live hand to mouth as best they can in a hostile environment.

Since many “monster races” have been known to worship demons, they are trusted the least, and feared to be spies of the demons. Indeed, some are practicing demon worshipers, while a small number of others worship the Thorn Forest and offer it sacrifices of other slaves, travelers and intruders; mostly fellow mortals, though the occasional Sub-Demon or Lesser Demon.

For the most part, demons have decided they don’t care about runaway slaves living in the Thorn Forest. It provides the opportunity for sport (i.e. hunting), and if they survive and breed, they represent a stock of wild slaves that can be captured and domesticated in the future. For some slavers and merchants, hunting slaves in the forest for resale is already a going business. Lately, the trend has been to sell slaves from the Thorn Forest as gladiators, with a sales pitch that if a mortal can survive in the Thorn Forest he or she must be hardier and more resourceful than others of their kind, and thus make a better gladiatorial contestant. It’s not true, but such slaves continue to command 20-30% more in the marketplace.

Aside from hunting slaves, several Greater Demons come to the Thorn Forest to hunt Harpies. These creatures are starting to breed out of control and become an infestation. They are seen as a formidable challenge and most demons enjoy chopping them to pieces.

City of the Ancients

Also known as City of Thorns

Land Area: The city covers approximately a 100 square mile area (256 sq. km).

Demon Population: Approximately 405,000.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 10,000
Gargoyles – 25,000
Gurgoyles – 50,000
Gargoyle Lords – 1,000
Gargoyle Mages – 500
Tauris – 1,500

Lesser Demons

Alu – 15,000
Aquatics – 500
Banshees – 2,000
Demon Bats – 5,000
Demon Flies – 5,000
Ghouls/Nasu – 12,000
Lasae – 100,000
Mares/Nightmares – 20,000
Shedim – 75,000
Succubus/Incubus – 2,300

Greater Demons

Baal-Rogs – 2,000
Brek-Shall – 1000
Death Demons – 300
Demon Locusts – 500
Gallu Demon Bulls – 1,000
Magots – 100
Night Owls – 50,000
Raksasha – 5,000
Soul Catchers – 1,000

Slave Population: There are approximately 750,000 slaves.

Humans – 500,000
Non-Humans – 200,000
Supernatural Beings – 10,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D6x100 travelers in the city.

The only city to be found in the Thorn Forest is the **City of the Ancients**, or, as some call it, City of Thorns. The city is probably the oldest in all of Hades and no demon can recall its origins. It was also once much larger, but the city’s popularity and position of power has faded over the eons.

The city’s appearance contrasts with all the other architecture in Hades. Instead of the big, blocky style of buildings and the common use of Black Granite and Blood Marble, it is mostly made of white marble and wood! It’s nothing like anyplace in Hades, and those who first lay eyes on the city may believe it to be an ancient Greek or Atlantean city, that is, until they see the demons and its dark side. The buildings have beautiful columns and pillars, there are numerous fountains fed by underground springs, and there is a pyramid, with a few mystic properties, in the center of town.

The rest of the city is set up around the pyramid with most buildings being occupied by the masses of demons. There are several very large buildings that double as barracks for the hundreds of thousands of slaves found in the city, however the city is largely devoted to its export products.

Industry

The city produces much in the way of trade goods that caravans are eager to trade for. The two most exported products are Fire Wine, and Thorn Tree wood. Both are very popular around Hades and can bring a considerable profit. Thorn Trees are impervious to normal fire, plus the wood disperses heat to remain cool to the touch. Even magical fire only does one quarter the normal level of damage to the wood, making it ideal for building construction and especially for making Thorn Tree wood boats and barges. The wood of a dead or live Thorn Tree is excellent for building small boats and barges that can sail across rivers, lakes and seas of lava. In addition, the wood has numerous other applications all over Hades and is something that is exported to the north. Likewise, the thorns can be used to make picks, tools, implements of torture, decorations, and other items, or ground up to make a rich fertilizing compound. Thorn Tree wood is almost always part of any caravans heading out of the city.

Thorn Trees are milled right in the city. There are several nearby rivers of lava that slaves use to transport the uncut timber. Once select trees are found they are cut down, floated down river, recovered, and brought to the city for processing. This is a year long endeavor that only stops on two occasions: the annual bloom of the Orange Orchids when all slaves go from wood cutting to harvesting the sacred flower; and the Festival of Modeus, a time of celebration.

It takes an incredible amount of manpower for all the processing the city does, and slaves are used up rather quickly. Caravans usually bring in slaves by the cartload. With the rate at which the forest grows, slaves are sent to cut and harvest trees often under the watchful eye of a Shedim, or other Lesser Demon. Slaves also are required to keep the road going into and out of the city clear, as well as to keep the forest at bay and from entering the city. Thorn Trees grow five times faster than a normal tree on Earth.

The Pyramid

At the center of the city stands a giant pyramid. It has a white, glossy look that is a total contrast to the rest of Hades. It always looks pristine and unblemished, and as if it were cut from a single stone. (Which sounds impossible!) There is only a single entrance, and that is a grand arched foyer on the east side of the structure.

The pyramid is a conduit for magic energy and rests at the junction of three faint ley lines. It seems that the pyramid has numerous magical properties, but the demons are unable to access any of its powers and have given up long ago on trying to unlock its secrets. Duke Namlack, however, has become obsessed with trying to crack its secrets, though he has been unsuccessful to date.

Rifts® Crossover: Hidden on the interior of the pyramid are numerous ancient Atlantean glyphs. They are nothing like the current written language and only an Atlantean scholar versed in Atlantean history would be able to decipher the script. Basically, it tells of the history of the pyramid and the city that once existed around it. Once, long ago, the pyramid and city were on Rifts Earth, and went by the name *Atlantia*. When the Great Rift was opened by the ancient Atlanteans, the technicians in Atlantia tried to assist by drawing on the dimensional portal's power, hoping to shut it down and prevent disaster. Perhaps due to the numerous dimensional disturbances, especially the ones that ripped Atlantis from the planet Earth, the city of Atlantia was also torn from the planet and deposited in Hades at the City of the Ancients. Why there? Who knows? Drawn to the ley lines, perhaps, or some lingering ancient magic?

Time and dimensions were in flux, so it is not known when the city arrived in Hades nor what fate befell its inhabitants. When the city was found by demons, it was mostly overgrown and years were spent uncovering it and trying to learn its secrets. At first, demons thought the Ancient Ones had returned, for it is known that a great city once existed on this very site, but it was destroyed long before this new city appeared. As far as most Atlanteans believe, the city of Atlantia was destroyed. Its original location was on the tip of South America and all that was left there was a crater the size of the city! Any Atlantean who comes to City of the Ancients will recognize the hallmarks of their ancestral past, but unless they go inside the pyramid,

they won't know anything about its history or that it is Atlantia. Most will be heartbroken to know that one of their greatest cities of the past has fallen into the hands of such evil beings.

The pyramid is capable of great magic, far beyond what most pyramids can do. The pyramid of Atlantia was a newly completed prototype, and that might also have something to do with how it was teleported to Hades.

It has the following special capabilities in addition to the powers of a normal Atlantean Stone Pyramid.

City Dimensional Teleport: The pyramid can teleport itself and up to 30 square miles (77.6 sq km) around it to another dimension. P.P.E. Cost: 10,000.

City Dimensional Phase: The pyramid can phase the city and itself for 3D6+12 minutes, turning itself and everyone in it into phantoms, thus protecting it from bombardment. The effects are similar to Fade Towns, except the duration is controlled by the pyramid's operators (if they can figure out how, otherwise, as above). P.P.E. Cost: 300 per minute.

Ley Line Defense – Using the existing ley lines, the pyramid can do the following: Solidify Ley Line, and turns the blue energy into a wall of force that can not be penetrated or destroyed (instantly renews/recreates itself every few seconds). This feature works best when tied to a Ley Line Triangle. P.P.E. Cost: 100 per minute.

Ley Line Tendril Bolts: With the pyramid as the source, Ley Line Tendril Bolts can be sent down all ley lines around the pyramid as far as one mile (1.6 km). Everyone on the ley line, including vehicles, takes 3D6 M.D. per melee round. Can be maintained for 2 minutes per level of the person activating it. P.P.E. Cost: 300 per minute.

Ley Line Lightning: Similar to Ley Line Tendril Bolts, except it is a massive magical charge that can be made to hit any one target on an existing ley line. It is a single bolt that can be fired twice per melee and does 1D6x10 M.D.; can be fired simultaneously down each ley line. P.P.E. Cost: 200 per minute.

Force Field: The pyramid is able to generate a mystic force field over itself providing 60,000 M.D.C. (or double the equivalent S.D.C. in an S.D.C. environment), or it can be extended over the city, but the protection is reduced to 6,000 M.D.C. (or 12,000 S.D.C.). P.P.E. Cost: 500 per minute.

Mystic Energy Storage: The unique materials and designs incorporated into the pyramid enable it to store up to 10,000 P.P.E. However, it is only accessible to Atlanteans and Stone Wizards who know how to access the power. It is currently charged to full P.P.E. and can replenish its supply on a nexus at an astonishing rate of 10 P.P.E. per minute or 600 P.P.E. per hour.

Final Pyramid Note: The Pyramid was unique for its time, and to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands it was built only to respond to Atlantean DNA. As a result, the Demons are not able to use it at all.

Duke Namlack, Quick Stats

Namlack is the latest in a long a line of cruel taskmasters put in charge of the City of the Ancients. Most have ended up dead because they were foolish enough to keep some of the Emerald Orchid powder for themselves. Word eventually gets to Modeus, and he has a policy of no drug addicts in positions of



power, and they are severely demoted or, more likely, eliminated. So far, Namlack has proven an effective leader of the city and has been lucky in that the city has produced some of the finest Fire Wine in ages, and he was able to harvest over a dozen of the Emerald Orchids in the last year.

He looks typical for a Night Owl, except for the gray plumage on his back, indicating that he may be of considerable age.

Race: Night Owl.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Alignment: I.Q. 15, M.E. 16, M.A. 14, P.S. 29, P.P. 16, P.E. 18, P.B. 11, Spd 22, 130 flying.

M.D.C.: 140. (On S.D.C. worlds Duke Namlack has 68 Hit Points and 30 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 11.)

Experience Level: 12th.

Disposition: A true despot who overseas many things himself, preferring not to rely on aides. As one might suspect, he is quite distrusting of everyone.

Skills of Note: Lore: Demons and Monsters 98%, Intelligence 98%, and Detect Ambush 75%.

Weapons and Equipment: He openly carries two small bags each containing one dose of Emerald Thorn Orchid in powder form, but has no intention of using them, they are worth millions, and represent his safety net should he need to cash out. He has no other items for now, preferring to rely on his own abilities. However, he is amassing a vast treasure hoard as Prince of the City and has 1D6x10 million Mods his disposal.

The Sanctuary of Abdul-Ra

The **Sanctuary Mountains** are located along the southern coast of the Thorn Forest. The mountains are so named because that is what Abdul-Ra calls his domain, "the Sanctuary." On the northern face, in the middle of the mountains, is a giant effigy of Abdul-Ra's face. It is the entrance to a series of caves and tunnels that run under the entire mountain chain. Here he and several hundred thousand Raksasha dwell in relative seclusion and opulence.

The chamber of Abdul-Ra is located in the deepest part of the caves. It is possibly one of the largest caverns to be found in Hades, and it is truly a sight to behold. Various gemstones and traces of precious metals adorn the walls. Statues and effigies of Abdul-Ra and his Raksasha are everywhere in the chamber. At the center is a massive cauldron hewn right from the rock. A natural spring fills it and the Demon Lord was able to enchant the pool so he could use it as the ultimate scrying tool. With the pool, he is able to see the area around any of his Raksasha. It is a powerful tool and one that he does not reveal to the other Demon Lords.

The Demon Lord does most of his thinking and contemplation in an opulent chamber filled with books, elaborately decorated tapestries, and mounds of pillows covered in silk. He has a statue of the Deevil Lady Rhada carved from jade in one corner. It is something to help him determine his feelings for her. He wonders, sometimes, if he destroyed the statue, if it would help

him push her from his mind. There are several claw marks around his chamber from his frustration over the matter and unrelated times of anger held in check. Paintings, tapestries, statues, murals and other works of artistry adorn the polished walls of his hidden palace.

Thousands of Raksasha also reside within the Sanctuary Mountains. It is a suitable place for them, and Abdul-Ra prefers to have his people close at hand. Whenever he needs one for an assignment, there is always one immediately available. They also bring him news, mostly independent views on the progress of the Minion War, as well as the latest gossip and happenings around Hades.

In addition to the Raksasha, there are also several hundred humans and a select handful of other demons living in the caves. Random, Abdul'Ra's human valet, has proven so useful over the years that the Demon Lord has taken in more humans to be trained accordingly. At least two dozen have been assigned to various Raksasha to assist them as valets.

Tower of Murmur

The last of the Demon Lords to reside in the Thorn Forest is the Demon Lord Murmur. He has constructed a tower south of the Western Mountains on a peninsula. The tower is a sight to behold, and quite beautiful. Not too far away is his personal music hall. While single individuals are often brought to Hades, there are occasions where whole orchestral groups are brought, and the hall serves as the perfect place for them to perform. Despite the size of the massive outdoor hall, it's only for an audience of one. Murmur can listen for hours on end, sometimes causing the musicians to collapse from exhaustion for playing so long.

The Grand Music Hall is constructed from the best materials, and those who examine it should be quite impressed with its quality. The design is also made to have the sound amplified, so the music can be heard for several miles in all directions.

The tower is a unique construction. It appears to be made from a combination of granite and sapphires, which it is. Many of the windows are created from the expensive gemstone, and the tower itself from black granite with ornate decorations around it made from blood marble. The tower is huge, measuring just over 500 feet (152 m) tall and 100 feet (30 m) wide. Several floors are dedicated to the arts, and there can be found often top quality musical instruments from all over the Megaverse, especially Palladium. Only the topmost floors are reserved for the Demon Lord, while the bottom floor, with a vaulted ceiling is his grand audience chamber where he usually first meets with anyone.

Thorn Forest Tables

Thorn Forest Weather

Climatically speaking, the region is fairly stable. For the most part, the forest is a drab and dreary place. Roll on the following table every three days.

01-15% Tears from Heaven. Real rain. Cool and refreshing.

16-40% The region is particularly dry and hot, with no signs of impending weather.

41-50% Acid Rain. For the next day, there are 2D4 downpours that last for 3D6+4 minutes at a time. Shelter is hard to find and the trees offer little or none.

51-60% Acid Rain Storm. For the next day 1D4 storms pass over, each lasting 6D6+12 minutes.

61-70% Fire Rain. Conditions are right and over the course of the next two days there will be 1D6+1 brief downpours.

71-80% Fire Storm. The weather will be relatively calm for the next three days. On the fourth day, the forest is pounded by a series of Fire Storms.

81-85% Fire Tornado. Two days of calm weather end in a Fire Storm. Shortly after the storm begins, it turns into 1D4 Fire Tornadoes that rip through the area.

86-90% The next several days threaten an intense Fire Storm. Then out of the blue, it strikes. A Fire Wall is ignited and heading straight into the path of the characters.

91-95% Toxic Air! The weather is clear, but the wind blows a huge cloud of toxic air over the area.

96-100% Hades Lightning Storm. Travel is relatively clear for a week. Throughout that time, there is the occasional rumble and the threat of a Fire Storm, but it never comes. Finally, an intense Hades Lightning Storm lights up the area for several miles.

Terrain Table

The Thorn Forest is an immense area in Hades. The same terrain can go on for days at a time. It is suggested that Game Masters roll once every 4 days to determine the terrain, or as needed.

01-30% Impassible. The Thorn Forest is just too thick and overgrown. It would cut a man to ribbons and even take demons days to make a dent in it trying to chop it down. A way around it must be found. The characters spend 1D4+1 hours looking for an alternative route. The G.M. may want them to re-roll for new terrain.

31-40% A river of lava cuts through the forest. It is only 1D6+4 feet (1.5 to 3 m) wide, so the characters can try leaping across at a narrow point. Or they could build a raft made of Thorn Tree wood and ride down the river to see where it leads.

41-50% Dense forest. This particular area of the Thorn Forest is very overgrown and much denser. If speed is not reduced by 60%, then the characters will suffer all damages as listed above.

51-60% Open forest. No paths, no trails. Just endless tracts of forest. If speed is reduced by 30% the area can be traversed with no penalties. Traveling any faster will incur all damage as listed above.

61-65% The Thorn Tree forest thins and opens into a field of Razor Grass and wildflowers. The field covers a 1D4 mile (1.6 to 6.4 km) area. Go through slowly or go around.

66-70% Animal path. It is not as wide or cleared as a path used by people, but it is a welcomed relief in the Thorn Forest and allows for easier travel. Thorn Tree vines have overgrown some spots here and there and there is the possibility of damage if not careful. Damage from the surrounding trees is minimal and happens only if someone is careless. It should be noted that

in order to traverse safely, speed is reduced by 10%. Travel is possible at full speed, but then the penalties of the forest as described above apply.

71-75% The forest gives way to a 1D6 mile (1.6 to 9.6 m) field of wildflowers and Acid Pod plants, with the occasional, scattered cluster of Blood Weeper trees, a few lone Thorn Trees and even a fresh water pond. Traveling at half speed is safe and easy. Of course, the characters are out in the open where flying predators can see them. This is also a place where Couril, Demon Flies or runaway slaves might be encountered. Roll on the Encounter Table.

76-80% A well traveled path! Wide and maintained, it is virtually free of Thorn Trees and their barbed vines. There are no penalties and people can travel at their normal rate, without any effects from the forest. The path runs 2D4x10 miles (32 to 128 km), but it ultimately leads to the City of the Ancients and the characters are likely to encounter predators, demons, slaves and/or caravans out in the open like this. Roll on the Encounter Table.

81-85% River of lava and – roll again and combine the result.

86-90% A thin portion of the Thorn Forest, but it is interlaced with Fire Jets. Since they have no affect on the Thorn Trees they only add to the obstacles.

91-95% Scattered ahead of the characters is a patch of Fire Geysers. Travel through them looks difficult, and the trees surrounding the geyser field are pretty dense. Is it safer to try and find a way around, or risk running the gauntlet of Fire Geysers?

96-99% A massive Tar Pit or a series of Acid Pools dot the land ahead for 1D6 miles (1.6 to 9.6 km).

100% A 1D6 mile (1.6 to 9.6 km) swath of light forest with only a few Thorn Trees among them. It is a pleasant relief and a likely place to encounter one of the following: *01-25%* 4D6+6 escaped slaves (friendly). *26-50%* 3D6+4 hostile escaped slaves (monster races) who don't like strangers coming around their domain. *51-75%* 3D6+4 cultists looking for victims to sacrifice to the great forest. *76-00%* 1D6+3 demons (Lesser or Greater or a combination of both) looking for a little *sport*, like hunting humanoids. They'll assume player characters are runaway slaves and fair game. Or as per the Game Master's own design; be creative.

Thorn Forest Encounters

The Thorn Forest is crawling with all kinds of predators, demons, and monsters. Encounters can happen just about any time. Game Masters should take great care and roll as they feel appropriate. The forest is huge, and at the discretion of the Game Master, the players with the roll of a successful *Detect Ambush skill*, may not only be alerted to danger, but if they roll under their skill by more than half, they may actually *get the drop* on their foe! This gives the characters the choice to engage, or use those other skills, like Prowl, to successfully avoid the encounter altogether.

01-10% All is quiet. No problems. Or is it too quiet?!

11-20% 1D4 hungry Dragondactyls attack. They try to grab one or two characters in the group and fly off with them to kill away from their comrades.

21-25% 1D4 Demon Flies or Demon Bats looking for fun, food or trouble at mortal people's expense.

26-30% 2D4+4 Demon Worshiping cultists and a Taursis Sub-Demon (their leader) living the simple life in the woods, killing any slaves and strangers they come across, stealing their belongings and sacrificing them to the Thorn Tree Forest by impaling them on the tree trunks.

31-35% Two Demon Bats hanging from a tree. They are more curious than murderous and may forget they've ever seen the player group if they get a nice bribe. Otherwise, they might just fly off and tell some Greater Demon there are strangers in the forest.

36-40% The wail of a Banshee is heard two miles away. As the player characters approach the source of the wailing, they see 2D6+6 Murmur Black Vultures licking their chops from up in a tree (or circling in the sky). They all wait for a pair of Ogres to die. One is covered in Thorn Tree vines and in a coma. The other is hurt badly from battle and covered in nicks from Thorn Trees. A slain Harpy is off to his side. He will die in another hour or so from blood loss. Both can be saved with medical treatment or psionic or magic healing. Do the heroes help or leave? Do they make a friend or find themselves in more trouble?

41-50% 1D4+1 Worms of Taut; Game Master's choice as to which ones.

51-55% Something has been stalking the characters for some time. It caught the characters' scent, has been following their trail and it's only a matter of time before it attacks. Game Master's choice. Could be a Netherbeast (any) or a Lesser or Greater Demon.

56-60% The characters are being stalked from the air! Game Master's choice. Could be 1D4 Dragondactyls, Psi-Hawks, Harpies, Gargoyles, Demon Flies or a lone Baal-Rog or Night Owl.

61-65% 1D4+2 Harpies or Shedim with a taste for blood.

66-70% 1D6+2 Lasae looking for trouble. The player characters are about to become the victims of numerous, cruel practical jokes and general harassment by these angry little demons. Fortunately, they're looking to be mean, not kill, today. May substitute evil Faerie Folk, Couril or Gargoylites.

71-75% A Raksasha looking for some henchmen to send on a mission of theft, information gathering or murderous revenge.

76-80% The group comes across 2D6 Ghouls munching on a dead body (killed by a Thorn Tree). They aren't happy to have their meal interrupted and hiss and threaten, but only attack if they are attacked first.

81-85% Demon hunting party and the player group have just been chosen as the prey. Run, little humans, run. G.M.'s choice of the type of demons, but two Baal-Rogs or Raksasha, 1D4+2 Shedim or 1D6+2 Lasae are the most likely.

86-90% A screeching Drakin flies a circle over the heads of the player group and then flies off in a particular direction down a narrow, but clear path. If the group doesn't follow her, she returns and repeats the action several more times before giving up. If our heroes follow her, they break into a small clearing. Before them is a Brek-Shall. At the demon's feet are three dead human males; presumably escaped slaves. Cornered against a boulder is a human female clutching a baby. The demon snarls at the player group and tells the group to be on their way, this is none

of their affair. If they question or try to help the woman and child, the Brek-Shall grunts and says, "This woman will die whether I stop to kill you first or not. Leave now and live another day."

Not leaving and trying to rescue the woman and child will require a fight to the death with a demon berserker. Success will win the favor of the woman and her slave friends, who can offer them food, shelter for the night and some basic information about the area. **Note:** This basic scenario can be alternated with different types of rare or dangerous creatures like a Taursis, Soul Catcher, Death Demon, Raksasha, Infernal Mastodon or a creature from another world/dimension. Likewise, the reward can vary from a lot to virtually nothing, and the victim could be a Greater Demon, Duke, Prince or even Namlack being bush-whacked by a trio of demonic rivals, Harpies, or other minions of Dyval. Rescuing this demonic aristocrat could have a surprising reward.

91-95% 1D6+4 escaped slaves. They view strangers with suspicion but are willing to help fellow beings trying to escape the persecution of demons. They may have information that can lead to other adventures, quests and missions, or provide hints and clues for the current one. One or more may join the group as an NPC guide.

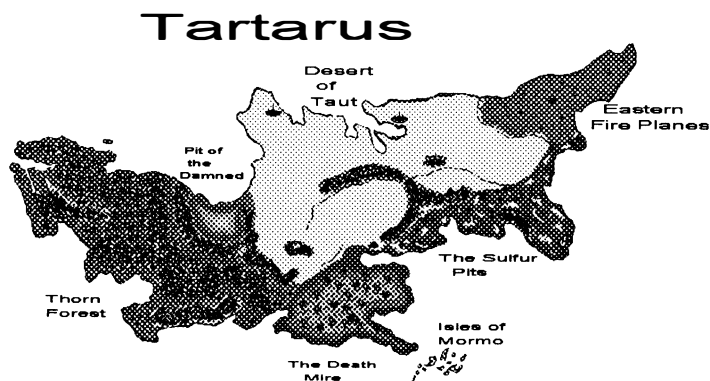
96-00% One Lesser Demon for each player character plus one Greater Demon leads them. The types of demons is the Game Master's choice. They are on the hunt for escaped slaves. Fortunately, they want to take them alive for resale on the slave market. Seeing the player characters will present them with a tempting challenge.

May substitute with beings from another world, Rifts Earth, the Palladium World, Phase World, the Three Galaxies, or even Dyval.

Pit of the Damned

The entire region is, effectively, one giant quarry pit that becomes deeper as you progress further into its heart. There are no trees, shrubs, or any kind of plant life. Nothing grows in this part of Hades because the ground is mostly rock and sand. This is clearly not a natural phenomenon in Hades. It's actually from the hundreds of thousands of slaves who are forced to labor in this part of Hades each year. Like most places in Hades, it's assuredly a death sentence, but one with hard labor that continues for as long as a slave is in the Pit. Most are shackled in groups and when Deep Night comes, they just collapse and sleep where they were working. They receive little food and nourishment, and most slaves don't last a year in the Pit.

There are concentric layers that are roughly round in shape, and each layer progresses deeper. Each layer of the Pit has the slaves doing something different. Some quarry the rocks; some shape them, while others push massive mills grinding the stone into smaller stones. There are even those who extract precious metals and stones. As you progress deeper the work becomes more demanding and punishing. Also, the number of demons increases as well.



Traveling between layers is relatively easy. The higher levels have numerous ramps as well as stairs and ladders. Except for where the ramps are, the ledges are a sheer drop a good 50 to 200 feet (15 to 61 m) per layer, roll 1D4x50 to determine the distance. The width of each layer can also vary, typically from 1 to 4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km). Given the overall size of the Pit of the Damned, this makes for a pretty deep pit. Few have been able to determine exactly how many layers there are, but it is suspected that there are at least several hundred! Various types of granite and stone are the main items produced, but the occasional vein of Black Granite or Blood Marble is also found. Rock is cut and shipped from here to all across Hades.

It is an area controlled by Abrasax the Insatiable, and he resides in the center of the Pit of the Damned. It is an open-air abode from which he does all of his work. There are numerous caves in the area, so when he requires privacy or a place to hide something, he'll use these caves.

Notable Levels

Level 5 is one of the more tame levels to be on. Here slaves are used to produce all kinds of stone tools that are sent all over Hades. They are only tools for other slaves, as no demon would lower himself to work when you have slaves around. This is another commodity that caravans will pick up and trade around Hades.

Level 14 is a quarry for obsidian. Here miners spend hours carefully carving the stone from the rock. Given the relative rar-

ity of obsidian in Hades, it is a hot commodity, so to speak. There are numerous quarries on level 14, each extracting various quantities. It is dragged to a ramp to an upper level where it is cut and polished.

Level 56 has numerous veins of precious metals, notably silver. Given that silver is the weakness of various demons, this substance is highly controlled and often under constant scrutiny. The silver is often collected in its raw unprocessed form and delivered to a special lift that brings the silver down to level 68, where only demons are allowed to be. They are in charge of collecting all of it and bringing it to Abrasax.

Level 91. Slaves in the Pit are probably treated as bad as it's going to get in Hades, but even the slaves of the Pit fear being sent to level 91. This level is set up like a giant demon carnival. Here all kinds of "demon games" are set up which usually involve the mutilation of the slaves in some horrible way. Shedim and other demons often hold blood feasts which usually involve disemboweling their victims alive and eating their entrails while they die.

Level 137 is one of the larger levels to be found in the Pit. All along the outer wall are numerous caves. Different kinds of monsters and slaves are kept here and brought out into an impromptu arena. There are no walls, and usually the demons form a circle around the combatants. This is also where demons can settle scores and it is very common to see Shedim at each other's throats trying to get ahead or to take out a rival.

Level 204 has several large caves in its walls, and several large stone buildings. Abrasax was able to steal the plans to the Hell and Soul Cannons and he is secretly constructing his own. This would not be sanctioned at all by any of the other Demon Lords, especially Modeus, and it could be his downfall. So far, he has done an excellent job at keeping it a secret by keeping the Demon Lords distracted with tending to other matters. Because materials are relatively limited, Abrasax cannot make many of these weapons at once. At most, he can make a single Soul Cannon and two Hell Cannons per month, sometimes less, as he has to have the materials smuggled in.

Level 246 is where the thousands of Shedim assemble and train for the war effort. Here Abrasax assembles units based on his assessment of their abilities and forms units that will inflict maximum damage to the demon enemies. He also has several units searching the Megaverse looking for cults to the rat god Kirgi. Their orders are to eradicate them and report their findings back to their Lord. These units are also used in the Minion War as well, however in addition to any orders they receive they are still to look for signs of Kirgi's involvement in the Minion War and report on it immediately. Each unit of Shedim is often led by a Gallu Demon Bull.

Terrain Table for the Pit

No terrain table is needed for the Pit of the Damned, as its concentric layers are all relatively flat from years of cutting stone. All loose rubble is removed, leaving the area relatively open. Only the occasional cave can be found along the rims of each layer.

Weather Table

Despite the Dire Mountains surrounding the Pit of the Damned, it is still subject to some of the various weather in Hades. However, it occurs far less frequently here. Game Masters should roll once per week or at their own discretion.

01-40% Nothing. Despite the sky threatening bad weather, nothing ever comes.

41-60% Ash Storm. At least it's not one of the more lethal storms. Ash begins falling from the sky, obscuring everything.

61-70% Isolated Fire Rain. 1D4 times throughout the week there are isolated bits of Fire Rain.

71-80% Sporadic Fire Rain. 1D4 times throughout the week there are isolated periods of Fire Rain, but they come and go 1D4 times throughout the day as well.

81-90% Fire Storm. There are two days during the week where there is an intensive Fire Storm, with each lasting twice their normal duration.

91-95% The week is relatively clear until a Fire Storm hits, and halfway through it turns into 1D4 Fire Tornadoes.

96-100% Fire Walls. They are only half as strong as normal (½ damage, duration, etc.), but they are far more frequent, occurring at least twice per day for 1D4 days. There is also a 01-60% chance that the storm pushes everyone deeper into the Pit.

Encounter Table for the Pit

Despite its vastness, the Pit of the Damned is quite populated. It's mostly Shedim because they're found in droves in the Dire Mountains. There are also millions of slaves scattered all over the Pit, and finding places to hide will be nearly impossible. It is suggested that Game Masters roll at least once per day, if not twice.

01-20% A minor respite, as there appears to be no one for miles.

21-30% 1D6 Fire Worms, these things are all over Hades and in the Pit too.

31-40% 1D4+2 Worms of Taut; **01-33%** Tomb Worms, **34-66%** Nippers, **67-00%** Tri-Fangs.

41-45% 1D4 Psi-Hawks. Yes, in the Pit or even underground in the large tunnels and chambers. They are hunting for Worms of Taut, but not having found any, the characters are looking like a tasty alternative.

46-50% 1D6+1 Ghouls looking for recently deceased, or weak and dying slaves to dine on. They aren't supposed to be down here, but come around anyway.

51-60% A group of 2D10 slaves. They are working alone quarrying stone and will be afraid of the characters, fearing it is some kind of demon trick.

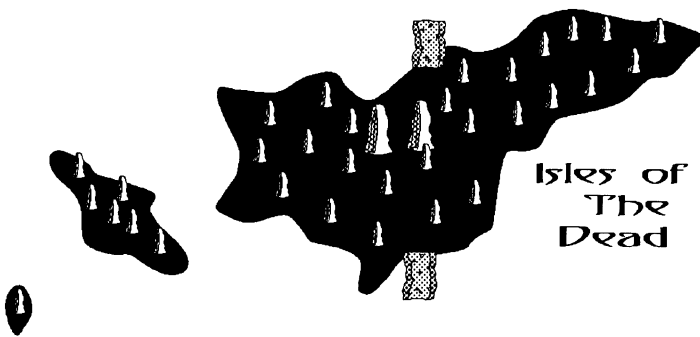
61-70% A group of 2D4x10 slaves and 1D4 Slave Masters. They will not go out of their way to stop the characters, but the Slave Masters may report them to curry favor with their demon overlords.

71-80% 1D4x100 slaves and 2D4 Lesser Demons, most likely Shedim. If the characters are spotted, the demons will no doubt want to stop them and bring them to Abrasax.

81-90% 1D4x1000 Slaves and 1D6 Lesser Demons, and 2D4 Greater Demons. If dressed appropriately, the players may slip by unnoticed.

91-95% A squad of 3D6 Shedim. They are most likely headed to the Minion War and may be looking for some action when they spot the characters.

96-00% 1D6 Greater Demons. They are undoubtedly on some mission for a Greater Demon or Demon Lord (possibly Abrasax), either delivering a message or important news. Seeing the characters, they are likely to attack first and ask questions later.



The Isles of the Dead

At the center of Hades lies a trio of islands. Collectively, they are known as the Isles of the Dead and considered as a single region of Hades. However, each has its own name. The islands, as a collective, are named after the largest of the three, the *Isle of the Dead*. The second largest of the *Islands is Bones*, and the smallest is *Skull*. For some reason the islands are a sort of dimensional nexus through which dimensional travelers appear.

The Island of Bones has a small stone dock with two or three Thorn Tree wood ferries moored there. Anyone arriving on Bones and finding the dock will see the Isle of the Dead not too far off and can take the ferry there, arriving in about 12 hours.

Skull used to have a dock as well, but it was destroyed by Duke Femus some time ago. This way he can enjoy the pleasure of tormenting people stranded there.

Isle of the Dead

Right in the heart of Hades is the Isle of the Dead. The island is covered with thousands of stone monoliths. It is unknown how they came to be, but the monoliths seem to be a unique part of the terrain, having been thrust out of the earth rather than carved. Each is roughly hewn stone and no two are alike, varying in size from 4-24 feet (1.2 to 7.3 m) in height. They appear to be made from simple granite, with the occasional quartz vein running through them.

In the center of the isle is a pair of massive stone monoliths that stretch to the sky, approximately 4000 feet (1219 m), and

each has a base 2000 feet (610 m) in diameter. They are roughly 1000 feet (305 m) apart, and between them rests one of the permanently open dimensional gateways in Hades. In fact, this part of the island has four ley lines that converge at this junction. The Rift being permanently open causes numerous dimensional disturbances in the area. The destination of the Rift changes every 1D4 minutes, and several times a day there is a *Dimensional Vortex* that sucks everything in, including a random Entity or two. Once in a great while the Rift also sparks a Ley Line Storm, but they are rare, only occurring once or twice a year.

This Rift is not very stable and the demons have given up trying to control it long ago. The Rift cycles too often to send a considerable force of demons anywhere. Only demons looking for some kind of adventure will step through an unknown Rift, because they could end up anywhere. The Rift seems to be more useful for coming to Hades than leaving, and anyone who tries to take control of the Rift will be *overwhelmed* in 1D4 minutes by various Entities.

The ground itself is barren and devoid of any type of plant or animal life. It is composed of a reddish rock that is sharp and jagged. Any who walk barefoot take 2D6 S.D.C. per hour and see their speed reduced to third. There is no cover from the elements and the only thing that stands out is the monoliths. Along the coast the terrain is relatively clear, as the magma is very fluid and instead of building up, acts like the tide that rises and falls throughout the day.

Being in the center of Hades, as well as having a sea of lava and fire surrounding it, the temperature on the Island of Death is considerably higher than the rest of Hades, with temperatures reaching 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 C). This blistering heat is unbearable to most mortals and they quickly succumb to it. Unless the characters are carrying lots of water, this area of Hades will quickly dehydrate them and the effects of heat exhaustion will rapidly set in. The island offers little in the way of sustenance.

Most demons steer clear of this island, though it does have its inhabitants, mainly Lesser Demons like *Labassu Lost Souls* and *Banshees*. Other demons stay away, visiting only if going to or from the Abyss or Tartarus, or stranded there themselves. When demons are slain in other dimensions, their essence *returns here*, and remains on the isle for some time. (See *Discorporation* under **Death of a Demon** earlier in this book.)

In addition to the Labassu and Banshees, the island is inhabited by millions of **Entities**. They are attracted to the island like flies to honey. The Entities harass everyone, from spirits to the living, and thrive on the misery they cause. Tectonic Entities have the most fun when they form bodies from the rock and debris on the island to attack unsuspecting island visitors. Others may try to possess them or just harass and bother them.

The Isle of Bones

The Island of Bones lies to the west of the main isle and is the second largest in the chain. Like the main island, Bones is also covered with monoliths. However, as one might guess, the island is covered with bones as well. Not demon bones, but the bones of mortals and animals. In short, the Isles of Bones is a dumping ground for garbage, dead bodies and the remains of dead mortals and animals. Consequently, it is infested with 1D4x10,000 Ghouls and thousands of Tomb Worms, Black Vultures, and other carrion eaters.

The Isle of Skull

The last of the islands in the Channel of Blood is the Isle of Skull. It is the smallest in the chain and is the residence of Femus. The original name of the island is lost to time, as when Femus became the ruler of Saddum, he quickly retreated from the city only to settle on the Island of Skull. He has left the day to day decisions of the city to his Priest and has spent his time collecting millions of skulls. His residence is made entirely of the skulls, and so are many of the other standing structures, furniture, etc. Even his roads and pathways are paved in skulls. Most people assume Duke Femus is quite deranged, others claim he is a master of Necromancy and is working on some great plot involving skeletons and skulls. This island also has some stone monoliths, but only a few.

Duke Femus is a 10th level Night Owl once known for his military acumen as well as his depravity. Nobody knows whether he is insane or up to something ingenious or dangerous. Most opt for crazy. He is a recluse who refuses to see or speak to most people and all his dealings are handled by his right-hand man, Majordomo Rags, a trusted and capable Alu demon.

Rags, Quick Stats

Rags acts as Duke Femus' intermediary between himself and the outside world. Since Femus has little to do with the goings-on in Saddum, and the place pretty much runs itself, Rags is the defacto ruler of the city! However, officially, Rags is a lowly servant, Duke Femus' Majordomo, so this is quite a coup for a Lesser Demon to be running the affairs of a city, even if it is a city of mortals. The Priest, Maliki, does all the hard work of administration, with Rags giving him messages and orders, supposedly from the Duke. Rags spends half his time in the city (and wishes it was more often than that) and half at his master's residence. As Demon Taskmaster, he commands a dozen Alu who answer directly to him and serve as guards at the residence on the island. He can contact Femus from the city via a magic cauldron at a moment's notice whenever he is away in town. The cauldron is kept in a secret place in the city.

Even Rags hasn't a clue whether or not Femus is crazy or working on some brilliant new scheme. Sadly, he fears his master is insane. A fact he tries to hide from the outside world, for fear he'll lose his position of power if Duke Femus is locked away or demoted. For now, he is living the high life and enjoying every minute of it.

Race: Alu.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Alignment: I.Q. 12, M.E. 11, M.A. 10, P.S. 24, P.P. 21, P.E. 22, P.B. 5, Spd 29.

M.D.C.: 110. (On S.D.C. worlds Rags has 44 Hit Points and 38 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 12.)

Disposition: Rags has learned to be professional and diplomatic when it comes to dealing with people and politics. He never craved power as much as other demons, but is certainly enjoying his position as the "unofficial" ruler of Saddum.

Skills of Note: 10th level Assassin with W.P. Dagger and Spear.

Notable Weapons and Equipment: A plain Bone Dagger, and another Bone Dagger that does double damage to good creatures and shoots a 5D6 M.D. fire ball once per melee round.

Also has a talisman of Metamorphosis: Human (transformation lasts for 6 hours and can be used three times a day).

Environmental Tables for the Isles of the Dead

Weather on the Isles of the Dead

Being islands in the middle of a sea of fire and magma makes the Isles of the Dead very susceptible to a variety of the unique weather found in Hades. However, for some reason, the periods of calm seem longer here. It is suggested that G.M.s roll for unique weather every 1D4+1 days while on the Isles of the Dead. The time between should be considered clear. It should also be noted that the monoliths are very resistant to the brutal weather and rarely take severe damage, and the two giant megaliths at the center of the Island of the Dead are impervious to weather.

01-25% A warm breeze coming off the lava seas.

26-45% An Ash Storm comes in quick and furious, blotting out the sky. Lasts only 1D4 hours.

46-55% A brief Fire Storm strikes the island; 1D4 minutes.

56-65% Fire Storm, but the characters can see it rolling in across the seas and have 1D6+3 minutes to prepare of it.

66-75% A Fire Storm is raging over the sea of fire, however when it lets up, 1D4 Fire Tornadoes head right for the island.

76-85% A large yellow and black cloud drifts down to the ground. A Fire Wall forms the second it hits the island, and heads in the direction of the characters.

86-95% A massive Hades Lightning Storm will sweep the island in 1D6 minutes, take cover.

96-00% Off in the distance it appears as if a smoke fog is rolling in. However, soon after striking the ground it sparks into a Fire Wall.

Terrain

The Isle of the Dead is a relatively small area for Hades. As a result, it is suggested that the terrain table be rolled for every six hours of travel.

01-10% No Terrain modifiers. The area is relatively clear, allowing for easy travel.

11-40% This area has an unusually high density of stone monoliths. They are much closer than usual and only one person can get through at a time. This also makes combat more difficult as people will be forced to fight in tight quarters.

41-60% Small Rivers of Lava (only 1 to 2 feet/0.3 to 0.6 m wide) course through a dense field of stone monoliths. This makes traveling through them all the more dangerous as not only do the characters have to watch out for ambushes, but they must be careful with their footing too.

61-70% The ground has become severely broken and cracked, making the terrain difficult to cross or fight on. While passing through this area, speed is reduced to one half. While fighting on this terrain, the characters are -1 to strike, parry, and dodge due to the uneven footing.

71-75% A clear, flat area, littered with bone fragments and partial skeletons. None of the remains have skulls, and it is clear that most of the bones have been partially eaten. Lingering in this area for more than a few hours will lead to an attack from 3D4+3 Ghouls or Black Vultures, or 4D6+3 Tomb Worms (there are thousands not far below the surface!).

76-80% Broken monoliths litter the area, as if a massive battle has been fought here. The characters will either have to go around, which will add 2D6 hours to their travel time, or try and pass through this rough terrain. Going through is the fastest and will only take 1D6 hours. This may or may not be a good thing. Negotiating through the monoliths will not be easy as several have to be climbed to go over them. On the other hand, this is a perfect place to hide as the broken monoliths do provide nice cover.

81-90% A field of stone monoliths and Fire Jets cover the terrain ahead. The problem is that some of the monoliths have become conduits for the Fire Jets, meaning that the Fire Jet could be sprayed in any direction, even horizontally. This will be evident from a distance and shouldn't catch the characters by surprise. Going through this area will be like walking through a minefield.

91-00% Several Tar Pits are dispersed through a field of monoliths. Going through a Tar Pit is not an option, so the characters will have to skirt around them. This would be a bad spot for an ambush.

Encounters in the Isles

Encounters on the Isles will be more frequent due to their odd nature.

01-05% 1D6 Pit Vipers come to prey on Ghouls, Tomb Worms or Black Vultures, but mortal humanoids are good too. Fight until half are killed, the rest leave.

06-10% Flock of 4D6+6 Black Vultures emboldened by their numbers attack! Fortunately, killing as few as three or four, or a show of great force, will scare them all away.

11-15% One Soul Catcher who is amused to have encountered mortals here and wishes to sit down and chat awhile. He becomes hostile only if he is insulted, ignored, or attacked first, at which point he will respond in anger with deadly force and soul stealing powers.

16-20% 1D4+1 Nipper Worms of Taut pop out from behind a monolith and attack.

21-25% 1D6 Poltergeists or Haunting Entities pester the group for 1D6 hours.

26-30% 4D4 Tomb Worms rise up from the ground and attack. Fortunately, they are small and slow and fairly easy to escape.

31-40% 1D4+1 Syphon Entities are lying dormant in a nearby stone monolith. They awaken when one of the characters either walks by or brushes against it.

41-45% 2D6+6 Ghouls! They are brave because of their numbers and attack to kill. They will give up when half their numbers are slain or if there is a demonstration of power (magical or otherwise).

46-50% 2D4 Labassu or Banshees are in the area and spot the characters.

51-55% A Succubus (or Raksasha or other shape-changer) disguised as a helpless human so she can join the group, maybe make love and cause them trouble with her suggestions and actions.

56-60% 2D6 Tectonic Entities sense the characters. They quickly form bodies or take over a nearby monolith and attack.

61-65% 2D6 Demon Flies happy to see yummy mortals to chow on rather than old bones and rotten meat. They will fight until half are slain or most are severely wounded.

66-70% Labassu (or a Possessing Entity) looking for a mortal host to inhabit, so it can torment and cause trouble for humans. Will try to possess an NPC first, rather than a player character; G.M.'s discretion.

71-75% Roll twice, combining the results above. However, substitute one of the Entities for a Possessing Entity!

76-80% 1D4 Lesser Demons on the island for some reason.

81-90% 1D6 Lesser Demons and one Baal-Rog or Gallu Demon Bull.

91-100% 1D4+1 Greater Demons.

The Demon Bridges

For thousands of years, Hades was divided by oceans of flame and lava. This made keeping control over Hades, as a whole, difficult. While numerous demons could fly, the span between the continents was difficult and far even by demon standards. During Modeus's rise to power, he ordered the construction of two bridges to span the gap between the north and the south. This would help to resolve numerous issues, including better communication, commerce and interaction between the two continents. After all, Hades is low in magic energy and it takes a great effort to teleport troops of demons over vast distances. Even with that power at their disposal, moving large amounts of cargo, troops, slaves and people was not very practical. At the same time, the slave population had grown to historic levels and Modeus saw the opportunity to put millions of slaves to work on the bridges.

The Demon Bridges are constructed of black granite from the Destiny Mountains. This unique stone is the perfect material as it can endure the heat and fiery depths of the lava oceans surrounding the continents. For several hundred years, slaves toiled digging and transporting the raw material out of the mines and building the bridges. Hundreds of slaves died in the process each day as a result of the backbreaking work, foul weather, heat and appalling work conditions. Any slave ordered to work on the bridges knew it was a death sentence.

Today the bridges are complete and span the distances from the *Abyss* to the *Isle of the Dead*, and from the isle to the continent of *Tartarus*. They hold up well, and have never been severely damaged. But the weather in the area is harsh and tends to damage the two bridges despite their durability, and every year thousands of slaves are sent to the bridges to conduct the constant repairs and upkeep they require. Long hours of back-breaking work, day in and day out, with insufficient water means agony. All one can hope for is a quick death when his time finally comes.

The two bridges are nearly identical. Both are very crude suspension bridges constructed of the black granite and chains. At

the base of the bridges where the supports thrust into the lava, they're a reddish hue in color, as the material is superheated, yet they still maintain their structural integrity. Fortunately, the stone retains its solid structure and strength even when superheated. The massive supports rising out of the lava are carved with the likenesses of the various slaves found in Hades, portrayed holding up the massive structure, each with a pained look on his face. Balanced on the support columns is the bridge itself, which is 2000 feet (610 m) wide. This makes it possible for armies of demons to cross the vast distance with ease. The massive bridge is also several hundred feet thick. This is an intentional design and it is rumored that there are numerous secret passages and rooms inside the bridges to create a sprawling dungeon network within the body of the bridge. It is also said that this is where the Twin Demon Princes who run the bridges reside.

Where the suspension cables would be are massive chains, with links that are each a hundred feet (30 m) in length. They are made out of some type of metal that can also endure the heat of Hades. Holding the suspension chains are huge edifices of the various Demon Lords, the largest being Modeus, at the center of each bridge. The links go through the various Demon Lords' hands as if they were holding a chain whip. Each visage of a Demon Lord is impressive and monstrous in size, easily spotted for several miles. The bridge as a whole adequately represents conditions in Hades and demonstrates how the demons consider themselves far superior to all other beings.

Traveling on the bridges is probably the easiest way for anyone to reach one continent or the other without using magic or supernatural abilities. While the occasional demon will be found crossing the bridge, most are couriers or on a mission for a particular Demon Lord or Prince. They do not typically have the time to stop and harass travelers, but some do like to amuse themselves and will attack if provoked or bored. The most common sights on the bridge are hundreds of slaves chained together working on bridge repair and lengthy caravans going from one continent to the other. In the case of slave labor, a Task Master controls and supervises them, making sure they don't try to escape or bother travelers. Most slaves leave travelers alone, and won't even look them in the eye or say hello.

The bridge keepers are known only as the North Gate Keeper and the South Gate Keeper, or as the Bridge Princes. They are Princes in the demon hierarchy appointed by Andras, the Marquis of Hades. They have orders to exact a reasonable toll from everyone who crosses their bridges. However, reasonable they are not. They have the authority to request *anything* they desire from the people crossing the bridges. The only exceptions are other Princes and the Demon Lords. Sometimes the request is as simple as a gold Modeus coin or information on the latest happenings around Hades. Other times it's a particular magic item or as much as 33% of cargo being hauled over the bridges. It all depends on their moods, and their moods depend on how polite and respectful the traveler is. Lick the Demon Princes' boots and get off light, be rude and lose a third of your belongings. And yes, it is common (and smart) for travelers to pay *each* Prince an equal amount. Most demons these days make arrangements prior to sending their minions over the bridges. Bribing the two Princes with treasure or gold is making them quite wealthy, even though half of it goes to Andras, who in turn,

gives half of it to Modeus (Modeus thinks he's getting 75%). Each of the Bridge Princes has a vast treasure hoard tucked away somewhere in their respective bridges.

The Twin Princes of the Demon Bridge

The Demon Bridge connects the northern and southern portions of Hades and is commanded by two Demon Princes. However these are no ordinary Demon Princes, as they are twins. This is rare unto itself, but even rarer for the siblings to get along. Their parentage is in question, as their appearance is like a mix between a *Baal-Rog* and a *Deevil Beast*! Each has a tiger stripe pattern of bronze and black, however each twin's stripes are of the opposite color. Each has horns that grow curled out of their head like a ram's horns, and boney protrusions protrude down their backs, as well as on their knees and elbows. They each have massive, bat-like wings on their backs, allowing the twins to fly. Each is versed in a distinct magic discipline and a force to be reckoned with.

Note: Unless stated otherwise, stats are the same for both twins.

Race: Mixed race, Baal-Rog and Deevil Beast.

Names: The North Gate Keeper, and the South Gate Keeper, a.k.a. the Bridge Princes.

True Name: Bal'Bes and Bes'Bal.

Alignment: Diabolic and Miscreant.

Attributes (Same for both): I.Q. 14, M.E. 18, M.A. 8, P.S. 33 (Supernatural), P.P. 20, P.E. 22 (Supernatural), P.B. 6, Spd 40, 90 flying.

M.D.C.: 1200. (On S.D.C. worlds the Demon Princes have 300 Hit Points and 300 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 15.)

Height: 18 feet (5.5 m) and 2,200 pounds (990 kg).

Age: Unknown, presumably several thousand years old.

Disposition: *Bal'Bes* is the dominant of the two brothers and occupies the northern bridge. He is brash, arrogant, and talks down to almost everyone, even other Demon Princes. He has no compunction about denying access to the bridge to any demon, or anyone he considers beneath him. His most common tactic is to request some type of component he can use in his Necromantic practices, typically blood, but he will sometimes demand the life of an underling of the demon requesting passage. Because of this he has amassed quite a collection of demon bones and rare components. If word ever gets back to Modeus, his days of demanding demon components may become numbered.

Bes'Bal, on the other hand, is far more sedate than his brother. His studies in Stone Magic have made him a recluse and a loner. He has little if any contact with outsiders and seems content to wander his greatest creations, the Demon Bridges. If he does come across any Lesser Demons he will demand gems in exchange for passage to the north. Otherwise, as far as demons go, he is a somber being who keeps to himself. *Bes'Bal* was directly responsible for some of the major construction of the bridges. Slaves could not do it alone and his Stone Magic played an integral role in building the bridges. He is also the mastermind who designed the bridges, so to say he is somewhat attached to them is an understatement.

P.P.E.: 600

Horror Factor: 15

Natural Abilities: In addition to their respective magic abilities (each has the abilities of his respective magic discipline), they can also see the invisible, nightvision 500 feet (152 m), bio-regeneration 3D6 every two melees, magically knows all languages, Shadow Meld three times per day for 20 minutes at a time, teleport self at will 61% and dimensional teleport at 42%. Despite their level of power, the Twin Princes have not developed any deific powers, probably from a lack of followers.

Skills of Note: Varies, see the O.C.C. Skills of the respective magic disciplines, minus any technological skills.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Staff at 10th level for Bal'Bes, and W.P. Blunt at 10th level for Bes'Bal.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Each has his own vulnerabilities, more so for Bal'Bes. He is obsessed with rumors and happenings around Hades. He is currently caught up in the rumors circulating about a demon vying to be a Demon Lord who goes by the name of Lord Karnack. Being assigned to the bridges has left the demon out of the loop when it comes to the gossip in Hades, and this drives him crazy.

If Bes'Bal has any foibles it's his obsession with the Demon Bridges. He is constantly looking them over and conducting numerous repairs and modifications to them. If anyone damages his creation, he flies into a frenzy trying to brain the person responsible. This makes him an extremely difficult demon to work for. Slaves are constantly fearful that if they do something to damage the bridges that Bes'Bal will kill them where they stand and all those around them.

Experience Level: Bal'Bes is a 10th level Necromancer and Bes'Bal is a 10th level Stone Master.

Psionic: None.

Magic: Each is a master in his respective field. Bal'Bes knows all Necromancy spells, as well as all spells from the fabled Book of Bygone Spirits (see the *Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 12, Library of Bletherad*). It's even rumored that he has a copy of the book. Bes'Bal is proficient in the Stone Master arts and commonly has a dozen spell gems on himself at any given time.

Attacks per Melee: Eight each.

Bonuses (Includes all attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +3 on Perception Rolls, +8 to strike, parry, and dodge, +5 to disarm and pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, Critical Strike on a Natural 19 or 20 and impervious to toxins and fire.

Alliances and Allies: Both received their appointments of Prince from Andras, the Marquis of Hades, and are completely loyal to him. If Andras should ever get the opportunity to elevate his position, they would stand at his side and do what they could to help. Each also has an assortment of several dozen Lesser Demons at his command.

Enemies: The brothers both dislike Raddos the Strangler. While they have no substantial proof, they have heard rumors of attempted assassination plots against Andras and they've decided she is behind them. She is disliked and harassed whenever she has to cross one of the bridges.

Weapons and Armor: Bal'Bes is in possession of a Necronstaff. He is also adorned with a boney style half plate

armor. A massive rib cage with a large skull of a dragon or some type of reptile covers his torso and head, while bones cover other parts of the body. Only the wings are really exposed, allowing him to fly. The bone armor has 200 M.D.C. (200 S.D.C. and an Armor Rating of 16 in S.D.C. settings).

Bes'Bal has a Rune stone club. It has the standard eight abilities plus can cast the following Earth Elemental spells three times per day: Chameleon, Earth Rumble, Wall of Stone, Quicksand, Throwing Stones, and Petrification. Damage from the club is 4D6. As for armor, he typically wears none, and is usually adorned in a simple brown robe that has numerous pockets.

Demon Bridge Encounters

The Demon Bridges use the Weather table listed above under the Isles of the Dead. There is no need for a terrain table, as the bridge is well, a bridge, and doesn't change. The bridge is a relatively busy part of Hades and there always seems to be a demon traveling over it. As a result, it is suggested that Game Masters roll for encounters every 4 hours on the bridge.

01-10% 1D4 Psi-Hawks attack, looking for easy prey. They go for livestock first, slaves second and others next. May be substituted for Baal-Rogs, Gargoyles, Demon Flies, or even a Dragon.

11-20% 2D6+2 Alu (or Shedim) bandits. They're looking for loot, not a fight, and will give up if there is too much resistance. Not because they are cowards, but because they don't want to capture the attention of either of the Bridge Princes. The Twins severely punish those who engage in banditry on their bridges.

21-30% Speaking of bold bandits, an Air Jinn and his four Gargoyle (or Demon Bat) henchmen swoop in to rob and extort the player characters.

31-40% A Couril or Gargoylite appears and offers his services as a guide across the bridge. He claims to know several places where travelers who appear to be camped on the bridge are really bandits (or demons looking for the group). He's glad to help them avoid these places and get them across without incident for only 20 Modeus coins or equivalent in change. His story may or may not be true. Can the group take the chance? In any case, should he get the chance, the little varmint will also try to steal candy, booze, jewelry, magic items and other small valuables.

41-50% Bridge fight! Somebody has had an altercation about something and now a fight's broken out just ahead. The nature of demons being what it is, these fights can turn into brawls that involve everyone within a 600 foot (183 m) radius! Are you ready to rumble? Thieves may also use the diversion to pick pockets and rob wagons.

51-55% Did that stone statue just move? Hey, that's no stone statue, it's a Gargoyle Lord and a Gargoyle Mage out to rob dimensional travelers, outlaws and fugitives (like the player characters), because they can't turn to the authorities for help or report the crime. The Gargoyle Lord can summon an additional 1D4 Gargoyles for additional help; they are hiding a short distance away.

56-60% A chain gang of 6D6 slaves and 1D4 slave masters. There are no demons around and the slaves are too fearful to be cooperative. They toil away at their given task.

61-70% Escaped slaves! 2D6 have managed to escape and once they see the characters, will plead for assistance. Good aligned characters will have a difficult time refusing the slaves. Depending on the characters' reasons for being in Hades, the slaves could help or hinder them. If Game Masters want to make things really interesting, there is a 01-45% chance that one of the slaves is pregnant and ready to give birth in 1D6 days . . . to a demon!

71-80% 2D6 Entities! Several have wandered onto the bridge and are looking for trouble. Roll to determine what kind: 01-40% Haunting/Ghost. 41-60% Poltergeist. 61-80% Possessing. 81-00% Tectonic Entities, who will use pieces of the bridge if need be to form bodies. They tend to be one of the sources that do the most damage to the bridges.

81-90% 1D6 Lesser Demons, typically Alu, Shedim, Ghouls, Demon Bats, Demon Flies or any type of Gargoyle. They will be passing from one continent to the other, possibly bearing an important message or news. The characters will be seen as a threat or amusement. In either case the demons will most likely attack or at the very least harass the characters.

91-96% 1D4 Greater Demons are encountered. More than likely, it would be either a Baal-Rog, Gallu Demon Bull, a Jinn or possibly a Night Owl. Seeing a chance to bully and beat up mortals is not something a Greater Demon would pass up on.

97-00% The Demon Twins! Depending on whether the characters are on the north or south bridge will depend on whom they encounter. Bal'Bes occupies the north bridge. This brash and arrogant demon will certainly talk down to the characters and may attack only if insulted, however he can be bribed to pass! If the characters are shrewd negotiators, they could probably pass with only having to give up some minor magic items, or even a few pints of blood! If the characters have a rare magic component, like powdered Unicorn horn, an Angel feather or something of that nature, it will buy them relatively safe passage across the bridge. Of course, if the characters have some juicy gossip (no, tales of their adventures won't help) on the happenings around Hades and can entertain Bal'Bes for an hour or so that would also suffice as payment.

Now Bes'Bal, on the other hand, is of an entirely different nature than his brother. If encountered he will most likely be either overseeing repairs to the bridge, or possibly doing them himself. If the characters in any way damage the bridge he will fly into a frenzy, attacking the characters with the rage of a demon. On the other hand, compliments on the beauty of the bridge and its construction can buy the characters passage as well. If the characters don't know that he is the creator then they can buy safe passage with gems! Bes'Bal will accept no less than a stone worth 1000 credits/gold pieces per character.



Lands. The few demons found in the Abyss are most likely performing some task for a Demon Lord or are the Fallen, outcasts who have been exiled there as some bitter punishment. An abundance of monsters are found in the Abyss, including dragons and other creatures of magic from various alien worlds. Most are aggressive predators who come to the Abyss to find solitude. All add to an already dangerous environment. Also, with the Minion War heating up, demon troops and patrols are beefing up around the Demon's Gate in case minions of Dyval use it to invade Hades in retaliation for the demons' invasion of Dyval.

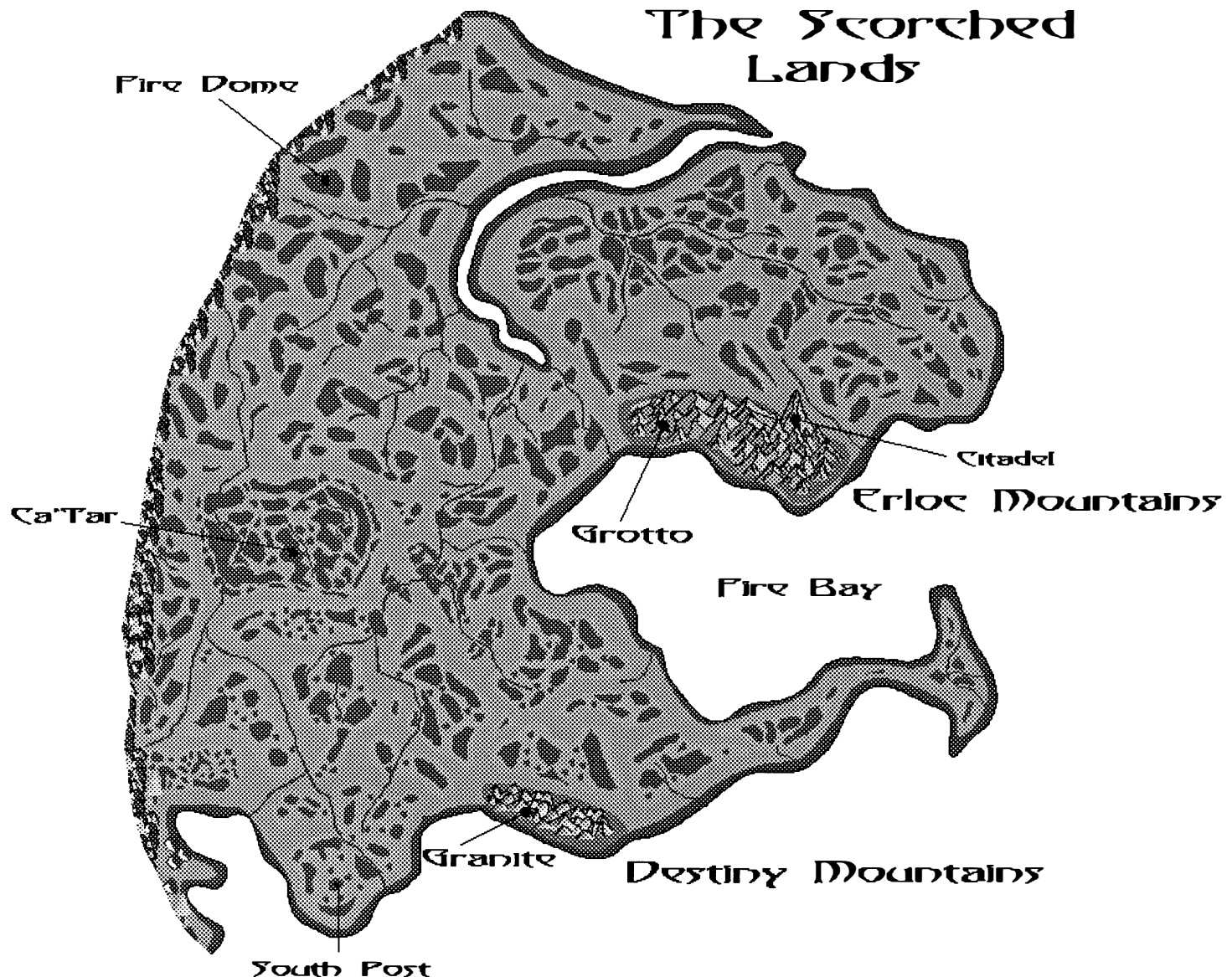
The Scorched Lands

The Scorched Lands are situated on the east coast of the Abyss. The land is a vast desert region of buttes and bluffs, rock and Fire Jets. It is blackened and charred, with rubble scattered everywhere. This land is under a constant siege by the elements. Fire Storms pelt the land day after day with no sign of it letting up. Storms constantly surge in this part of the Abyss, moving from north to south. Some areas will see a small reprieve for a few days, or maybe even a few weeks, but it's only a matter of time until the storms return.

The area is somewhat like a rocky desert. In the valleys between the buttes and bluffs is a sandy ground, mixed with various sized boulders. From pebbles to giant boulders hundreds of feet in size, this makes moving on the ground very difficult. In addition, Rivers of Lava snake their way through these lands, blocking paths and forming impassable barriers. The rivers can vary greatly in size to monsters such as the **Mighty River Styx**, which is several miles in width, to relatively minuscule rivers only a few feet across.

To compound the danger even further, the Scorched Lands have an abundance of Fire Geysers, Fire Jets and Steam Vents. They are scattered all over this part of the continent and are yet another obstacle to overcome. Like the Desert of Taut, the heat here is unbearable. Even the ground is hot to the touch, and the mountainous rocks that jut out of the land hold and absorb the heat. This makes for an oven-like effect, with waves of heat rising from the very stones and earth. Rivers of Lava also add to the sweltering heat of the region. In some areas the Rivers of Lava are so plentiful, travelers may feel as if they are in a maze, and spend countless hours going out of their way to avoid them. The whole region is very difficult to navigate on foot. Of course, this makes the Scorched Lands ideal for creatures like *Gar-*

The Scorched Lands



goyles. The buttes and bluffs are perfect for the winged demons and serve as lookout posts and roosting places. Plus they are filled with caves where Gargoyles can live.

Millions and millions of Gargoyles live in the Scorched Lands. Some of the larger buttes actually house entire Gargoyle cities, or at least what may pass for a city. They are really more like giant warrens. Still, it is a place for the clans to gather, share information, exchange trade goods, or just to get out of the weather. Gargoyles are by far the dominant species in the Scorched Lands. They are closely followed by Gurgoyles and then Gargoylites. There is no official census, but there are easily a hundred million Gargoyles living in the Scorched Lands. Gargoyles are said to be all over the Abyss, from coast to coast.

Other demons are also found in the Scorched Lands, but they represent the minority when compared to the Gargoyle population. Baal-Rogs, Demon Bats, and Demon Flies all come to the region for the same reasons the Gargoyles do. A few isolated clans of Baal-Rogs are found in the Scorched Lands, and the Brass Guard are said to train there as well. Despite the Gargoyles' dominance, one of the largest **Shedim** clans is located in the northernmost portion of the Scorch Lands. They live along the shore and in the adjoining buttes and bluffs. They usually have little to do with the Gargoyles, and travel in large groups to avoid isolated, unwarranted attacks from their winged inferiors. Small gangs of **Alu**, **Gallu Demon Bulls** and **Jinn** are also found in the Scorched Lands. The Gallu and Alu gather for contests of strength and sport, often at the expense of Gargoyles and Gurgoyles. Other demon clans live a nomadic life, moving from one location to the next in the north, living off the land, battling monsters, and seeking other challenges to test their mettle and improve their fighting skills. Many like the Abyss because it is wild, unchecked and without any of the laws, rules and restrictions of the more (at least by demon standards) civilized South. The Jinn usually come spoiling for a fight or hide while they sulk about some recent injustice. Many other demons found in the North are the Fallen, banished here to hide their shame from demon society, or are renegades, outcasts and outlaws who come to the Abyss to hide until things cool down or they can hatch a new scheme or revenge.

Most Gargoyles resent true demons, especially Lesser Demons, who they don't see as being any better than they are, and try to run them off whenever they can. Sub-Demons have very little they can call their own, and the Scorched Lands belong to them! They rule the Scorched Lands through sheer numbers. Yet still, Gargoyles are treated with nothing but contempt, especially by the likes of Baal-Rogs and Gallu Bulls. To Greater Demons, Gargoyles are slaves and lowlives, nothing more.

An estimated 80% of the Gargoyle clans are followers and servants of Lord Modeus. Another 10% follow one Demon Lord or another, 5% belong to Charun and 5% are rogue, turning to other deific beings to worship and obey. Among the latter are those who worship Deevils, the Splugorth and Set and/or the Pantheon of Taut. Through influential Gargoyles such as Powmer, Set's name is spreading, and if the Demon Lords aren't careful they could lose a substantial number of worshippers. These groups go to great lengths to keep this fact concealed, as any other Gargoyle clan would jump at the opportunity to expose these non-believers for the heretics they are and wipe them out to curry favor with their demonic patrons.

A few of these Gargoyle clans defy the demons outright, but the fear of being annihilated keeps them from making any grand attempts at rebellion. The most they do is turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the demands of the Demon Lords, and they sometimes help a dimensional traveler, fugitive or outright enemy of demons as a way to secretly strike back at their demon oppressors. To openly defy the Demon Lords, however, is to invite complete destruction. The rogue 5% who worship other beings may soon find their days numbered, as the Minion War is forcing everyone to declare a side, and stand and fight, or flee Hades.

All in all, the vast majority of Gargoyles worship and obey Modeus, Lord of Hades, with the other Demon Lords having an even split of about 10% of the Gargoyles. The only exception is Charun. He has the second largest group of Gargoyle followers (everyone else outside of Modeus has 1-2%, he has 5%). Charun has been methodically recruiting discontented Gargoyles by offering them greater respect and the chance to distinguish themselves in combat for him in the Minion War (and, secretly, he is building an army to usurp the throne of Hades from Modeus). He currently has his eye on the clans who once worshiped Mantus but feel abandoned and unappreciated.

The typical Gargoyle clan has 3D6x10,000 members and with the thousands of clans, this equates to hundreds of millions of Gargoyles found in the north. They tend to be a mix of Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, and Gargoylites. The exact figures vary by clan, but they are all led by either a Gargoyle Lord or Mage. The largest clans live in the mountains and their numbers can grow into the millions.

Most of the Gargoyles end up serving in the Minion War. Clans become organized by various demon lieutenants such as Baal-Rogs, in particular, the Brass Guard. Most are expendable fodder for the demons, but if any one group stands out or survives numerous engagements, they are allowed to return as heroes. This keeps the morale up and makes other Gargoyles yearn to join up to crush the enemies of the Demon Lords. This makes for a ready army and millions of disposable troops.

Erloc Mountains

The Erloc Mountain range is on the north coast of the Fire Bay. It is the largest mountain range in the Scorched Lands and is densely packed with Gargoyles. Located in the mountain range are two Gargoyle cities. **The city of Citadel** is located in the northeast part of the mountains and it resides in the tallest peak in the whole mountain range. Actually, it is the tallest peak in all of Hades, and it holds the ruling body of the Gargoyles, namely *King Erloc* and *Lady Leeves*. They claim the entire Scorched Lands as their kingdom, however their true domain and seat of power is no farther than the borders of the mountains. The Citadel is the unofficial capital of the Gargoyles and is the seat of power for King Erloc and his clan. They are the largest and strongest Gargoyle clan in the Abyss and are over two million strong. They help recruit Gargoyles for the Demon Lords and draw in additional Gargoyle clans every year. However, demons like Modeus are shrewd and use the Gargoyles' ambitions to serve their own selfish desires. The Demon Lords often play one clan off another, keeping them in a constant state of warfare and rivalry. As long as the many Gargoyle clans fight, they'll never unite to pose a threat. This also serves to

keep Gargoyles in their place as they try to curry favor with Modeus and the other Demon Lords. Sometimes a Gargoyle will be granted the power he needs to slay his enemies, and inevitably the next one in line hopes to be granted the same favor in order to kill him. It's a never-ending cycle that has been going on for eons to the demons' satisfaction.

The city of Grotto is second in sheer size and population. It is from here that the Gargoyle Mage, *Powmer*, rules and can execute her secret plans undisturbed.

The mountains are sharp and jagged. They have a dark grey color with streaks of black throughout. This comes from the combination of granite and obsidian which forms to create the black granite common throughout Hades. The mountains are an absolute haven for Gargoyles, and they are everywhere.

Cities of Stone

"Cities" may not be the appropriate word, as there are not any large metropolises found in the Abyss and certainly not in the Scorched Lands. However, huge numbers of Gargoyles do congregate together in a structure that is very similar to that of a human community or city. They are probably more akin to warrens, but with minor businesses popping up, and laws handed down by the King, they are taking on more of the traditional role of a city state. The Gargoyles just choose to use natural caves and hollows instead of buildings made of brick or wood. Gargoyles and their cousins are certainly in the majority, however other races such as the Za and Sowki have found that they can make a decent living catering to the Gargoyle masses. So it's not too unusual to see a few non-Gargoyles lurking around these massive Gargoyle dens. So long as they do not disturb any of the egg chambers, or cross the wrong Gargoyle, they are usually free to conduct their business as they see fit. The majority of non-Gargoyles are usually associated with one of the many air caravans that fly around Hades. Beings such as Za and Sowki can walk freely around Hades without being harassed. Some of these beings like the thrill and adventure of running a caravan in Hades. Especially if you're able to make the right contacts, then it is a gold mine waiting to be tapped.

Citadel

Land Area/Internal Volume: Citadel covers approximately a 100 square mile area (259 sq. km). The majority of it is within the mountain.

Citadel Demon Population: Approximately 5.5 million.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 500,000
Gargoyles – 3.5 million
Gurgoyles – 1 million
Gargoyle Lords – 500,000
Gargoyle Mages – 10,000
Taursis – 3,200

Lesser Demons

Alu – 1,500	Lasae – 2,000
Demon Bats - 500	Shedim – 5,000
Demon Flies – 2,000	

Greater Demons

There may be a few traveling Greater Demons, but none who reside in Citadel.

Citadel's Slave Population: There are approximately 1.5 million slaves.

Humans – 1 million
Non-Humans – 350,000
Supernatural Beings – 150,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D6x1000 travelers in the city.

High atop the largest peak in the Erloc Mountains can be found the Citadel, home to over five million Gargoyles and seat of the longest ruling Gargoyles in Hades. The peak is hollowed out and the city extends into a valley at the base of the peak. The valley runs for five miles (8 km) in an "S" shaped pattern. The mountain is a city by itself and is where the ruling body lives. The interior of the mountain has a hollowed out vertical shaft that is roughly a mile (1.6 km) in diameter and about five miles (8 km) long. All along the shaft are thousands of caves and natural hollows that allow the Gargoyles to live comfortably. At the base of the shaft is a massive arena that can seat (or perch) roughly 1,000,000 Gargoyles! It is here that the Gargoyles watch all kinds of blood sports, and the area is large enough for numerous kinds of activities. The latest trend is to stage mass combat scenarios where hundreds of slaves are pitted against each other in a free for all. This incites the masses of Gargoyles into a bloodlust frenzy. By the end of the melee, with the majority of the slaves either dead or dying, thousands of Gargoyles swoop down to join the orgy of blood and gorge themselves on the spilled guts, entrails, and carcasses of the freshly killed. This is becoming an all too common spectacle and is a trend that is beginning to spread throughout Hades.

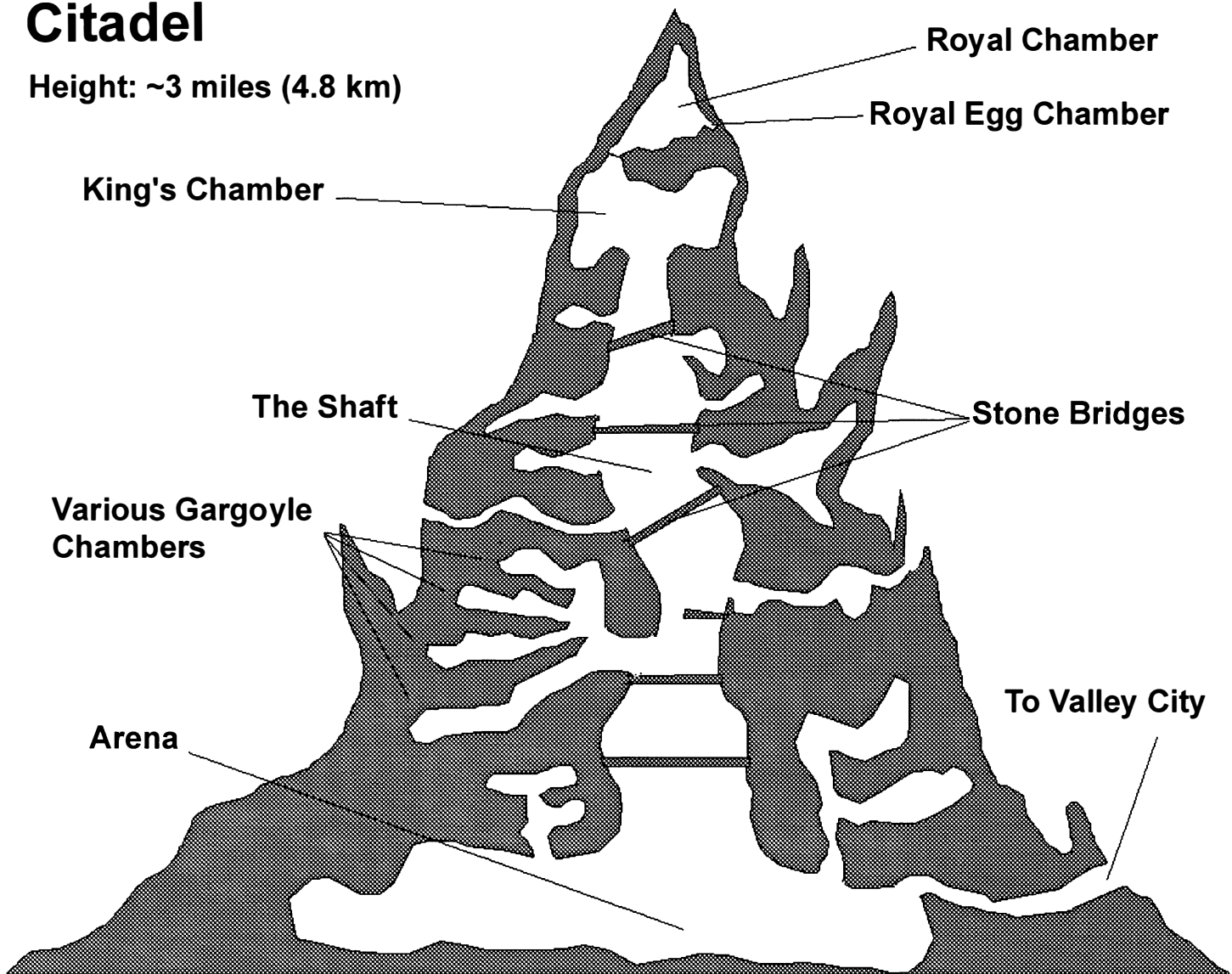
The interior shaft is filled with all kinds of shops, inns, blacksmiths, drug dens, butcher shops, and other types of illicit businesses that cater to Gargoyle needs. Several levels are dedicated to the slave trade and there are numerous holding pens for all kinds of creatures, especially humans. The Gargoyles have a thing for cages, and they hang precariously over the central shaft, preventing slaves from having any chance of escaping. When slaves are needed, a Gargoyle will swoop to the top of the cage and pull out as many slaves as are needed. Other cages are hooked up to booms with a system of ropes and pulleys for non-Gargoyles to hold slaves captive. Because of how the Gargoyles maintain their slave stock, it's not uncommon to see a slave or two fall down the shaft, only to have a Gargoyle snatch them out of the air. Some actually fall to the arena below, but only if they miss the numerous bridges and crossways on the way down.

Both natural and Gargoyle-made bridges span the width of the interior shaft so that the flightless Gurgoyles (and other flightless demons and beings) have a means to traverse the interior of the Citadel. The networks of bridges are composed primarily of stone, and the Gargoyle-made bridges are carved stone trees from the Forest of Stone. Sticking out of the bridges are hundreds of perches for the Gargoyles to rest on.

King Erloc and his entourage reside in the uppermost caverns within the Citadel. They are massive caves that encircle the peak of the mountain. They're well fortified, and the King only keeps

Citadel

Height: ~3 miles (4.8 km)



his most loyal and trusted clansmen at his side. The only way to get to this fortified area is by flying, so anyone who can't fly must be brought up by a Gargoyle or some other means, usually by magic. The King's Cave, as it is called, is also where Erloc holds court. The cave is large enough for several hundred thousand Gargoyles to be present and it sometimes fills to capacity when the King makes a decree or some other royal business is at hand.

Grotto

Land Area: Grotto covers approximately a 50 square mile area (129.5 sq. km).

Grotto Demon Population: Approximately 6.1 million.

Sub-Demons

- Gargoylites - 1 million
- Gargoyles – 4.5 million
- Gurgoyles – 500,000
- Gargoyle Lords – 100,000
- Gargoyle Mages – 2,000
- Taursis - 500

Lesser Demons

- Alu – 2,000
- Aquatics - 0
- Banshees – 3,000
- Demon Bats – 5,000
- Demon Flies – 6,000
- Ghouls/Nasu – 1,000
- Lasae – 2,000
- Mares/Nightmares - 0
- Shedim – 8,000
- Succubus/Incubus – 1,000

Greater Demons

At any given time there might be 100 to 200 Greater Demons in Grotto, however none reside there.

Grotto Slave Population: There are approximately 2.5 million slaves.

- Humans – 2 million
- Non-Humans – 5,000,000
- Supernatural Beings – 10,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D4x500 travelers in the city.

The city of Grotto is the domain of the Gargoyle Mage, Powmer. She resides in this city because it is relatively isolated and not easily accessible. It also happens to be on one of the few ley line nexus points in the north. The city is not accessible at all from the ground due to the rough terrain. Only creatures that can fly can truly call Grotto home. Consequently, very few Gargoyles live in the city, however numerous other flying races like the Za and Gromek call the city home.

Powmer likes the isolation of the city as it allows the mage to conduct her “business” relatively undisturbed. The city has never been visited by Modeus (the city’s official Demon Lord) and there does not seem to be any hint of him coming any time soon. As a result, non-demon cults have popped up all over the city. The most popular seems to be a cult to Set, led by none other than Powmer. A massive cathedral dedicated to the death god overshadows any of the Demon Lords’ sanctuaries found in the city.

The city lines a gorge deep between two mountains. The majority of the city is underground and stretches along the gorge walls. Several stone bridges span the gap across the gorge, as well as bridges constructed from stone trees. The city has an arena that is out in the open between the cliff walls. Thanks to the contours of the cliff walls, thousands of Gargoyles can perch to watch the action in the arena below. Unlike the Citadel arena, which is indoors, the Grotto arena is an open-air coliseum and allows far more to attend. With the numerous totem poles, cliff walls, and stone bridges around the arena, approximately 2,500,000 Gargoyles can visit at one time. The favored sport in the city is wrestling matches. All kinds of supernatural creatures participate in these no-holds-barred matches. Most start out as regular wrestling matches, which quickly escalate to violent grudge matches. These grudge matches are all the rave in the city and each part of the city has their favorite contenders. Recently, to spice things up, an ambitious Za decided to form a grudge team, and others quickly followed suit. The teams compete at least once a week. So far, the Stone Fists are the reigning champions. They are a group of six Gargoyle Lords and three Gargoyle Mages. The Stone Fists are utilizing unusual powers and abilities that are giving them a huge edge over their opponents. Perhaps the fact that three of the team members are Witches and have made a pact with Set has something to do with it. No one knows, of course, and the team is slowly corrupting their fans into followers.

The city also happens to have many natural fresh water springs. In fact, that is how the city got its name. There is a large “grotto” in one of the city’s caves that has a small lake and is one of the main sources of water in the region. Numerous caves contain small fresh water springs, and the slaves in Grotto spend most of their time collecting water and harvesting it for distribution to the various Gargoyles. The water is stored primarily in water skins made from the various beasts that prowl around the Stone Forest. They are transported in bulk out of the city via flying convoys of Dragondactyls, Gargoyles, and Za. A few small trading posts at the edge of the mountains are the destination of many of the convoys, while some travel as far as South Post. The trading posts are open to just about every kind of being, however the Gargoyle clans seem to be the main buyers.

Granite and the Destiny Mountains

Land Area: Granite covers approximately a 75 square mile area (194 sq. km).

Granite Demon Population: Approximately 6.1 million.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 2 million
Gargoyles – 3 million
Gurgoyles – 1 million
Gargoyle Lords – 100,000
Gargoyle Mages – 20,000
Tauris – 10,000

Lesser Demons

Alu – 1,000
Aquatics - 0
Banshees - 0
Demon Bats – 1,000
Demon Flies – 5,000
Ghouls/Nasu – 1,000
Lasae – 3,000
Mares/Nightmares – 1,000
Shedim – 2,000
Succubus/Incubus - 500

Greater Demons – no permanent residents.

Granite Slave Population: There are approximately 2.5 million slaves.

Humans – 500,000
Non-Humans – 2 million
Supernatural Beings – 20,000

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 1D4x50 travelers in the city.

The city is located in the western half of the Destiny Mountains. The mountains have a similar makeup to the *Erloc Mountains*, however over 90% of the stone is black granite. This makes the Destiny Mountains one of the longest standing landmarks in all of Hades. The name is lost to the ages and believed to originate to a time prior to the rise of the Palladium World. At one time the south face of the mountains was carved into some kind of grand visage, probably of the previous ruler of Hades, but it was defaced and half of it blown to bits, long ago. All that remains today is the city of Granite. It gets its name from the unusual granite in that portion of the mountains. The stone is black, like coal, but has all the properties of granite plus it’s five times stronger than normal stone, and is impervious to the effects of lava and fire. **The city of Granite** evolved from the construction of the two Demon Bridges that span from the Isle of the Dead to the Abyss and Tartarus. Slaves labored for hundreds of years quarrying the stone, leaving several gutted out mountains. With ready-made homes, Gargoyles flocked to the area. The city pretty much sprang up overnight, plus the Gargoyles were put in charge of administering to the slaves so it worked out well for them. The city still quarries stone, and sells

it at a premium to interested parties. In game terms, the S.D.C. value of black granite would be five times the S.D.C. value of normal stone structures.

Over the years, slaves would quickly die due to the harsh conditions of quarrying the stone. So the Gargoyles started selecting the hardiest of those slaves as the preferred slave stock. As it turns out, Dwarves, Kobolds and Orcs from the Palladium World were the ideal choices, and as such, Granite has the largest concentrations of these races in Hades. Unfortunately for these people, the Gargoyles tend to work them to the bone.

A Gargoyle called Sekloc administers the city. He was one of Lady Leeves' trusted defenders and was given the position as some type of reward. Sekloc is a fierce warrior and Gargoyle Lord with incredible strength. He also wields a magic pole arm that does double damage to reptilian races. Few who challenge him survive, and one of his morbid rituals is to eat the remains of those he defeats. He believes it will give him additional power. Consequently, he is a cannibal and has eaten numerous Gargoyle challengers. Sekloc is fiercely loyal to Lady Leeves and secretly yearns to be her mate. If ever she were to make a play for the throne and attempt to dethrone the King, Sekloc would support her all the way. For the time being, he is a harsh taskmaster and is having his slaves work around the clock on a new project. He has designed a grand palace for the Queen of the Gargoyles with all the amenities. It even has a massive, five hundred foot (152 m) tall statue of the Queen.

This residence is being constructed in the eastern half of the Destiny Mountains. It will probably be another ten years before it is completed; however it has already started to take shape. The foundation has been quarried out and the first floor is all but complete. The statue of her majesty is done and Sekloc is contemplating whether he should have a likeness of himself built at her side.

Sekloc, Gargoyle Lord, Quick Stats

Sekloc quickly distinguished himself in the Minion War. He was brutal in battle and showed no fear. That is probably because he loved the rush of combat and feeding upon his enemies. He led numerous units to victory in the Great Rift in the Land of the Damned, and even volunteered for incursions in other dimensions. He finally returned to Hades with great ambitions. Having been decorated numerous times by Lady Leeves, his lust for her finally won out and now he considers her his next conquest.

A large, imposing Gargoyle, Sekloc always wears various pieces of bone and hides from the various Deevils he has defeated in battle. His most noteworthy piece is a necklace that consists of a Deevil horn, Fenry teeth, and the teeth and claws of a Horror. He also has a small golden sash, presumably from a Deevil Serpent. Sekloc's ambitions may be his downfall as he becomes too blinded to see others plotting against him. These days, he is quite obsessed with Lady Leeves and siring the next generation of Gargoyles.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Alignment: I.Q. 15, M.E. 11, M.A. 13, P.S. 28 (Supernatural), P.P. 29, P.E. 25 (Supernatural), P.B. 10, Spd 17, 90 flying.

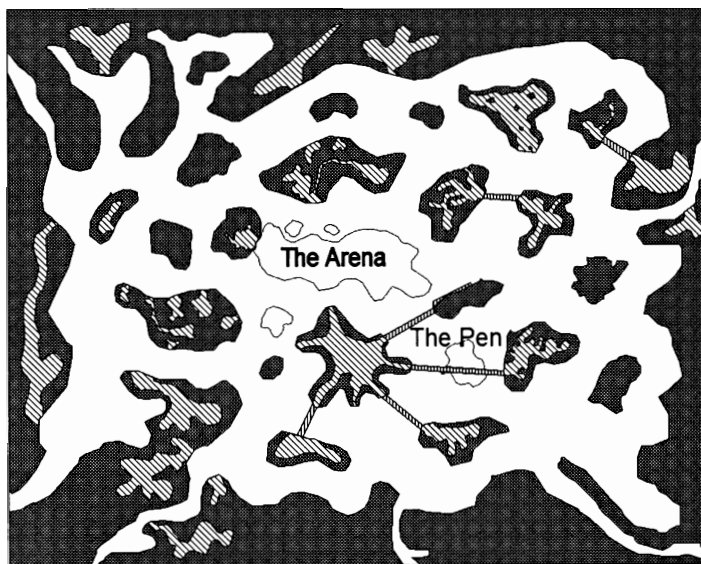
M.D.C.: 600. (On S.D.C. worlds, Sekloc has 75 Hit Points and 70 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 7th.

Disposition: Sly and cunning, always looking to one-up his competitors. He has a smooth exterior, and will deal with anyone so long as he can benefit from it.

Skills of Note: Detect Ambush 85%, Detect Concealment 80%, Intelligence 72%, Track Humanoids 85%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Land Navigation 74%, Prowl 75%, Swim 85%, W.P. Sword, Pole Arm, and Battle Axe.

Weapons and Equipment: Aside from his assortment of Deevil bones, he has a pole arm crafted from a single piece of alien metal. It is covered in strange glyphs, similar to runes. It does 6D6 points of damage and double damage to all reptile creatures. This does include Gargoyles. Twice per day the halberd's power can be activated, but in order to do so, the blade must be covered in blood. This usually means having to defeat at least one foe before the power can be activated. Once activated, the blade glows and does 1D6x10 points of damage instead of its normal 6D6.



Fire Dome

Land Area: Fire Dome covers approximately a 30 mile area (48 km).

Fire Dome Demon Population: Approximately 4.5 million.

Sub-Demons

Gargylites - 500,000
Gargoyles - 2 million
Gurgoyles - 1.5 million
Gargoyle Lords - 200,000
Gargoyle Mages - 70,000
Tauris - 2,000

Lesser Demons

Alu - 5,000
Aquatics - 0
Banshees - 1,000
Demon Bats - 5,000
Demon Flies - 10,000
Ghouls/Nasu - 0
Lasae - 6,000
Mares/Nightmares - 1,000
Shedim - 10,000
Succubus/Incubus - 1,000

Greater Demons

There are no permanent residents, except perhaps for a few renegades. Most Greater Demons in Fire Dome are here for the gambling and there are likely to be 1D6x1000 various Greater Demons with the majority being either Gallu Demon Bulls or Baal-Rogs.

Fire Dome Slave Population: There are approximately 2 million slaves.

Humans – 500,000

Non-Humans – 1 million

Supernatural Beings – 500,000 (most used in the arena)

Dimensional Travelers: At any given time there are 2D4x1000 travelers in the city.

Another giant Gargoyle warren located in a butte in the northwest section of the Scorched Lands is the Fire Dome. It caters to all kinds of sporting activities, but especially gladiatorial games. Death matches and other gladiatorial contests are the new, hot thing at Fire Dome.

Like other Gargoyle “cities,” Fire Dome is a large, cave-like structure within a butte. However, the entire bottom floor of Fire Dome is one large *lake of lava*! There are a few small islands and one large one, where all the competitions take place. The Gargoyles love it here because with the lava, it is that much hotter. Within the butte are hundreds of the largest stalactites in all of Hades. Most are hollowed out, making for the equivalent of buildings. There are also a variety of natural and Gargoyle-made bridges. However, there are enough handholds that even the dexterous Gargoyles can swing freely on the ceiling. This makes most of the activity in the upper parts of the cavern community near the ceiling. Slave pens also hang precariously, often hundreds of feet above the lava lake, with slaves plucked out by Gargoyles as they are needed.

The **gladiatorial arena** is just half of the main attraction, the other is *gambling*. The Gargoyles can’t get enough of it, and there are even many Greater and Lesser Demons who frequent the Fire Dome to make wagers and watch the games. Some even bring their own enslaved gladiators or are competitors themselves. The area has all kinds of competitions, from slave versus slave, to demon versus demon, but the biggest draws are contests that pit demons against minions of Dyval, alien monsters and dragons. Anybody who loves combat, blood sports and competition will love the battles at the Fire Dome arena.

Gambling over every event occurs all the time and like a large casino, the house gives the best odds. Any who wish to place a bet can do so through any of Lokar’s representatives. The house always pays well, however for big winners (typically anything over 1000 Modeus coins), a “winners tax” is assessed of 10%, which is usually kept by the house. Those who gamble the most know of this and begrudgingly accept it because Lokar not only runs the city, but has some of the most powerful enforcers around as well.

The arena itself is unique. In the center of Fire Dome is a large stone island that sits in the middle of the lava lake. Surrounding it are numerous smaller islands. All are fair game and can be used by any of the competitors. Also, the islands are not all level. For example the largest island is approximately 8 feet (2.4 m) above the lava, with many of the other islands slightly above or below that mark. So foes who have been pushed off have a chance of grabbing onto the edge. Many a gladiator has been vanquished because of the hot lava surrounding the islands.

King Lokar, Quick Stats

King Lokar, Lord of the Fire Dome, is a Gargoyle Mage who has become used to the opulent life of running a massive Gargoyle warren and having the power to back up his position. Over the years his little physical activity has caused him to become incredibly fat, to the point that he rarely leaves his favorite position looking over the arena. When he is moved, his Gargoyle minions often hoist him up on a custom-made throne and carry him to where he needs to be.

Over the years, there have been more than a few sore losers who Lokar has had to have expelled from the city. Given the nature of Fire Dome, he has more than his fair share of enemies, yet still he prevails through cunning and preemptive strikes by his minions.

Race: Gargoyle Mage.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Alignment: I.Q. 17, M.E. 21, M.A. 16, P.S. 21, P.P. 23, P.E. 28, P.B. 7, Spd 11 running, 80 flying.

M.D.C.: 750. (On S.D.C. worlds Lokar has 88 Hit Points and 50 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

P.P.E.: 220

Experience Level: Fifth.

Disposition: A big time gambler who loves the feel of winning, and since the house always takes a cut, even when it loses, King Lokar is always a winner. As a result, he very much enjoys running Fire Dome and his unofficial title of “King.” For the most part, he is surprisingly fair and honest to deal with, and always honors his word. This is one reason Fire Dome is so successful. However, he has a terrible temper when crossed and can be quite vengeful. He is even known to take bets from, and make deals with, mortals, as well as let them compete in the games.

Skills of Note: All those of a Gargoyle Mage plus Cardsharp at 63%, Gambling (Standard) 78%, and Gambling (Dirty Tricks) 59%.

Magic: P.P.E.: 220. Earth Elemental Magic as is standard for a Gargoyle Mage.

Weapons and Equipment: Lokar has no special weapons save for a Demon Bone Spear. He does, however, possess an unusual amulet that seems like a small glass disc filled with mud. It is some kind of magic amulet that expands Lokar’s *Earth Elemental* powers, doubling the damage, range and duration of any spell he casts. He can also summon a Greater Earth Elemental once per week. This amulet is one of the secrets that has allowed him to gain power and keep it for so many decades.

Kingdom of Ca’Tar

Land Area: Ca’Tar covers approximately a 200 mile area (320 km) and includes dozens of large Gargoyles warrens, with the smallest having fifty thousand Gargoyles.

Ca’Tar Demon Population: Approximately 8.5 million.

Sub-Demons

Gargoylites - 2 million

Gargoyles – 5 million

Gargoyles – 1 million

Gargoyle Lords – 500,000

Gargoyle Mages – 50,000

Note: No other demons really come to Ca'Tar, because it has nothing to offer them. At this point, Ca'Tar is a fledgling city state that in several decades may be the next Fire Dome, or Citadel.

Ca'Tar Slave Population: There are approximately 3.1 million slaves.

Humans – 1 million

Non-Humans – 2 million

Supernatural Beings – 100,000

Dimensional Travelers: There might be 1D4x10, but most are discouraged from coming, unless under the invitation of Charun.

For the most part, Ca'Tar was of little importance to the Gargoyles. It was just another location where millions gathered, primarily to get out of the elements or just to socialize. At any given time there would be a million Gargoyles, and most were a disorganized lot bickering amongst each other. That is until **Charun the Cruel** finally decided to establish himself in the Scorched Lands. For years he has been subverting the Gargoyle masses from the other Demon Lords and getting them to worship him instead. In fact, in a grand gesture of arrogance, and without Modeus' knowledge, he destroyed the grand statue of the Demon Lord that stood in the center of Ca'Tar, and had one of himself erected in its place. This sent shock waves through the Gargoyle communities in the area and he was able to win them over with this grand display of power.

Since then, grand cathedrals have been dedicated to Charun and he is several million followers stronger, and that number keeps slowly growing. Ca'Tar has always been known for its large statues and edifices of all the Demon Lords, as well as King Erloc, Lady Leeves and even Powmer. Only that of Mania remains, and the statue of Mantus has been defaced and turned into a mockery and is the laughingstock of Ca'Tar. In the place of the Demon Lords, Charun has erected visages of his various Gargoyle Generals and those he has granted positions of power. This has only strengthened his position in the north and keeps more Gargoyles flocking to his banner every day. Someday soon, he dreams, he may become the opposition to Modeus he has always imagined, and seize Hades for himself.

Ca'Tar consists of over a dozen Gargoyle warrens all within immediate vicinity to each other. They form a circle around a large open area several miles in size. At one point there were pillars of stone that were carved into the likenesses of the Demon Lords. It is this area that Charun has changed. Millions of Gargoyles can flock around either sitting on the various buttes, on the ground, or the variety of stone totem poles in the area. What were once competing Gargoyle warrens are now one single group united under Charun.

Slowly, Charun is spreading his influence and is having groups of Gargoyles travel across the Abyss looking for other clans and warrens that are willing to rally to his call. He must tread softly, however, or risk tipping his hand. Fortunately, Lord Modeus and most of the others are too consumed with the Minion War to notice his activities, and fewer still care about what might be going on with the lowly Gargoyle population. For now he is focused on Gargoyles dissatisfied with the other Demon Lords and hopes to woo them by giving them the attention, respect and attention they crave. At least until they help him get what he wants. He knows they exist and tries to seek them out and convert them. Any who threaten him or warn they'll report

his activity to Modeus are wiped out. This gives him and his Gargoyles free reign to sweep across the Abyss, largely unchallenged, as long as they don't challenge the largest and most powerful clans. So even if he "mistakenly" attacks one of the clans that worships one of his fellow demons, he plays it off as a mistake or that they showed signs of treachery worshipping other gods, or worse, Deevils.

Ca'Tar offers no unique amenities like Fire Dome, Grotto, or the Citadel. It is really nothing more than hundreds of Gargoyle clans that have united under Charun. Only the center park with the dozens of statues is what stands out. Charun has grand plans for the future and will carve out his empire starting in Ca'Tar. First, he is developing Ca'Tar and plans to make it a place in the Scorched Lands that will rival Fire Dome or the Citadel. Millions of slaves have been brought in and are constructing grand structures, starting with his new palace, and then the largest arena in this part of Hades. Both are already taking shape and should be completed sometime in the next ten years. For now, while the slaves toil away, Charun's minions continue to grow as his influence spreads across Hades.

South Post

Population Note: The population of South Post varies so dramatically that to include a population estimate would just not be accurate, because it changes so frequently. At any given time there are 1D6x500,000 Gargoyles and Gurgoyles, 1D4x100,000 Greater and Lesser Demons, and 1D4 million slaves.

South Post, while not a city by any standards, is a place to gather and trade. It is in a hollowed out butte in the south of the Scorched Lands where dozens of caravans gather to trade and sell their various products and slaves. As is typical in Hades, it's the slave trade that makes up the bulk of the commerce. Slaves are shipped north to Granite, Grotto, the Citadel, and Fire Dome on a regular basis. Most are for the latest Gargoyle obsession, the bloodbath in the arenas, while others are used to mine the various precious metals and other menial tasks that are below demons.

The other hot imported item is *Blood Wine* from the vineyards of Thorn Forest. Gargoyles love the stuff and can't get enough of it. The only other item that sells well in the north is *weapons*. There are a few independent weapon dealers in Shek'Ra who purchase Demon Bone Weapons in as large of quantities as they can lay their hands on. What weapons are not purchased by the Demon Lords directly are bought by these dealers. They can make a substantial profit in South Post, if they can get them there. The Demon Lords are reluctant to arm the Gargoyles for fear it would give them the courage to start yet another rebellion, so most Gargoyles are tossed into the Minion War with nothing more than their bare claws to fight with. While the Demon Lords don't like to arm the Gargoyle masses, Gargoyles are not forbidden from having weapons, and loyal leaders and warriors are often given simple weapons as a reward. This also means arms dealers can sell Gargoyles weapons without breaking any laws, and some even go so far as to bring in M.D. and minor magic weapons from other dimensions. Mostly melee weapons, not guns.

South Post is divided into two distinct sections. The first and largest is the main floor, or just called the floor. It is there that the ground caravans gather and most of the activity occurs.

There is a second tier to the cavern, which is about 200 feet (61 m) up and runs along the interior walls. The second floor is called the rim and it is there that most of the flying caravans gather. The rim has several openings from which flying creatures can enter and exit South Post. Most of the buying and trading takes place on the floor and goods going north are shipped out from the rim via the flying caravans. The whole place has the feel of one giant bazaar and just like Shek’Ra, just about anything can be bought and sold here.

Caravans & Commerce in the Abyss

The Abyss offers little in the way of commerce for Hades. Gargoyles do not make any worthwhile products. The only thing they do provide in abundance is troops for the Minion War and any conflict where numbers can win the day. This means life is cheap among the Gargoyle population, and their Demon Lords see them as little more than cannon fodder.

Despite that, there are still some worthwhile resources to be had in the Abyss. For instance, *Blood Marble* is a unique stone that is quarried from the Destiny Mountains. It’s the only place in Hades where it can be found in large quantities and the miners in Grotto are experts in obtaining it from the mountains. They have learned to deal with the super tough, black granite that makes up most of the mountains. They typically have to remove several tons of it to get to the marble. While the Blood Marble is unique, it only sees use in some of the demonic artwork found in the various palaces around Hades. It does not have the quality of black granite that seems almost indestructible in the environment of Hades. Still, it is valuable because it is rare and something that appeals to the weird tastes of the Demon Lords.

Precious metals are also a commodity and they can be found in the Scorched Lands as well. Gold, silver, copper, and platinum seem in to be abundance in the north. Some of the buttes have obvious veins running along their walls, yet few have the experience to extract it from the stone. So there they remain, untouched and untapped.

The problem is the land in general. It is just not suitable for large caravans or human slaves. The majority of the land is uneven and rocky, making travel on the ground difficult. Even the mighty Netherbeasts can succumb to the elements. Add the devastating storms, the rivers of lava, rogue groups of Gargoyles and outlaw demons to the equation you have for a place that makes the American Wild West look tame. Most caravan leaders just refuse to do business in the North. Still there are those who try, and the lucky few can make a fortune trading with the Gargoyles. There are rumors of secret caravan routes that go as far north as Fire Dome. The rumors suggest that some of the route is underground are through some of the buttes and bluffs in the area. This would provide a reprieve from the weather that is usually the undoing of many failed caravans. If the rumors are true then it would further open up the north to more opportunities for the local caravans around Shek’Ra. However, for the time being, no routes beyond South Post are known to exist. If one were to be found, a map of the route would fetch a nice profit, or as is more common in Hades, a knife to the back.

Overall in the Abyss, most of the trading is done at South Post. Most caravans can make it by ground, but have to contend with the weather as well as rogue Gargoyles, Alu, and other

raiders who will try and plunder the caravans before they make it to South Post. Caravans heading north must, as a precaution, be well armed and able to fend off many attacks. It’s not just Gargoyles they have to fear, but many of the creatures that roam the area as well. King Erloc usually has his loyal minions patrol the routes to try and keep them clear, but there have been times when his own men are the troublemakers.

Caravans rarely try and go any further north than South Post. Those who do usually travel via air. Air convoys consist of dozens, even hundreds of flying creatures carrying trade goods. They fly over otherwise rugged and hostile terrain and are usually fast enough to avoid any oncoming storms. Flying raiders are the problem.

Notable Figures in the Scorched Lands. The Scorched Lands are a vast place. So vast, in fact, that several powerful beings have set up shop in this region. Despite its high concentration of Gargoyles, there are locations that are completely desolate. Some beings prefer this solitude or have a hidden agenda and wish to be left alone from the prying eyes of the Demon Lords. Charun the Cruel is one such figure. However, he did not come to the Abyss for solitude. No, he is here to subvert as many Gargoyles to his cause as possible. That is why he selected a location such as Ca’Tar. It was relatively isolated, hard to get to and of little interest to anyone. It was there that he knew he could rally Gargoyles to his cause. Other beings such as Prince Ba’Zal desired a place to be alone and plot out their future and revenge. And then there are just those few beings that don’t seem to have any agenda. The Scorched Lands is a large place and seems to have room for everyone.

Prince Ba’Zal

Nestled away in the southeastern corner of the Abyss lies the Destiny Mountains. This area of the Abyss is home to millions of Gargoyles, as one would come to expect in this region of Hades. However, there is one area within this mountain range that is completely devoid of demons, at least those that would be considered living. **Death Demons** are plentiful here. In the easternmost area of the mountain range, one can find the Tower of Prince Ba’Zal, home to the undead. The tower lies on a small mountain peak and appears as if the tower were carved from the very mountain. Surrounding the tower for roughly a mile (1.6 km) radius are hundreds of Fire Geysers. A River of Lava also weaves its way through the southern radius of the tower, making getting to the tower by ground a dangerous prospect.

One of the more powerful Demon Princes, a Prince Ba’Zal, claims the region as his own. Unbeknownst to the majority of the Demon Lords, Modeus among them, is that Prince Ba’Zal is responsible for the recent plague of **Death Demons**. At first, the demons were considered a strange, but rare abomination, or possibly cursed by some powerful god. A rumor is quickly spreading that Prince Ba’Zal is the one responsible, though his motives are yet unknown.

The tale of Prince Ba’Zal goes back several millennia. At one point, the Raksasha demon known as *Baalthas Zezal* was a loyal subject to Lord Abdul-Ra who was sent to spy on Succor-Bemoth. Rumor had reached Abdul-Ra that demons were being sacrificed in some type of ritual, and Raksasha were no exception. Baalthas was ordered to infiltrate and learn as much

as possible. The young Raksasha was more than willing to do his master's bidding, and was able to easily slip into Succor-Bemeth's realm. Over a period of several months, Baalthas was able to gather much information and reported it back directly to Abdul-Ra. The activity of Succor-Bemeth was appalling to the Raksasha. Demons were being sacrificed for the sake of the Demon Lord's deific powers. Abdul-Ra could have cared less if it were Lesser Demons, or even perhaps other Greater Demons, but Raksashas were Succor-Bemeth's victims of choice, an insult that needed to be rectified. Baalthas was ordered to continue observing Succor-Bemeth until Abdul-Ra could confront the Demon Lord. During one particular experiment, a half dozen Raksasha were escorted in, not knowing that they were about to face their doom. Baalthas was no fool, he would wait until the most opportune time and interrupt the experiment and save his fellow demons. However, what Baalthas did not know was that once begun, the experiment would automatically run its course, and so it was that a half dozen Raksasha perished that night. When Baalthas tried to interfere, part of his life force was caught, but not all of it. His flesh and blood were torn from his body. Insane with pain and lost to panic, he fled as a bemused Succor-Bemeth looked on and laughed. Shortly afterward, Succor-Bemeth, fearing discovery and retribution, sent his minions after Baalthas.

The Raksasha was in great pain and being chased. He tried to shape-change, but found that he could not. Losing the ability to shape-change was like losing a limb for the Raksasha. In addition, his powers of bio-regeneration seemed to be failing. Finally, catching a reflection of himself in a pool of water sent him into a blind rage. He wanted to hurt someone for what was happening to him, so he stopped running, and ambushed his pursuers. During the battle, Baalthas discovered the true nature of his transformation. After receiving a serious wound from a Gallu warrior, Baalthas reached out and drained the Demon Bull's life force. Having already been wounded, the Gallu groaned and turned to ash! This infusion of the Demon Bull's life energy was all that Baalthas needed to defeat his other pursuers. Shocked that he was able to defeat four Greater Demons and three Lesser, he fled as far and as fast as he could. The North was the place to hide.

Prince Ba'Zal once had the visage of the mighty Raksasha, with an elegant golden mane and eyes. After getting caught in Succor-Bemeth's experiment, his flesh and muscle were stripped from his body, leaving a skeleton of a Raksasha with his internal organs exposed. Some tendons and pieces of muscle still clung to various portions of bone. The bone that was exposed was bleached white in color. His skull remains that of a feline, but where his eyes once were are golden orbs that seem to be on fire.

Not wanting to spend his days wandering the Fire Flats, Baalthas fled to the Abyss. For years he wandered the wasteland, honing his new abilities. This was when he discovered that he had an infectious attack. Demons who became infected by him turned into a new type of demon, the **Death Demon**. Baalthas was quick to realize that he could amass an army if he chose. Moving across the Abyss to the east, he came across a Gargoyle fortress. It was remote, and difficult to get to even for demons. Baalthas made this his new home, and with his small army of Death Demons, quickly occupied the Gargoyle fortress.

With a sanctuary to call his own, Baalthas began his own experiments, mostly to discover the extent of his own powers, as the majority of his Raksasha abilities had been stripped away during Succor-Bemeth's experiment. Realizing that if his actions were discovered the Demon Lords would be quick to retaliate, Baalthas limited his experimentation to the Gargoyles in the region. After all, they were mere fodder to the Demon Lords. After some years had passed, Baalthas was confronted by Abdul-Ra. The Demon Lord had spent considerable resources trying to track down the missing spy, and had finally found him. However, Abdul-Ra was not prepared for what he did find, an army of Death Demons waiting to be unleashed on Hades with his former acolyte as their leader. Abdul-Ra knew that he had to act, and quickly, or else Hades would be embroiled in a devastating civil war. So he made an offer to Baalthas: In exchange for not releasing his undead hordes upon Hades, Baalthas would be elevated to the rank of Prince, and answer solely to Abdul-Ra. As for his army of Death Demons, they would be dispersed throughout the Megaverse, leaving only a small contingent in the Destiny Mountains. In addition, any retribution against Succor-Bemeth would wait until a time deemed by Abdul-Ra. Baalthas agreed, changing his name to Prince Ba'Zal. As per the agreement with Abdul-Ra, the Prince's activities would be kept a secret so long as no Raksasha were turned into Death Demons. This was agreeable to both, and each had gained an ally.

Ba'Zal

True Name: Baalthas Zezal.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 22, M.E. 25, M.A. 20, P.S. 20, P.P. 24, P.E. 28, P.B. 4, Spd 10, 110 flying (75 mph/120 km).

Size: 20 feet, 6 inches (6.2 m), and weighs 1400 pounds (630 kg).

M.D.C.: 4000. (In S.D.C. settings Prince Ba'Zal has 1500 Hit Points, 1500 S.D.C. and A.R. of 14.)

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 2200

Disposition: Wicked, suspicious and vengeful, he yearns to dominate and take absolute control of any situation. When dealing with others, he often speaks down to them, showing little respect. Only those who might rival him in power get any shred of respect, and the only person to get that so far has been Abdul-Ra.

Age: Effectively Immortal.

Natural Abilities: Prince Ba'Zal lost his Raksasha abilities long ago. He is a mere shadow of his former self; however he still has a formidable array of abilities. Fly at a speed of 110 (75 mph/120 km), magically knows all languages.

Life Drain. Each attack drains 1D4x10 S.D.C./Hit Points or 1D6x10 M.D.C. when dealing with Mega-Damage beings. If Ba'Zal is able to grasp an opponent for one full melee he can drain 2D4x10 direct from Hit Points (2D6x10 M.D.C.).

Metamorphosis into a Being of Living Shadow. This makes him insubstantial and only affected by magic and psionics. He can do this three times a day for an hour at a time. While in this state, Ba'Zal can still drain the life force of his enemies, but because he cannot make direct contact, he can only

siphon 2D6 S.D.C./Hit Points (or 4D6 M.D.C.) and must make a successful strike to do so. Ba'Zal can drain through Mega-Damage body armor, but does half damage.

Create Death Demon (undead demons). Much power was infused into Ba'Zal the day he changed. While his flesh and blood were boiled away, some of that power remained within him. As a result of his change, he has the Ability of Deific Curse: Pox and Pestilence, and Create Minion. Essentially, the power to create *Death Demons*, a sort of undead demon that responds to him as its lord and master without question or hesitation. Ba'Zal is something new and different. A one-of-a-kind Demon Lord that never existed before. You might think of him as a cousin to the Vampire Intelligence only he turns demons, Sub-Demons and similar evil supernatural beings into his obedient, Undead legion. This curse does NOT work on mortals.

Skills of Note: Basic and Advanced Math 98%, Climb 80%/70%, Forgery 75%, Intelligence 85%, Land Navigation 60%, Wilderness Survival 60%, and Streetwise 80%. Astronomy, Anthropology, Lore: Demons and Monsters, Lore: Faeries, Lore: Magic, and Lore: Hades, all at 98%. W.P. Sword and Staff at third level proficiency.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: 1. Megalomania and a lust for revenge (against life). Ba'Zal has suffered terribly. For the longest time he couldn't come to grips with losing his Raksasha powers and being turned into a monster. It was only his newfound powers that allowed him to overcome this tragedy. As his powers grow, his aspirations and goals change. He would have his vengeance and make everyone else feel his pain. This has turned Ba'Zal into a megalomaniac of epic proportions. Only his contact with Abdul-Ra has prevented him from trying to sweep across Hades with his Death Demons.

2. Ba'Zal, like most Undead, is vulnerable to silver. Even ordinary S.D.C. silver weapons do 3x their normal damage as M.D. (In S.D.C. worlds it does triple damage direct to Hit Points.)

3. Holy Weapons and Rune Weapons also do triple damage, weapons from the Millennium Tree do quadruple damage, and holy symbols hold the demon (and his Death Demons) at bay.

4. Prince Ba'Zal does not take damage from running water nor from sunlight, however, in the light of day, his Supernatural P.S., P.E., number of attacks per melee, bonuses and Spd are all reduced by half.

Experience Level: 10th level Undead Demon and Necromancer.

Attacks per Melee: Six physical attacks or three life force drains, or via magic attacks.

Bonuses (includes attribute bonuses): +6 to initiative and strike, +8 to parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, and roll with fall/impact. Ba'Zal is impervious to Horror Factor and is +9 to save vs magic and +5 to save vs psionics. Ba'Zal is considered a Master Psychic.

Psionic Powers: I.S.P.: 350. The transformation ravaged Prince Ba'Zal's mind and he only retained a fraction of his once mighty mind powers. However, while he lost some, others emerged. He has all *Mind Bleeder Powers*, all forms of Telekinesis, plus the following Super Psionic powers: Empathic Transmission (6), Mind Block Auto-Defense, Telekinesis

Super (10+), Telekinetic Acceleration Attack (10-20), and Telekinetic Force Field (30).

Magic Knowledge: A young Baalthas was already a powerful spell caster, having studied Wizardry for some time. After his transformation his knowledge was greatly increased. In addition to knowing all invocations level 1-8, he knows all Bone Magic, all Necromancy spells and rituals, including all spells from the **Book of Bygone Spirits** (see *Palladium Fantasy's Book 12: Library of Bletherad*, for details on the Book of Bygone Spirits).

Weapons and Armor: None! Even though Ba'Zal has gathered a substantial treasure trove, he only uses his natural abilities and still wears the rags from the day that he was changed.

Money: Prince Ba'Zal has amassed a fortune in gold, gems, and magic items in a vault on the eighth floor of his tower. Untold millions lie in there, waiting to be claimed. It is even rumored that he has a vial of ambrosia that could conceivably turn him back into a normal Raksasha, but if true he has yet to partake of it.

Allies and Alliances: Ba'Zal is on speaking terms with Abdul-Ra, although they rarely collaborate. Ba'Zal vaguely recalls the feeling of loyalty, trust and respect he once had for his liege. Ba'Zal has also made several other contacts, including with the god, Set. Set has taken an interest in Ba'Zal's Death Demons, and has employed some in "special" missions. At the moment, Set and Ba'Zal have a tentative relationship that may grow, should Set provide Ba'Zal with favors and future considerations. Ba'Zal has also made contact with Hel, the goddess of death in the Norse pantheon. Hel was seeking Necromantic spells that she did not possess, and Ba'Zal was a likely source. They have since traded information, and as a favor to Ba'Zal, he has been given access to her realm as a place to go for privacy and to assemble his minions without the knowledge of the Demon Lords. All Death Demons are his creation and are exclusively his personal minions.

Enemies: Enemy number one is Succor-Bemoth. Ba'Zal blames him for his transformation and life of eternal torment. While he gained much power as the result of the torture, he still longs for his old life he knows he can never have. Thus, Ba'Zal has embraced being a monster and the source of a new form of Undead.

The Gargoyle Lords aware of Ba'Zal's existence see him as a plague and a threat to all of demonkind. Several have tried to take back the tower that Ba'Zal resides in, but all have failed, with many of their own forces being turned into Death Demons.

The tower is unique, and within it are several dimensional portals through which aliens and enemies can come and attack him. They are a constant threat that Ba'Zal must contend with.

Tower of Ba'Zal

Ba'Zal's tower was originally a Gargoyle fortification dating back several millennia. It was used in numerous failed coup attempts by the Gargoyles to become independent demons in Hades. When Ba'Zal found the tower, it was occupied by a powerful Gargoyle Mage. The battle to take the tower did not last very long and at least 60% of the occupants were converted

into Death Demons, with the remaining fleeing. Over the years, Ba'Zal has had to fend off his share of attacks, but so far, they haven't been anything he and his minions couldn't handle.

The only visible entrance is from the top of the tower, and is easily accessible by flying creatures. Outside the tower are numerous perches where Gargoyles could rest to survey the area, and the top of the tower is shaped like a spiked crown ringed by numerous statues of Gargoyles. The crown is the widest part of the tower, with the body only having a 200 foot (61 m) diameter.

The base of the tower rises out of a mound of rocks and appears to have been carved, because the tower seem to be constructed from a single piece of stone. From a distance the tower could resemble a morningstar. In addition, the tower is surrounded by a field of Fire Geysers and a River of Lava flows along the southern part of them.

Through the years, the tower has been strengthened by Ba'Zal's magic and rumor suggests Ba'Zal somehow got a powerful god to put a Sanctuary enchantment over the tower (or at least his inner sanctum).

Other changes to the tower include making it stronger so that it can survive the strongest Fire Storms and other brutal weather. The numerous Gargoyle statues have been retooled to have a skeletal appearance and look like Death Demons. The stone has changed from a rocky gray to a shiny obsidian black, and the Gargoyle perches have become sharp and pointed, like giant thorns. In theory, a person could climb the tower with the assistance of these "thorns," but getting in and facing Death Demons could be a fate worse than death.

The top seems to be the only way to get in, but astute observers may notice a distinct smell coming from an area northeast of the tower. The basement of the tower has a waste chute that funnels the waste away from the tower. This chute runs at a 30 degree incline for approximately 2000 feet (610 m) and is roughly 10 feet (3 m) in diameter. The chute runs to the basement of the tower, where it opens into a sort of holding tank filled with all kinds of waste, human remains, and blood, among other things. The chute itself has 10 grates including the exterior grate. There are no special enchantments on these grates, however they are quite strong, having received the tower's enchantments. Each grate is made of stone and has 100 M.D.C. (or an A.R. of 15 and 100 S.D.C.).

The interior of the chute is not only foul smelling (those entering need to make a save vs non-lethal poisons/toxins of 16 or else they will vomit and heave for 1D4 melees every 5 minutes in the chute) but covered in a fine slime that makes the chute slippery. The chute is also home to several Tri-Fangs, Nippers and Tomb Worms.

Basement/Dungeon

The lowest level in the tower is filled with at least a dozen cages. Some hang from the ceiling while others are built-in. The cages share the room with the tower's septic system. This is a small vat of waste that, when it fills to a certain point, empties into a waste chute that takes it away from the tower.

Within the cages are usually mortal slaves. Others hold demons and mortals who are in various stages of being turned into Death Demons. (Ba'Zal can't turn mortals into Death Demons, but Death Demons can.) Ba'Zal keeps very few prisoners, and

most of those in the cages are usually handpicked for special purposes. Ba'Zal is currently experimenting with different life forms to see which might be immune to the Death Demon transformation and if he can make variant Death Demons.

This floor has a 40 foot (12.2 m) ceiling and in the center is a massive stairwell that goes up to the next floor. At the base of the stairs is a cage door that is heavily reinforced and locked.

Level One – Large Holding Cells

This is where Ba'Zal cages his *demon subjects*. The cages are much stronger and able to hold even those with Supernatural Strength. In addition, there are several wards of Mystic Energy Drain in place to keep them weak and from using their magic powers. Several of the demons are simply tortured by the Death Demons while a few others are currently going through the Death Demon transformation. Of particular interest to Prince Ba'Zal is a Magot. It is taking longer than the typical transformation time, but is slowly changing. Thus far, it has not lost its ability of turning its enemies to stone, and this has piqued Ba'Zal's interest. Other demons found here include a few Tauris and one Baal-Rog of great interest. The Baal-Rog is a member of the Brass Guard, that much is clear, but spies reported he displayed an unusual fighting style for a Baal-Rog. So far, he has not been infected, just beaten on a regular basis with the hope that he will eventually break and reveal some interesting information. However he is not talking and there is no sign of him weakening yet.

This level contains seven very sturdy cages that are all built right into the wall. The ceiling is 30 feet (9.1 m) tall, allowing ample room for some of the larger creatures and demons and two sets of stairs, however they go in opposite directions. Ba'Zal always has an assortment of demons and creatures captured, but one of these days Ba'Zal hopes to capture a dragon to experiment on. Even if the experiments fail, the dragon would yield a bounty of Necromantic and Alchemical components.

Level Two – The Bone Room

As one ascends higher into the tower, the rooms begin to show more signs of Ba'Zal's twisted nature. The Bone Room is filled almost to the brim with mounds of bones from thousands of creatures. The majority are the slaves of Hades, but if you were to pick through you could find bones from all kinds of supernatural beasts including Gargoyles, Sowki, Za and various other demons and even a few Deevils that have been captured. There are at least a dozen mounds of bones with the highest mound stretching to the height of the 50 foot (15.2 m) ceiling. Hundreds of skeletons could be animated from this chamber alone and if Ba'Zal ever needs minions in a pinch he could conjure them from the bone room.

In the room are two or three Serpent Beasts. They are pets of the Prince, and he has found them to be efficient guard dogs. The Serpent Beasts can usually get the scent of any trespassers and will hunt them down relentlessly to have fresh meat. The majority of the time they are in the bone room crunching on bones and fighting amongst each other.

Level Three – The Blood Room

This is perhaps one of the more disgusting chambers to be found in Ba'Zal's tower. Here fresh corpses hang from the ceiling as they are drained of blood into the oversized vats on the

floor. The vats vary in size and can hold several hundred gallons of blood per vat. The blood is used in a variety of Ba'Zal's Necromancy experiments, plus it is used to soothe the pain of the Death Demons and Prince Ba'Zal, himself. Since the room is filled with these vats, there are elaborate trellises built above the vats. The stairs from level two end right at the beginning of the trellises. There is a corresponding set of stairs on the eastern side of the tower that continue up.

Usually hidden among the hanging bodies are Demon Flies. They're literally hanging from the ceiling and gorge on the corpses and dine on the fresh blood whenever they get the chance. This chamber is large enough for them to fly around; it has a 50 foot (15.2 m) ceiling.

Level Four – Gate Room

Cleverly hidden in the side of the tower is a massive portcullis. The Gate Room is an alternative entrance into the tower. At one time it must have been used by the prior owners. Now, it is mostly neglected by Ba'Zal. It is guarded by six Death Demons, because Gargoyles always think they can sneak in this way, and inevitably they are caught, and either torn to pieces by the Death Demons, or added to their ranks.

This floor's stairs are on either side of the tower and are hidden behind locked doors. There are several defaced Gargoyle statues and the chamber is divided into three larger rooms. Like the previous floor, the ceiling is 50 feet (15.2 m).

Level Five – Prep Room

The "Prep Room" is a torture chamber where demons and mortals are tortured for fun and science. Ba'Zal has an interest in studying the transformation process of a Death Demon, so he cuts them up while in varying stages of transformation to study the process. He has been doing this for centuries, so whether it is for some perverse pleasure or study is anyone's guess. Others are tortured for fun or to extract information.

The first part of the chamber consists of dozens of wall manacles. Most are magical and meant to hold creatures with Supernatural Strength. The remaining ones are just normal manacles that can hold any mortal creature. The second chamber has eight slabs with feet and hand manacles. There are also a variety of instruments of pain in this room. The third room is actually a spare room, but does contain two vats that can be heated and filled with any kind of liquid needed.

The final chamber is actually the bottom of a shaft that runs to the top of the tower. Designed for Gargoyles, it was the shaft allowing winged creatures to fly to the remaining levels of the tower. Within the shafts are hundreds of Gargoyle style perches of varying length. Anyone without wings and wishing to get higher into the tower must enter through here and climb all the way to the top of the tower.

This is a unique Gargoyle defense mechanism. Any enemies working their way to the top of the tower are stopped and contained on the fifth floor. Only creatures that can fly can hope to traverse the shaft unmolested. Those that can't fly must use the Gargoyle perches and that is a tedious task at best, and one that makes them vulnerable to flying creatures such as Gargoyles. The shaft ends on the tenth floor, where it opens up into the Throne Room.

Level Six – Laboratory

The sixth floor has a more uniform setup than the rest of the tower's floors. On the north and south part of the chamber are 26 individual cells. Here Ba'Zal experiments with a variety of potions and alchemical treatments to treat those who have become infected and turned into a Death Demon. If he can find a cure, he would effectively control the life *and* Undeath of a demon, and this would make him supremely powerful.

The lab is stocked with every kind of Alchemical component available. (For an extensive list, see **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, page 261.) His potions vary, with the most common being in the greatest quantity, while of rare stuff he may only have one or two, or a few ounces worth.

The lab also contains an extensive library. Most subjects deal with Necromancy and Alchemy. There are also a few magic tomes to be found. Rumored among them is the Book of Bygone Spirits, and the Tome of Northern Winter. Also, at any given time there will be 3D6 scrolls, most with rare and arcane knowledge, but nothing exceeding level 10.

The final item of note is a Circle of Teleportation. These circles are similar to the spell, Circle of Travel, but are very limited in range, usually no more than a few hundred feet. These circles are always active and when someone fully steps into the circle they disappear and reappear in a corresponding circle on the tenth floor. Like the rest of the tower, it was constructed with larger beings in mind and has a 30 foot (9.1 m) ceiling. Also, the stairs begin again and go up to the seventh floor.

Level Seven – Portal Room

These days Ba'Zal doesn't do much in the way of traveling. He does, however, keep in contact with his various minions around the Megaverse. He does this via his Portal Room. This room has eight separate chambers with locked doors. Each room possesses some type of teleportation device. Within Hades, Ba'Zal uses the spell, Circle of Travel, and for dimensional travels he had constructed several magical archway portals that remain open constantly. The room has a 50 foot (15.2 m) ceiling allowing for demon size portals.

The destination of each portal is as follows:

1. A Circle of Travel to Shek'Ra.
2. A large archway portal to the Land of the Damned in the Palladium World.
3. A Circle of Travel to Allvice.
4. An archway portal to Center on Phase World.
5. is currently an inactive portal. Ba'Zal keeps this portal in reserve in case he finds a new location to travel to.
6. An archway portal to Hel's dimension.
7. An archway portal to the Tree of Darkness in Rifts Earth, Germany.
8. An archway portal to the Calgary Rift on Rifts Earth.

The archway portals are one way Rifts that remain permanently active. In order to return through them a Shifter or someone knowledgeable in dimensional travel would first need to know about the portal and also be able to manipulate a Rift, and this is a difficult task to accomplish. There are the occasional random creatures that come through the portals, however the numerous Death Demons on guard usually make short work of them.

Level Eight – The Vault

This room contains centuries of plunder and gear that Ba’Zal has taken from his enemies or has received from his Death Demon minions as tribute. He has millions in precious metals and stones. Most are in various currencies, such as the Modeus, and even Gold Crowns from the Eastern Territories in Palladium. The vault also contains a collection of magic armors, weapons, scrolls, medallions/magic amulets and various other trinkets and even a few Techno-Wizard items. Other items will include various non-magical weapons from other dimensions such as Phase World. This chamber could contain just about anything and Game Masters should feel free to stock it with whatever they feel is appropriate.

The vault has two entrances. One is a set of stairs from level nine. This, however, has a magically sealed door that can only be opened with a key that Ba’Zal possesses. The other entrance is from a Circle of Teleportation. The corresponding circle is located on level ten.

The vault is protected on the outside by numerous Death Demons that stand guard on level nine. Within the vault are Worms of Taut who serve as interior guards. The majority are Tri-Fangs with a few Nippers and Tomb Worms. There are also a dozen Zombies charged to protect the chamber as well.

Level Nine – Death Demon Chamber

This floor serves little purpose. Since it is a means to get into the vault, Ba’Zal has stationed a dozen Death Demons here. It can essentially be considered a barracks, as this is where the majority of the Death Demons can be found.

Level Ten – Throne Room

When Ba’Zal isn’t in his lab he can usually be found pondering something on his throne on the tenth floor. It is also here that the tower’s central shaft opens up. Death Demons and other flying demons can also be found climbing in and flying out of the shaft. Directly in front of Ba’Zal’s throne is a sacrificial altar that is stained the color of blood. Behind the throne are three carved statues. One is of Ba’Zal as he once was, the center is one of him during his transformation and the final one is how he currently is. Two larger statues sitting in massive thrones are on opposite sides of the throne. One is of Abdul-Ra, perhaps as a reminder of the past, and the other statue is of Ba’Zal’s hated enemy, Succor-Bemoth. The statue is defaced and it has suffered from abuse over the years. During times of frustration Ba’Zal will hurl a fire ball or outright strike the statue. In its present condition it’s only a few more years before it is pummeled into dust.

The remainder of the chamber is relatively empty, including the hallways that follow the perimeter of the tower. The hallways lead to a set of stairs that go down to level nine as well as up to the top floor, and two Circles of Teleportation that go to Ba’Zal’s lab and treasure chamber respectively.

Top Floor

The top floor is little more than a terrace that overlooks the surrounding area. Ba’Zal rarely goes up here, but several of his Death Demons often stand watch, looking for any intruders that might try to sneak into the tower. Finally, in the center of the terrace is an enchanted pentagram. It is what holds the tower’s

Sanctuary spell in place. It is carved right into the stone floor, so it is not indestructible and can be destroyed. It would take minimal damage to break the circle, and 50 points or more damage will do it.

Ba’Zal’s Tower Final Notes

It should be noted that the Sanctuary spell is indeed a powerful enchantment in place to protect Ba’Zal. However, since he does not possess such knowledge, if the circle on the top floor is destroyed he will become vulnerable. Even while the protection is still in place, however, his Death Demons are *not* protected by it, and can be attacked. Also, because Ba’Zal has grown arrogant as well as complacent over the years, there are no traps in the tower, save for the Death Demon guards. Only the doors are locked and the entrance to the vault mystically sealed so only Ba’Zal can enter with his key. Some adventurers have tried to break into the tower and most who do end up dead. One pair entered but managed to escape through the archway portal to Hel. Little did the fools know that they went from the frying pan into the fire.

Random Tables for the Scorched Lands

Scorched Lands Terrain

The terrain in the Scorched Lands is immense. Given normal ground travel on foot or possibly by mount, it is suggested that this table be rolled twice a day. Travel by a faster means such as vehicles or exotic mounts can be rolled more often at the discretion of the Game Master. If flying, there is really no need to use the terrain table.

01-10% No additional terrain modifiers. It’s either a continuation of what the characters encountered in their previous 8 hours or the terrain has leveled out and become relatively clear.

11-20% The path is blocked. The characters have either wandered into a dead end, or the terrain no longer permits forward travel. Characters will either have to go over, (perhaps climbing is an option, or flying) or double back and go around. In either case it will take roughly 2D4+8 hours to go around.

21-28% Rough, rocky terrain impedes movement. Reduce best possible speed by 1/3.

29-34% An underground tunnel is before the characters. This tunnel can either go underground or through one of the enormous buttes that are scattered around the Scorched Lands.

35-41% The terrain turns very rough with rocky debris and boulders everywhere. Speed is reduced by ½.

42-48% A field of Fire Jets blocks the characters’ path. Going around will take an extra 2D4 hours of travel.

49-54% The characters’ travels have taken them to a large crevasse. There is a ledge running along it and it’s large enough for the group to travel over. It shouldn’t present too many problems, unless there are other factors such as weather or demons!

55-61% A River of Lava blocks the path of the characters. They will either have to use some type of magical means to cross the river or they will have to find a safe place to cross. Finding a safe location to cross could take up to 3D4 hours.

62-68% A field of 4D6 Fire Geysers bars the characters' path. It will only take 1D4 hours to go around.

69-75% The area around the characters has numerous pits and holes varying in size from a bowling ball to that of a large car. Unknown to the characters, these are gas vents. The only clue might be a series of skeletons in the area or even a few carcasses. Perceptive characters should notice that the carcasses found display no marks of having died a violent death. In other words, they just dropped in their path and don't show any signs of having been in a battle. Also, there are no scavengers around, at least none of the ground dwelling kind.

76-82% A slip canyon. These kinds of canyons vary in width from a few feet to dozens of feet wide. The difference with these canyons is that they taper together at the top, making anyone traveling through them practically undetectable, at least from the air. Unlike tunnels, boulders and other debris can fall from the ledge and become wedged into the canyon, forming blockages. One can go over or under these boulders, but there is always a 01-25% chance that the boulder is knocked loose, trapping or pinning someone. In addition, they take 4D6 points of damage. They're a great place to hide and travel undetected, but there is the trade-off of falling debris, loose boulders and maybe a sudden flash flood of lava. Slip canyons, on average, extend for 1D4x10 miles (16 to 64 km).

83-90% Rock Slide – As the characters are passing through a region of buttes, various rocks and boulders begin to rain down. Damage is 2D6 per melee unless shelter can be found. The rock slide lasts for 1D4 minutes.

91-97% Roll on this table twice and combine the results.

98-00% Roll three times on this table and combine all results.

Scorched Lands Weather

It's suggested that G.M.s roll on this table at most, once per day of travel in the Scorched Lands.

01-20% Aside from a cloudy sky, it's relatively clear.

21-40% A large, black and gray cloud is spotted on the horizon. An Ash Storm is on its way. You have 1D6+1 minutes to take cover.

41-52% The sky shows signs of opening up. Fire Rain is brewing and will let loose in 3D4 minutes. Newcomers to Hades won't have a clue, but those who have been in Hades for a while may start noticing the warning signs. Fire Rain will occur 1D4 times throughout the day.

53-64% Off in the distance is a torrential downpour of Fire Rain. It's not just a small shower, it's a full blown Fire Storm heading towards the characters.

65-76% The characters are suddenly assaulted by a Fire Storm that quickly develops into 1D4 Fire Tornadoes.

77-89% A massive, yellow and black cloud bank falls to the ground in the vicinity of the characters. Moments later, it ignites into a massive Fire Wall and it's headed right towards the characters.

90-95% The region is about to be hammered by a Fire Storm. As the storm concludes, 1D6 Fire Tornadoes form and ravage the area.

96-00% The sky darkens and the sounds of thunder begin to fill the area. Orange lightning dances among the clouds. This is

the first sign of a Hades Lightning Storm and the bolts begin to fall.

Scorched Lands Encounters

Due to the population of Gargoyles, other demons and various creatures in the Scorched Lands, it is suggested that encounters be rolled every 8 hours. However, Game Masters should not feel restricted by this and roll as they feel appropriate.

01-10% Close Calls. Numerous demons, or monsters are spotted on the horizon, but they don't seem to spot the characters.

11-15% 1D6+1 Demon Flies or Demon Bats looking for prey and loot. They will fight until half of them are slain.

16-20% A single Gargoyle (01-60%) or Gurgyle (61-100%) out on patrol. Unless he's stopped immediately, he'll escape and bring back 2D6 reinforcements and one Gargoyle Mage.

21-25% 1D4+1 Baal-Rogs spoiling for a fight to prove how tough they are.

26-30% 2D6 Gargoyles on patrol. They'll try to capture the player characters and take them to their leader for further interrogation.

31-35% One or two Infernal Mastodons! He/they see humanoids as food, but will give up the chase if the prey is too fast, too powerful or hides well, the beasts give up and move on.

36-40% 1D4 Psi-Hawks (or Netherbeasts, or Worms of Taut) on the prowl and the player characters look like good eating.

41-50% 2D6 Gargoyles block the path of the characters. They resent non-Gargoyles on "their" land and will fight to kill or capture them.

51-55% The group is harassed by 1D6 Gargoylites. They're more out to give the characters a hard time than engage in a battle and may go away if bribed with booze, gold or something of value.

56-60% 1D4 Death Demons torturing two Gargoyles. Do our heroes help the Sub-Demons or turn away?

61-75% A royal entourage. A Gargoyle Lord, Gargoyle Mage, and 1D6 Gargoyles are looking for a little sport and the characters just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

76-80% Fire Worms or some other Worms of Taut. The characters come across a whole nest of the Worms, with 4D6 blocking the characters' path.

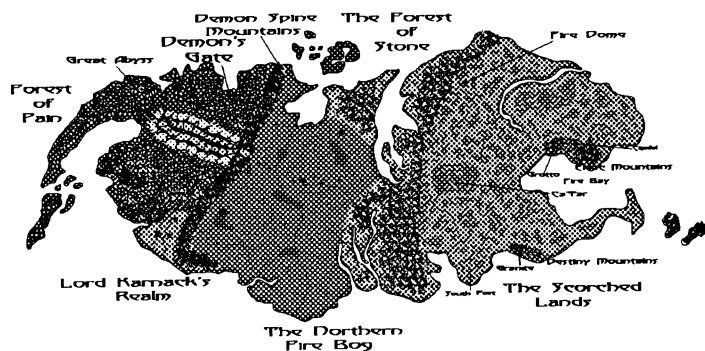
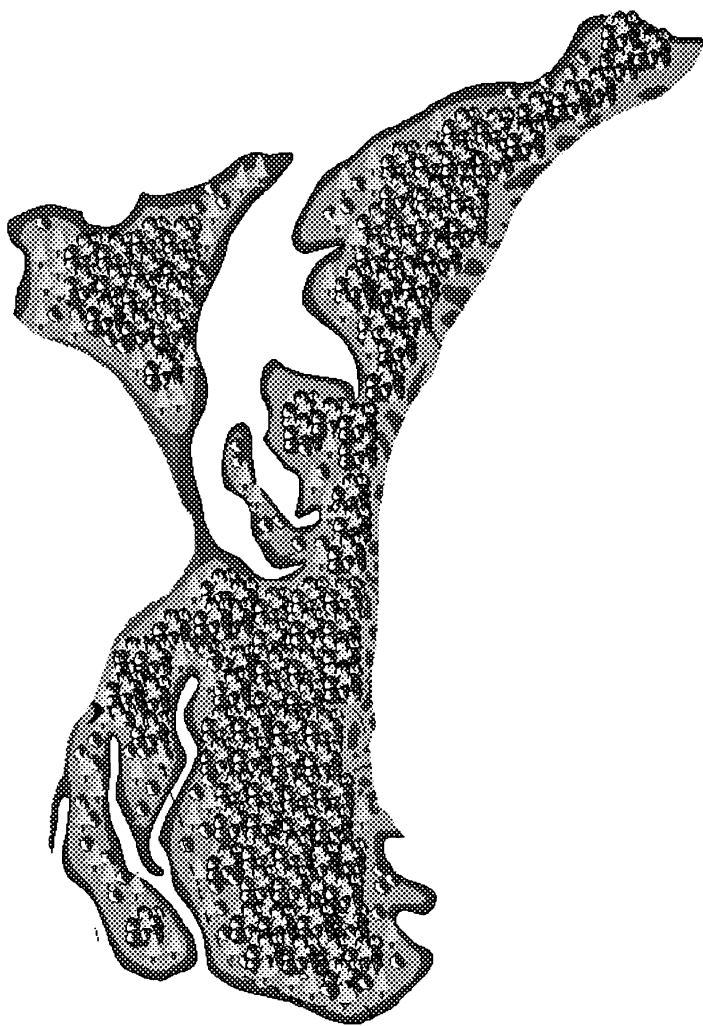
81-85% 3D6 Nippers are hiding in the terrain waiting for anyone to pass. It just so happens that the characters are heading right into them.

86-90% A horrible stench permeates the air from the 2D6 Harpies that come screaming from above.

91-93% Circling above the characters are 1D6 Psi-Hawks. They're looking for a meal and the characters are the only ones in the area.

94-98% A random squad of demons or even the Brass Guard! There are 2D4+2 demons in total. In the alternative, it could be a squad of minions from Dyval.

99-00% Monsters! The group encounters 1-4 creatures from another dimension like Dyval, Rifts Earth, the Palladium World, Phase World or the Three Galaxies.



Forest of Stone

Situated in the eastern half of the continent, the Forest of Stone divides the Scorched Lands from the rest of the Abyss. It is an amazing if chilling sight. Petrified trees a thousand feet (305 m) tall stretching out across the horizon for as far as the eyes can see. Black, ominous clouds with streaks of yellow lightning hover overhead, above the treetops. These Stone Trees have trunks as thick as a house, some thicker. The branches are as thick as steel girders, many are two to three times thicker and stretch out for hundreds of feet like mini-suspension bridges. The trees appear petrified and are stone gray in color, but like normal trees, they have leaves and a rough bark texture that provides creatures like Gurgoyles with ample places to grab and climb. The tree limbs weave and intertwine creating a canopy of stone that can be climbed and used like a highway above the ground. Creatures like the wingless Gargoyle and other creatures who cannot fly can travel through the stone tree branches like monkeys leaping, swinging and running through the trees. Many Gurgoyles live most of their lives up in the trees.

The petrified trees have no leaves and look like a deciduous forest in autumn. Despite their dead and stony appearance, they are alive, but grow at an incredibly slow rate. They seem to top off at 1000 feet (305 m) and stop growing. The trees and their fallen branches can *not* be manipulated by *Stone Masters*, because the trees are an organic stone that does not possess the

same properties as regular rock. They do, however, make excellent building material and have been used by the Gargoyles for countless generations. The majority of Gargoyle and Gurgoyles dwellings are constructed from the very trees they live in.

Travel on the floor of the forest is dangerous and problematic at best. The ground is littered with thousands of the smaller tree branches that break off during the most violent storms. There is no level ground anywhere, walking on the twigs and branches can be like walking across a pile of sticks, and where the ground is steady, there are often a jungle gym formation of fallen tree branches that require travelers to climb up and through or over. Like real wood, when a stone branch falls it doesn't shatter, but creates a loose and uneven ground cover. Getting struck by a falling stone branch is painful and can do as little as 1D4 S.D.C. to as much as 1D6x100 S.D.C. (or 1D6 M.D.). More than a few people have been crushed or pinned by a falling tree limb.

The forest floor is mostly shrouded in darkness, with only a few dim patches of light during the bright twilight of the red skies. During Deep Night, the forest is pitch black. The only decent light one gets in the forest is the red glow from the many **rivers of lava** that snake through the entire region. Large and small lava rivers twist and wind their way around the forest. Large branches that fall across lava streams may be used as bridges, though eventually, most slide into the lava and become part of the melted, moving slag. **Small Tar Pits** function as death traps, catching careless travelers, animals and monsters in their black embrace. **Murmur's Black Vultures** often roost in the trees overlooking Tar Pits, looking for easy pickings, but they also serve as a warning sign to tread carefully in areas where they congregate.

Steam and Gas Vents are also scattered across the Stone Forest, only the ground cover of twigs and branches often conceal them. Of course, Steam Vents are easy to spot and avoid when they unleash a burst of steam, but most toxic gases are invisible or unleash a gas cloud that is less obvious than a pillar of steam. The warning sign for a Gas Vent may be an abundance of bones in the area or a faint discoloration of the nearby trees. There may also be Tomb Worms, Ghouls and Black Vultures in the area of a Gas Vent. Fire Jets can also be found, but they are few and far between compared to many other lands in Hades.

It's the **Gurgoyles** who have carved out a kingdom of their own in the Forest of Stone. All members of the Gargoyle race live in the upper levels of the Stone Trees and harass outsiders. The wingless Gurgoyles are, by far, the most numerous in the forest and may confront outsiders, especially mortals, to question them, rob them (or demand tribute), or to kill and eat them as food. Gurgoyles like to thump their chests and play the role of king of the forest in this part of Hades. It is their domain and they like to let others know it.

Gargoylites are a tiny percentage compared to the many Gurgoyles and more likely to be mischievous than murderous. **Gargoyles** tend to stay up in the treetops, but may come down to earth to hunt for food, look for some kind of sport to test their abilities, harass outsiders, or simply to entertain themselves. **Demon Bats** and **Demon Flies** also live in the North and can be found in the Forest of Stone, just as other demons can be found exploring, hunting, or visiting the region.

Predatory animals like **Fire Worms**, **Nippers**, **Tri-Fangs**, **Tomb Worms**, **Black Vultures**, **Psi-Hawks**, and to a lesser degree, **Pit Vipers** and other **Netherbeasts**, as well as a variety of other-worldly creatures who arrive through the *Demon's Gate*, also live and stalk the Forest of Stone. From the *Palladium World*, that includes the Peryton, Feathered Death, Chimera, Devil Digger, Drakin, Dragonductyl, Dragon Wolf, Eye Killers, Rock Crawlers and Melech, among other much more rare creatures. Many prey on each other, but as fate would have it, most prey upon the multitude of Gurgoyles and Gargoyles.

Bad Weather

There always seems to be a hot breeze blowing through this part of Hades, and the forest is far darker than any other. *Gurgoyles* and their kin can usually be seen swinging from limb to limb or perched among the stone trees. This environment seems perfect for these *wingless* demons.

Its proximity to the **Fire Bog** sends the Forest of Stone its share of foul weather. Some of the weather only affects those living in the treetops with minimal effect to the forest floor, while other conditions occur only on the forest floor.

Fire Rain is a weekly occurrence. All of the storms form to the west and take an eastward track. The storms that hit the Forest of Stone are offshoots of these storms. The battering Fire Rain blackens the trees and weakens limbs, causing some to crack and break. Fire Rain can occur as often as twice a week. It is creatures in the upper reaches of the trees who catch the full fury of these storms (normal damage). The latticework of stone branches deflects most of the Fire Rain, so most of it does not reach the forest floor (does one quarter of the usual damage). This does present other problems. A minor Fire Rain-shower is hardly noticed at ground level, but when a **Fire Storm** sparks up, it can cause stone twigs and tree branches, small and large, to come crashing down like hail – and in some cases, deadly spears or falling steel girders! Unless some kind of substantial shelter can be found, there is a 01-50% chance per minute of the storm of being hit by a falling branch. Typical damage from a shower of small debris is 3D6x10 S.D.C. (1D4 M.D.), but getting clobbered by a large branch the size of steel girder does 2D6x100 S.D.C. (2D6 M.D.). A large falling branch creates a lot of noise so the character(s) underneath get to try to dodge with an additional bonus of +2 on initiative, and +3 to dodge.

Once or twice a year, a Fire Storm lasts longer than usual. When this happens the locals know to avoid the area, because the chances of a **Fire Tornado** are very real. Fire Tornadoes wreak all kinds of havoc on the forest and sometimes even cause the mighty stone trees to topple. For people on the ground, double the damage from a Fire Storm. That's assuming they are not in close proximity (within 500 feet/152 m), or caught by the Fire Tornadoes. If in close proximity, quadruple the damage from a Fire Storm, and if caught by the Fire Tornado, double the usual

damage caused by it. A Stone Tree falling on someone does 1D6x1000+600 S.D.C. or 1D4x100 M.D.C.

Fire Walls are all but unheard of in the Forest of Stone, but **Acid Rain** occurs thanks to the Northern Fire Bog. The atmospheric conditions are more suited to Fire Rain than Acid Rain, however Acid Rain happens 1D4 times a month. When it does rain, the Acid Rain is usually a severe storm. The rain also penetrates the canopy of branches and affects those on the forest floor as well as those beings in the treetops. The rain pools in locations on the forest floor and becomes one more hazard for ground dwellers. **Note:** The Stone Trees are impervious to Acid Rain and do not suffer any damage from it.

Three months out of the year (roughly what equates to January and February), the Forest of Stone experiences an *Acid Monsoon* season. During these months, it rains almost constantly. This affects the whole region and is most likely one of the reasons why the majority of the demons live in the south. During monsoon season, Acid Rain pours for 1D4+4 days at a time without stopping. The occasional break lasts 1D4 days, before the rain starts up again. The only possible saving grace is that there are no Fire Storm events during this period as it's just too wet. These monsoons may cause flooding, especially in the southern part of the Forest of Stone. Floodwaters rush to the coast and create billowing acidic clouds which turn into an **Acid Fog**. Some call it the Death Fog, and usually by the end of February, the whole forest is enveloped in it. Acid Fog is unique to the Forest of Stone and has been known to clear an area of all organic life. Only the hardiest of creatures and those living in the treetops, higher than 800 feet (244 m) are out of the fog's reach. Ground dwellers need to abandon the Forest of Stone entirely and find higher ground or burrow into the ground to hide for the duration of the season.

Damage from the Acid Fog is intense, as it is concentrated acid in a vapor form. When it seeps across the forest all that is usually left are the bones of those who got caught in its deadly embrace. Acid Fog Damage: 2D6x100 S.D.C. (or 2D6x10 M.D.) per hour. For those briefly exposed to the cloud, damage is only 1D6 S.D.C. per melee (one M.D. per minute) of exposure. The fog sweeps through the forest floor and lingers for weeks. By the end of the month the whole forest is permeated with fog cover that lasts for 1D4 weeks after monsoon season.

Gargoyle Clans

The Forest of Stone is ideally suited for the Gurgoyles. First, it provides numerous perches and landings for the Gurgoyles to roost on and second, one of the only ways to navigate the forest is by the interconnecting network of branches. Like monkeys, Gurgoyles are extremely dexterous and can swing from limb to limb at their full speed. Few creatures of the forest can match this speed and possibly only their Gargoyle cousins, and that's only because they can fly through the forest with relative ease.

Like the Gargoyles, the Gurgoyles gather in large clans of roughly 2D4x10,000 members. There are literally thousands of clans in the forest and no one clan holds dominance. Like the Gargoyles, there is too much strife and infighting to organize and become anything more than a group of warring clans. The clans have mixed leadership, with the majority being Gurgoyles. Others are ruled by powerful supernatural creatures such as a dragon, or even a Gargoyle Lord or Mage. The clans that have

weak leadership often are the first to be destroyed, so rather than face being wiped out, if the leader even shows a shred of weakness he is often attacked mercilessly by his followers and killed on the spot. This too has hampered the Gurgoyles who go through leaders on a regular basis. In the end, most have a young and inexperienced leader whose mistakes are interpreted as weakness and they are dethroned as quickly as they come.

Each clan has a designated territory usually marked with some kind of totem indicating the clan's name. Totems can be anything from carvings on a particular tree to a variety of bones strung between some branches, usually with some kind of arcane mark on them.

In order to protect themselves, some clans destroy trees around the perimeter of what they claim as their territory. This forms a makeshift moat, at least for creatures that can't fly. The materials from this often go to constructing crude shelters somewhat similar to pueblos, although they are among trees, not mountains. The mountain dwelling clans always use natural caves that are plentiful in the northern mountain ranges. These clans tend to use clay and stone to construct crude structures.

Most of the clans are separated along religious differences, with friction between clans worshipping a different Demon Lord. Unlike their larger Gargoyle cousins, Gurgoyles are much more easily incited to squabble and fight. Most clans are quick to take up arms and crush other clans that get in their way or threaten their chance to become noticed by their particular Demon Lord.

Gurgoyles (and Gargoyles) are often recruited to fight in the Minion War, where they usually serve as infantry foot soldiers. They are usually picked by clans, as most clan members work better together than mixed groups from several different clans. This can create armies of thousands, and it has been one of the successful tactics of the Demon Lords. Most clans are baited with the promise of favored status after their tour of duty, or special treatment by their deity/Demon Lord. What usually ends up happening, however, is a particular clan is continually used until they are wiped out or their numbers dwindle down to near nothing. Those who survive and return to Hades typically end up with empty promises and their same old life. There are only a few known clans, so far, who have managed to return from the Minion War with the majority of their clan intact.

Other Supernatural Creatures

While Gurgoyles and their kin certainly dominate the forest, they are not the only supernatural creatures to call the Forest of Stone home. Thousands of other creatures roam the forest, each trying to carve out their own little niche. Thousands of evil Faerie Folk live within the confines of the Forest of Stone. They cause all kinds of mischief to unfortunate travelers who come across them, especially Gurgoyles, who are easy to incite to begin with.

Other demons, usually the Fallen, make their home in the forest. These rejects and outcasts often come to the North to hide their shame, sulk or formulate new plans. Most demons adapt alright to the harsh northern region of Hades. Surprisingly, even a few dragons live in the forest as well, although most tend to be Night Stalkers. There are even rumors that vampires can be found deep in the interior of the forest. Who or what they feed on is unknown, unless they have the support of one of the Gargoyle clans in the area. More likely than not, a single Master

Vampire or two are responsible for these rumors, probably sent by some Vampire Intelligence long ago and forgotten. Demons hate the Undead, and vampires are one of their natural enemies. Consequently, armies of demons will sweep an area that *may* have even a single vampire to exterminate it quickly. If another rumor is true, a small cabal of Lizard Mages are the leaders of a rogue Gargoyle clan who have become cannibals. Agents from Dyval rarely visit or stay long in the Forest of Stone.

Notable Clans

Demon Nail Clan

The Demon Nail Clan resides along the Demon Claw in the Forest of Stone. They are so named because of their location. The clan resides at the tip of the second claw along the coast of the Demon Claw. They are ruled by a wingless Gargoyle who goes by the name of Anadax. He was a promising young Gargoyle Lord who resided in the Citadel to the east. One of Erloc's many children, he had an honored place among his father's personal guard. Then it was discovered that he was plotting to kill his father, and he was brought before the King. As an example to the rest of Erloc's children, the King had Anadax's wings removed. It was an excruciating process and with the help of magic, his wings would never regenerate. Anadax was banished from the Citadel and cast into the Scorched Lands. It was assumed that he would come across one of the hundreds of other clans, be picked out as an easy target, and killed. The King was wrong. Anadax fought his way toward the Forest of Stone for years, until he finally made it. From there he wandered until he came across a clan of Gurgoyles. Tired of running, and seeing a weakened leadership, Anadax challenged and killed the clan leader. From that point on, he has ruled the Demon Nail clan for almost fifty years unchallenged. Over the years, he has led many successful attacks, increasing the power of his clan almost three fold. Their numbers have greatly increased and one day Anadax hopes to go back to the Citadel with his army of Gurgoyles and kill his father. Until then he waits patiently for opportunities to come his way. However, his patience is wearing thin, and with his wings being clipped there is a constant reminder of his punishment and banishment.

Anadax, Quick Stats

Anadax is all about vengeance. As far as he's concerned, his rightful place as leader of the Citadel was stolen from him by Erloc and the treachery of his siblings. All Anadax thinks about is destroying Erloc and the rest of his line. Consequently, Anadax is a cruel and vindictive Gargoyle. He has no patience at all when it comes to dealing with others, and he has slain numerous underlings over the smallest infractions. Thus, he rules by fear, and his minions are even terrified to bring him bad news as he's killed the messenger on many occasions. For now, Anadax has done pretty well and amassed quite a power base, with over 70,000 Gurgoyles at his command. That number could triple over the next several years if Anadax can resist the urge to launch a premature attack against the Citadel.

Tall and imposing, even for a Gargoyle Lord, he is built like a body builder and has large, bulging muscles with the veins popping out. Where his wings once were are a set of stubs that are scarred and jagged with bits of bone sticking out. To cover

his disfigurement, Anadax wears a long, dark leather cape. However, it's not leather, it's really the tanned hides of several Gargoyles he's killed and stitched together.

Race: Gargoyle Lord.

Alignment: Diabolic with a cruel streak a mile long!

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 32, P.P. 29, P.E. 26, P.B. 9, Spd 20. Flying: Not applicable.

M.D.C.: 700. (On S.D.C. worlds Anadax has 96 Hit Points and 80 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: Sixth.

Disposition: Mean, suspicious and vengeful. Cruel in the extreme and loves to torture his enemies. He has a very short temper and is a powder keg that can explode at any minute. Anadax is quite obsessed with the destruction and death of his father and all his brothers and sisters. He won't rest for their transgressions against him and he waits for the day when he can run Erloc through.

Skills of Note: Strategy and Tactics 60%, Detect Ambush 70%, Intelligence 72% and Interrogation 72%.

Weapons and Equipment: Anadax is in possession of a rather unique sword. He probably stole it from his father's personal armory during his escape. It is carved from a single bone that is believed to be from a dragon. Whatever the case, it does extra damage to all reptilian races, including Gargoyles. The sword is best compared to a giant sized flamberge that is eternally sharp and does triple damage to dragons, Gargoyles, and all reptilian races (4D6+3 points of damage).

The Slayers Clan

The Slayers are one of the larger Gurgoyles clans in the Forest of Stone. Their numbers have stayed relatively consistent over the years as they seem more bent on slaughtering their enemies than assimilating them. The slayers are led by a Fire Dragon who goes by the name Cinder. She is a ruthless leader who seems to amuse herself by pitting her clan against larger Gurgoyles clans and winning. This seems to be done through the application of careful planning and the coordinated use of magic attacks from the few casters in the clan. The Slayers are, in general, troublemakers and often avoided by most beings in the forest.

What the Slayers don't even realize (nor do their enemies for that matter) is that Cinder is really part of a secret movement of heroes and angels who call themselves the Order of Light. Through the use of intimidation and a show of force, she was able to muscle her way in as leader. She plays the role of a psychotic lunatic bent on destroying everything. Cinder has played this part a little too well and the members of her cell are becoming a bit concerned that she may indeed be slipping, and turning evil. Cinder plays the part of an adult dragon, when, in fact, she is really a hatchling. Still powerful by Gurgoyles standards, Cinder has tasted power and what it's like to make your enemies tremble at your feet, and the feeling has become quite intoxicating.

Cinder, Fire Dragon, Quick stats

Alignment: Was Unprincipled, is currently Anarchist, and quickly slipping to Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 11, M.A. 13, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 27, P.B. 18, Spd 19 or 70 flying (68 mph/108.8 km).

M.D.C.: 300. (On S.D.C. worlds Cinder has 400 Hit Points, 220 S.D.C., and A.R. of 10.)

Experience Level: 8th.

Disposition: Used to be kind, curious and somewhat playful, however by living her role in the clan she has become cold and calculating. That curiosity and wonder she had prior to joining the Order is gone, replaced by the taste of power.

Description: Cinder is a ruby colored Fire Dragon Hatchling with a yellow underside.

Skills of Note: Lore: Demons and Monsters, Lore: Hades, and Lore: Magic all at 75%

Magic: Cinder is an 8th level Hatchling and has a formidable selection of spell magic at her disposal. **Spells of Note:** All Level Ones, plus Aura of Power (4), Chameleon (6), Cloak of Darkness (6), Fear (5), Armor of Ithan (10), Energy Bolt (5), Orb of Cold (6), Fireblast (8), Multiple Image (7), Eyes of Thoth (8), Call Lightning (15), Fire Blossom (20), Agony (20), Invulnerability (25), Fire Globe (40), and Firequake (160). Plus G.M.s can choose ten additional spells from levels 2-8.

Weapons and Equipment: She has started to amass numerous items like potions and scrolls that the clan has captured in battle. Cinder used to turn them over to the Order of Light, but as of late, she has started to hold back, keeping most for herself.

The Elemental Witch Clan

The Elemental Witches are a much smaller clan that has actually managed to hold its own in the Forest of Stone. They are led by a group of Gargoyles who somehow became endowed with Elemental Magic powers. No one knows if it is through some type of magic item, an artifact or some unholy alliance. All that is observed is that the four leaders of the clan each have access to a particular element. They are not out to conquer any of the clans and seem content as things are, or at least that's the way things appear.

The clan has erected temples to the four respective elements and the Gurgoyles clan, as a whole, reveres them all. They are located in the northernmost tip of the Forest of Stone. For now, no other clan bothers with them, because they are too small and insignificant to worry about. However, once word about their magic powers gets out to more clans, they may get more than they bargained for.

At last count, the clan was 5,000 strong and growing. They have been scouting their neighbors to the south and probing for weakness. At this time, they are outnumbered by at least four to one, and the four leaders have decreed that no actions be taken without their explicit orders. The clan, however, is growing restless and sooner or later, the four leaders will have to act, or else the clan will turn on them.

Aeroes, Forge, Gran, and Nautic

These are the four rulers of the Elemental Witch clan. Each is a Gurgoyles who has been infused with incredible powers. As part of his ongoing experiments in magic and transformation, Succor-Bemoth did all kinds of atrocious things to these Gargoyles. One of his goals was to create a hybrid of Jinn and Gurgoyles. It has worked, to a degree, but he has not been able to

replicate the experiment since these four escaped his clutches. The experiment cost the lives of four Jinn, given to each of the Gurgoyles. They now possess *most of the natural abilities* of the four Jinn, except they are not naturally invisible, can *NOT* turn invisible, nor see the invisible. Realizing what they had received, they were fortunate enough to act quickly and escaped from Succor-Bemoth's fortress. Naturally, they headed straight for the Forest of Stone. With their new found powers and abilities, they were able to gather followers very quickly. So for the last seven years they have allowed their new clan to slowly grow.

The four are not always like-minded, and at times, they are at odds with each other. Nothing has led to blows, yet, and Aeroes is always the level-headed one who manages to get everyone calmed down and working together.

Aeroes, Quick Stats

Aeroes looks like your typical Gargoyle, however he has a light bluish color to his skin, and when his veins bulge, they are a dark blue color. His eyes are also a solid blue color with no pupils and there always seems to be wisps of vapor around him.

Race: Gurgoyles-Jinn Hybrid.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attribute: I.Q. 11, M.E. 15, M.A. 11, P.S. 32, P.P. 22, P.E. 27, P.B. 10, Spd 21, 160 flying (112 mph/179 km).

M.D.C.: 740. (On S.D.C. worlds Aeroes has 147 Hit Points and 70 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Disposition: Calm, cool and collected. He always seems to have a level head and an analytical nature.

Experience Level: 6th. Aeroes was endowed with the natural abilities and spells of an Air Jinn.

Skills of Note: All those of a Gargoyle and is considered a 6th level warrior.

Weapons and Equipment: The four Gurgoyles were able to raid an armory from Succor-Bemoth when escaping. Aeroes commandeered a giant-size Demon Bone sword (does 5D6 M.D.) that can also shoot 6D6 damage lightning bolt twice per melee round; range: 2,000 feet (610 m).

Forge, Quick Stats

Forge has dark grey skin with a light red sheen. He also has solid red eyes and his veins are a dark ruby red color. Whenever he speaks it looks as if there is fire in his mouth and often when he exhales, there is black smoke.

Race: Gurgoyles-Jinn Hybrid.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 14, M.A. 7, P.S. 30, P.P. 24, P.E. 26, P.B. 9, Spd 15, 120 flying (82 mph/131.2 km).

M.D.C.: 560. (On S.D.C. worlds Forge has 116 Hit Points and 80 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 6th. Forge has all the magic powers and abilities of a Fire Jinn.

Disposition: Quick to anger and first to take action, Forge is a hands on Gargoyle who is quick to make decisions and jump to conclusions. He likes the heat of battle and thrives on conflict and strife.

Skills of Note: All those of a Gargoyle and is considered a 6th level warrior.

Weapons and Equipment: Forge uses a giant-sized Demon Bone ball and chain that does 4D6 M.D. as a blunt attack, but can burst into flames adding 2D6 M.D. to the attack.

Gran, Quick Stats

Gran has a dark green complexion with brown veins, and white eyes with dark green pupils. Whenever he sits or stands in one place for too long there is always a small left fresh pile of mud behind.

Race: Gurgoyles-Jinn Hybrid.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attribute: I.Q. 6, M.E. 9, M.A. 11, P.S. 33, P.P. 23, P.E. 20, P.B. 9, Spd 21, 140 flying (96 mph/153.6 km).

M.D.C.: 535. (On S.D.C. worlds Gran has 110 Hit Points and 100 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 4th. Gran has all the magic and natural abilities of an Earth Jinn.

Disposition: Stubborn and pigheaded, when Gran makes up his mind it's difficult to change. The others are always arguing with him to see it their way and it's often Gran who holds up any major decisions that have to be made.

Skills of Note: All those of a Gargoyle and is considered a 4th level warrior.

Weapons and Equipment: Gran was able to grab a giant-sized Demon Bone Club. It does 3D6 M.D. When Gran uses the club his critical is 18-20 instead of a Natural 20.

Nautic, Quick Stats

Nautic has a light green hide with light blue veins. His eyes are pupil-less and sea green in color.

Race: Gurgoyles-Jinn Hybrid.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 11, M.A. 8, P.S. 32, P.P. 25, P.E. 23, P.B. 9, Spd 23, 160 flying (112 mph/179 km).

M.D.C.: 648. (On S.D.C. worlds Nautic has 143 Hit Points and 90 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 5th. Nautic has all the magic and natural abilities of a Water Jinn.

Disposition: Nautic has an evil sense of humor and most things to him are a joke. He takes few things seriously, and more often than not, he is the one to start a fight.

Skills of Note: All those of a Gargoyle and is considered a 5th level warrior.

Weapons and Equipment: Nautic uses a long bone pike that is giant-sized and does 5D6+3 M.D. On command the pike can shrink down to six inches (15 cm) in length and become totally concealed.

Environmental Tables

Weather Table

For travel through the Forest of Stone, G.M.s should roll once per day. Whatever is going to happen usually takes the day to brew and then all of a sudden it happens.

01-30% It's as hot as a blast furnace, but that's all! No weather for now.

31-50% Fire Rain pelts the area for 1D8 minutes. Those in the upper canopy will take normal damage, while those on the ground only receive ½ damage.

51-60% A full blown Fire Storm hits! Those in the upper limbs need to find shelter immediately. Those on the forest floor have a few minutes before limbs start crashing to the ground.

61-70% Dark clouds overhead disgorge a Hades Lightning Storm. Traveling in the canopy increases the chances of being struck by 20%, so roll 01-50% every minute. Those on the forest floor can still be struck, but at the normal percentage, as the stone trees are excellent conductors of electricity.

71-89% Acid Rain falls from the sky, affecting those in the canopy or on the ground.

90-94% An Acid Fog begins to slowly roll in. The only safe path is up. The characters should have 1D6 minutes to escape before they are in danger of the Acid Fog.

95-00% There is a horrible crashing sound in the distance. Moments later is when the noise becomes evident as a Fire Tornado is crashing through the forest. At its present speed the characters have only a few minutes (roll 1D4) before the danger strikes.

Forest of Stone Terrain

Traveling through the Forest of Stone is no easy task. The table below takes that into account and G.M.s may want to roll ahead of time to map out the characters' travels. Given the size of the Forest it is suggested that Game Masters roll for terrain for every 2 days of travel.

01-20% No terrain modifiers. For the next couple of days the characters can make good time at their normal speed. Either the ground is relatively clear (perhaps a path cut by a Fire Tornado or a small herd of Infernal Mastodons) or there is easy access via the branch network.

21-30% A River of Lava bars the characters' path. It is 1D4x10 feet (3 to 12.2 m) across. Whether traveling through the trees or on the ground, the characters will have to find a way to bridge the gap.

31-40% Must go up and walk across on branches close to ground to avoid a huge Tar Pit, Acid Pool or River of Lava (1D4x100 feet/30 to 122 m).

41-50% Rough terrain. If traveling on the forest floor, the ground becomes so treacherous and filled with obstacles that the only place to go is up. Reduce the groups' speed by one half and roll a Climbing skill check every 15-20 minutes. If traveling in the branches, there's a large gap in the network and the characters must double back or climb even higher to get past it.

51-60% The easiest path ahead is a limb that stretches for hundreds of feet. However, it continues to narrow until it's only a few feet across! The limb is strong enough, but those with a fear of heights may have a problem and sense of balance rolls may be needed.

61-70% While traveling on the ground the characters come across either 2D6 Acid Pools or Tar Pits. Going around is an option, but by the looks of it, it will add another day to the characters trip. Charting a course through the dangerous area ahead is possible, and will only take 1D4+1 hours to do so.

71-80% The characters come across a relatively clear area ahead that extends for several miles/km (1D4). Unknown to the

characters, they are walking into either a series of Gas Vents or a Field of Fire Jets or Fire Geysers.

81-90% Devastated terrain ahead. It looks as if a Fire Tornado ripped through the area. The ground is relatively clear with only a few stumps from the Stone Trees as well as the occasional large tree branch. Travel is very easy and what would normally take a day's journey can be reduced to 1D4 hours. The only problem is the area is "very clears" putting the characters out in the open and making them easy targets to spot from the air. Taking this route almost certainly invites an attack from Gargoyles, demons or other air or ground predators, maybe even an Infernal Mastodon or other monster. Going around is an option but will take 3D4 hours cutting straight through.

91-95% While either traveling on the ground or over low hanging limbs, the characters stumble across a field of Fire Jets. Finding a way around will take 2D6 hours.

96-00% A massive canyon or gorge filled with lava is ahead. There is no way over except perhaps flying or magic. Finding a way across or around is the only way to go and it will take 1D4 days to do so.

Forest of Stone Encounters

The forest has numerous creatures roaming through the area at any given time. Encounters are likely every 8 to 12 hours, G.M.'s choice.

01-05% A Netherbeast (any) looking for prey.

06-10% 3D6 Black Vultures looking for prey. If someone in the group is injured, they'll swoop down to attack him and anybody else who gets in their way. Fortunately, they'll flee after only 1D4 of them are killed, grabbing the dead bodies and flying off with them to eat. So many Black Vultures also means there is a Gas Vent or Tar Pit somewhere up ahead. Slow, careful travel and observation (can roll under Wilderness Survival, Tracking or Land Navigation skill) should reveal the danger before it becomes a problem.

11-15% Clan skirmish! 3D6 Gargoyles are locked in combat with another clan of Gargoyles (or Gurgoyles) of equal size. There was a dispute, name calling and a fight broke out. They are too busy with each other to notice any people who sneak past them quietly. Make a loud noise or interfere, and both sides stop fighting to glare at the player group. They then both try to capture the outsiders to take back to their respective leaders. Their rivalry continues as neither clan is willing to work with the other and share, they both want to capture the player group for their own clan. This *may* give the player group the chance to slip away or play one clan off the other until they can make good an escape.

16-20% 1D6+1 Demon Flies spoiling for a fight. They'll flee after most have lost most of their M.D.C. or half are slain. Gargoyles, Gurgoyles, Gargoylites, or Demon Bats may be substituted.

21-25% 1D4+2 Gargoyle bandits. They want loot, exotic weapons and booze, and will fight till half are slain before giving up.

26-30% A trio of Baal-Rogs or Gallu Demon Bulls out for a little hunting competition in the Forest of Stone. They've noticed the player characters and think they could be a fun challenge.

31-35% A Peryton or Dragondactyl or some other alien predator from another world attacks, trying to grab a likely meal.

36-40% 1D4 Worms of Taut (any). They are hungry, cranky and will fight to the death or until there is a kill, then they all start to shred the dead person, animal or fellow Worm apart as they devour it.

41-45% 1D4 members of the Fallen are encountered. It can be a group of Taursis, Brek-Shall, Death Demons or other out-cast. They are looking for easy targets to bully and rob. Lucky you, they've spotted the player group.

46-50% 2D4 Ghouls and an elderly Alu are feasting on the remains of some other group of 1D4+1 mortals. They didn't kill them, they're just eating the bodies. The Alu is the leader of the group, and though old (half the usual P.P., P.E. and Spd), he is still formidable. Furthermore, the Ghouls are more aggressive with him as their leader. They attack if they feel threatened. 2D6 Black Vultures circle overhead hoping somebody leaves some food for them. The roar of a monster (Netherbeast? Dragon? An angry Gargoyle Lord?) causes everyone to stop and look in that direction for a moment.

51-60% A Gurgyle scouting patrol consisting of 1D4 members encounters the characters. If they feel they can take the characters, they will attack. If they're outnumbered by more than two to one, or if they think the group is too powerful, they'll size them up and retreat, running through the trees as fast as they can. This is bad news, because they'll be back in 2D6 minutes with reinforcements that outnumber the group two to one. Fortunately, they are looking to capture and question the outsiders, not kill them, before taking them to their clan leader.

61-70% A large contingent of Gurgyles lead by either a Gargoyle, Gargoyle Lord, or Gargoyle Mage comes across the characters. Depending on their mood they will either attack or demand tribute in order to pass. Tribute can be just about anything, including gold, gems, booze or even magic items.

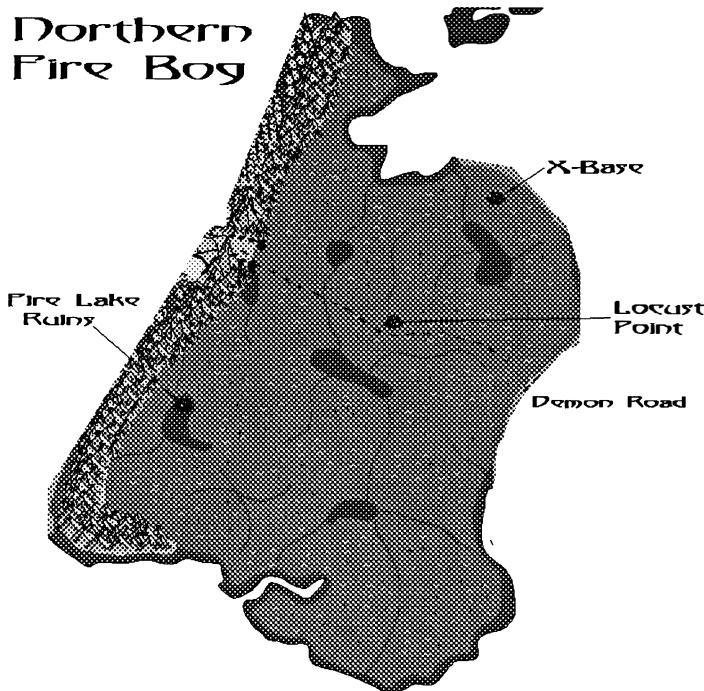
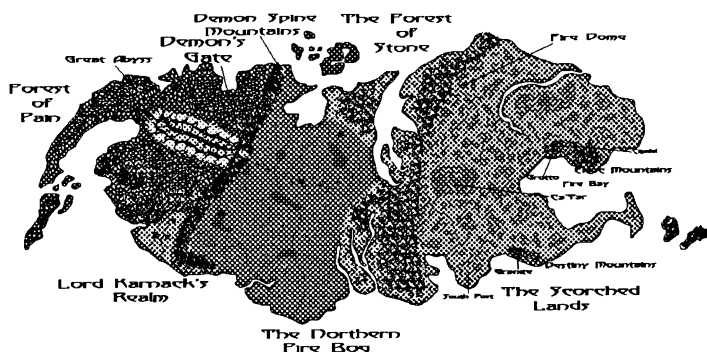
71-80% 1D4 Gargoyles attack the group. They are on the rampage for some reason and attack without warning.

81-85% 1D4 Lesser Demons are passing through the forest and encounter the characters. Can be any type from Shedim or Alu to a Lasae or Mare.

86-90% Evil Faerie Folk harass the characters or try to trick the group into going into a lion's den. The type of Faerie Folk can vary, from Black Faeries or Bug Bears to traditional evil little people such as Bogies, Pucks, Toadstool, Satyrs, etc.

91-96% Small group of 1D6+1 monsters. Roll type: 01-25% Fire Worms, 26-50% Nippers, 27-75% Rock Crawlers, or 76-00% Tri-Fangs.

97-00% A large monster is prowling; any.



Northern Fire Bog

Located roughly in the middle of the Abyss is the Northern Fire Bog, an immense swamp riddled with rivers of lava and pools of water (acid and fresh), and burning oil slicks. Husks of dead trees are found around the swamp, and a constant mist covers the ground up to the knees. This is the humidity that is constantly generated from the contact between water and the lava, as well as the thousands of Steam Vents found throughout the region. The heat makes the swamp that much more unbearable and even boils the water in some places. The average temperature of the swamp is 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 C), but with the oppressive humidity, it feels 10-20 degrees hotter.

Gas from the numerous vents directly contributes to the foul smell of the region. The swamp produces gas in abundance and is the source of thousands of Fire Jets that litter the area. Gas Vents are easy to spot, as the majority of them are underwater, and they bubble every time gas is released. For the most part, the gas here is harmless, it just makes the bog smell like rotten eggs. Of course, there are a few places where the gas is toxic and kills. However, these areas of the swamp are devoid of any life, even insects and Worms of Taut.

The Fire Bog runs from the end of the *Forest of Stone* in the east all the way to the *Demon Spine Mountains*, which act as a natural barrier. The swamp occupies one of the largest regions in the Abyss and is second only to the *Scorched Lands*. It also stretches completely from north to south.

Dangers in the Fire Bog

The Fire Bog is a dreadful place. Acid Rain falls at least once a day and Fire Rain at least once a week. The ground is scarred

and battered from the constant assault by the elements. In addition, there are few if any places to seek shelter, as the bog is relatively flat and open. Fire Storms constantly sweep through various parts of the bog at least once a week, while Fire Tornadoes and Walls occur roughly twice a month.

Rivers of Lava wind all over the giant swamp, with dozens ending in large lakes of lava. The ground is relatively soft and muddy from the constant rain, and dreaded Green Mold grows in large, uncontrollable patches. The only things that keep the Green Mold in check are the hundreds of Fire Geysers and thousands of Fire Jets scattered around the swamp. The Fire Bog gets its name from the fires seen everywhere. If it's not a River of Lava or a Fire Jet then it's simply pools of liquid on fire. What little pools of water can be found are usually contaminated with naturally occurring petroleum that is often sparked and burns right on the very surface of the water! In addition, there are Acid Pools everywhere!

Few creatures call the swamp home. Among them, however, are such monstrous inhabitants as the *Infernal Mastodon*, *Psi-Hawk* and *Worms of Taut*. *Fire Worms* and *Blow Worms* love the swampy environment, *Nippers* and *Tomb Worms* inhabit the numerous abandoned structures in the swamp, and *Serpent Beasts* prowl the swamps for prey. All kinds of Entities can be found here as well. Among demons, the *Labassu*, *Banshees*, *Ghouls*, *Shedim*, *Tauris*, and the occasional *Brek-Shall*, *Soul Catcher*, *Night Owl*, and *Raksasha* call this region home.

Hazardous Flora & Fauna

The Fire Bog is filled with all kinds of dangers, however the majority of them seem to be harmless from the surface and it's difficult for new travelers to spot them. In addition to Green Mold, which grows in large patches, the following plants grow all over the Fire Bog as well as a few isolated places throughout Hades.

Gas Pods

Gas Pods are far more plentiful here than in the Death Mire. Slaves are sent out in droves to collect the pods and bring them back to Locust Point. See the Death Mire for details on Gas Pods.

Acid Fungus

Large patches of a yellow fungus grow in the Northern Fire Bog. It's possible that it's a mutant variation of the Yellow Mold that grows in the Sulfur Pits. The fungus is very hardy and resistant to the Acid and Fire Storms in the region. In a way, it is a hidden beauty and bring some color to an otherwise drab place. The only danger comes from walking, fighting, or otherwise being on the stuff. The fungus grows in small yellow cones only a few inches tall. However it usually grows in large patches of several hundred, making for a large area. Typically, it covers a 20 to 80 foot area (6.1 to 24 m). When the cones are disturbed they release a concentrated cloud of acid. It's not so powerful that it eats the flesh like acid rain, but it does scar lungs and can damage them.

If exposed to the flesh it does 1D6 S.D.C. damage, however, if inhaled it does 2D6 damage direct to Hit Points as the lungs

are scarred. Damage is only temporary and lasts for 1D4 days. While suffering from this damage, speed and Physical Endurance are reduced to one half. Hit Points and bonuses to save vs magic and poison should be temporarily adjusted. Of course, those wearing full environmental body armor are safe and unaffected.

Carpet Plant

Carpet Plants get their name from the famous Carpet of Adhesion spell which they seem to emulate. The plant has very large leaves that grow flat at the base. The leaves produce a sticky resin that has the same effects as the *Carpet of Adhesion* spell. Anyone walking near the plant should make a Dodge of 16 or higher, or become stuck. However, unlike other plants that begin digestion with the use of various enzymes, the Carpet Plant must slash its prey and draw flesh into its central pod. Once stuck, the central pod opens up to allow several snaking tendrils to come out. The plant has a pseudo-intelligence that borders more on predatory instinct. Once pressure has been placed on one of its large leaves, the tendrils lash out to tear the quarry to bits. The plant has four large leaves, and four tendrils per leaf. Each tendril is covered in vicious spikes that rend its victims. Damage is 1D4 M.D. or 4D4 M.D. (1D6+1 S.D.C. or 4D6+4 S.D.C.) if struck by all four tendrils. (They don't have any bonuses to strike.) So long as there is pressure/weight on the leaf, the tendrils attack. **Note:** A combined, normal P.S. of 40 or a Supernatural P.S. of 18 is needed to pull free of the sticky, giant, six foot (1.8 m) long, by four foot (1.2 m) wide leaf.

The Northern Demon Road

Cutting the Northern Fire Bog nearly in half is a *road*. It starts at the edge of the Forest of Stone and goes directly to *Demon's Gate* in the northwest. It's not a true road, because the swamp makes it impossible for a real road to be built. It is more of a path or travel route used by animals as well as the demons from Gamora to get to and from Demon's Gate. The path is the easiest route to take in the Northern Fire Bog, but it is also the most dangerous, as thousands of demons travel it daily and bandits and predators stalk its trail. If not for the Minion War, the road would be all but abandoned, but with the need to move demonic troops overland to Demon's Gate, this is the route taken.

Ancient Ruins

Along the road there are a few ruins that are used as campsites, forts and way points by the demon troops. The Fire Bog must have been a battleground at some point in Hades' past, as hundreds of stone fortifications can be found throughout the swamp. They have been long abandoned by their unknown creators, and now serve as the habitat for Worms of Taut and other monsters, including Ghouls, Couril, and various Entities that seem to have overrun the swamp. The structures are a varied mix of fortresses, towers, small cities, and even dungeons. A few are intact, but the majority seem to have been reclaimed by the swamp. Their construction is a mystery, even to the Demon Lords. Most battlements face towards the west, further suggesting that at one point perhaps Hades was under siege from attackers coming through *Demon's Gate*.

Today, the ruins serve many purposes other than defense in war. Demons and monsters claim a few as their home or lair, some are used as campsites by travelers or hideouts by bandits and outcasts. A few of the larger standing, old fortifications have been turned into makeshift trading posts, and rumors tell that one of these structures sits on a ley line nexus where a Night Owl will open a Rift to send someone (demon or mortal) anywhere he wants to go, for a price.

The most notable is *Locust Point* (mentioned below), while the rest are nothing more than simple towers or piles of giant stones that used to be the walls of castle keeps. Greater Demons who have been tasked with delivering troops and/or information to and from the front-lines may also be found at the ruins and along the road. Oftentimes, there are a series of runners who deliver the message from one base to the next, rather like a demonic version of the Pony Express.

Of all the demons found in Hades, people are more likely to come across the Jinn at these ancient ruins and in the Northern Fire Bog. Several Earth Jinn have set up shop in the area, or use the ruins as their own dwellings.

Locust Point

Locust Point is the halfway marker in the Northern Fire Bog. It is on the main road to Demon's Gate and serves as a rest area for legions of demonic troops. Supplies can also be found here along with live food for demons to feast on.

The stone structure is one of the few that is constructed of black granite. It is in the shape of a pentagon, with walls on five sides. Within the walls is a three story stone building with a stone obelisk on the top floor carved from blood marble. The obelisk has several demonic symbols and is the equivalent of a demon flag.

The center structure is a large square barracks for demons to use as they see fit. Inside are dozens of individual chambers as well as a common meeting hall. On the second floor are larger rooms for officers as well as several large rooms used for planning and developing strategies.

The final floor is for the base commander. At this time, it's an old Demon Locust who is simply known as Prince Black. He oversees all demon troops in the north, and is also responsible for "recruiting" Gargoyles and others as fodder for the Minion War. He uses any and all means necessary to obtain more troops for the Minion War. Prince Black prefers to conscript whole Gargoyle/Gurgoyle clans, under the theory that they will fight better as a clan than for the demons' cause. He also believes in equipping his troops with weapons, and tries to obtain as many Demon Bone items as possible. This shouldn't be confused as some misplaced loyalty for his men. Quite the contrary, he just wants to win and at any cost! While he hasn't directly participated in the Minion War, Prince Black is a firm believer in Modeus, and a loyal General who takes great pleasure in his job.

Prince Black, Quick Stats

Prince Black is constantly reviewing his troops and running formations. Demons hate long stays at Locust Point, as Prince Black will have them drilling in the parade ground by the second day. Despite his constant reviews and pushing the troops to their limit, he is actually respected by many of the troops. His rank has earned him the Deific Power of Sphere of Annihilation.

Prince Black has a very dark green carapace that is practically black.

Race: Demon Locust.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 26, M.E. 19, M.A. 19, P.S. 41, P.P. 23, P.E. 26, P.B. 4, Spd 30, 190 flying (128 mph/204.8 km).

M.D.C.: 1100. (On S.D.C. worlds Prince Black has 60 Hit Points, 70 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 17.)

Experience Level: 9th

Disposition: Militaristic and disciplined. His demeanor is that of someone who has spent a lifetime in the military. His questions and answers are often curt and to the point.

Skills of Note: Strategy and Tactics, Military Etiquette, and Military Fortification at 98% in addition to those skills typical of Demon Locusts.

Weapons and Equipment: Prince Black has a pair of Forearm Plasma Blasters. However, he has had them personally rebuilt by the Splugorth to fire lightning charges instead of plasma. Damage is 5D6 M.D. with a range of 2,000 feet (610 m).

X-Base

Located in the northern reaches of the Fire Bog is X-Base. At some point in the distant past, X-Base must have been a stone pyramid. The base of the pyramid and the first 6 levels are intact, but the top is gone, as if there was some type of great explosion. Large chunks of the pyramid are scattered around the base in an "X" shaped pattern. While there is significant damage, the pyramid is operational to a degree. All it can do is Dimensional Teleport. All other powers that stone pyramids have are gone, and perhaps can only be restored by an Atlantean Stone Master.

The pyramid is constructed of normal stone that is found in the area. The effective M.D.C. has been reduced to 1/3 of what it used to be. X-Base is a long forgotten military base and, judging from the hieroglyphs found inside, it may have actually been an Atlantean pyramid from eons past. Why they would want to travel to Hades is beyond comprehension, but perhaps it was used in some past war, or as a base to search for Atlantia. If it was a military outpost it must have been eventually overrun and the previous owners either fled or were destroyed.

A Soul Catcher demon by the name of Getrix has taken sole ownership of the structure. He and his small entourage of demons discovered the damaged pyramid by chance when they deserted their post at Locust Point. Given the amount of troops that pass through daily, they were never missed.

Getrix also has in his possession three Atlanteans who are his slaves, and one happens to be an Undead Slayer. They are forced to operate the pyramid at his whims and to keep them in line, Getrix has trapped their souls. So long as they obey him and do the work he tells them to do, he has promised not to consume their souls.

As far as demons go, Getrix is no fan of Modeus or Hades. He was trapped in the Fire Flats and has resented his imprisonment ever since. So one of his first acts of rebellion was to escape and he managed to take six Tauris along with him as well as three Demon Flies and two Ghouls.



Discovering the pyramid has been a boon, and one that Getrix hopes to exploit to the fullest. He often takes trips to places like the Splynn Dimensional Market and Center on Phase World via his private pyramid. In addition, he has become an impromptu broker in dimensional travel, bringing people in and taking them out of Hades in secret via his pyramid. Of course, all of these transactions come at a price. Getrix likes to be fed on a regular basis and usually demands a sacrifice or a soul in order to make use of the pyramid. If anyone can meet his price he will grant them passage. He rarely accepts treasure, because over the years, he has managed to accumulate a lot of it from his victims and would rather have a soul. Getrix is so greedy and resentful of the Demon Lords that he has even allowed Deevils to use his teleportation pyramid. Of course they get charged twice as much. The Deevil, Kendal, uses the Pyramid every so often and always has some tasty morsel that seems to satisfy Getrix.

Getrix Quick Stats

The Soul Catcher has numerous faces on his body, but of particular interest is that of a dragon. It seems he willingly traded the soul in order to transport several hundred refugees from some burning city called Tolkeen. Getrix couldn't pass up the opportunity and he has yet to consume the soul because it brings him too much pleasure. Getrix has also adorned himself with his treasures. He wears a crown worth several million in gold/credits, a magic cape, and he loves his Eylor Assault Staff.

Race: Soul Catcher.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 18, M.A. 10, P.S. 39, P.P. 21, P.E. 24, P.B. 4, Spd 18.

M.D.C.: 614. (On S.D.C. worlds Getrix has 72 Hit Points, 50 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 6th.

Disposition: Getrix is enjoying the good life. He answers to no one and is his own boss. He has made several contacts in Splynn and enjoys his travels there.

Skills of Note: From his travels, Getrix has picked up all Lore skills, including Lore: Dimensions at 75%.

Weapons and Equipment: Counted among his millions in magic items, gold, and other treasures are an Eylor Assault Staff, a Cloak of Shadows, two Enchanted Bags (Dimensional Pockets), and a Book of Secrets.

Fire Lake Ruins

The Fire Lake Ruins are located in the southwestern portion of the Fire Bog. Right in the middle of a lake of magma is a large set of ruins. They could have been a large castle or keep at one time, but all that remains on the surface are portions of its battlements and a few shelled out buildings. The ruins are unique only because they are occupied by a small group of non-Hades demons. To be precise, a C'ro Demon Mage and his entourage.

While the surface of the structure is not impressive at all (and that's the way Skar likes it), it is below the surface that's important. Directly under the lake is a huge dungeon that the C'ro Demon Mage has claimed for himself. The demons don't bother him, because he has performed numerous services in the past and the ruins are considered a reward for all he's done.

Skar has occupied the ruins for some time, and they have become his official abode, at least in Hades. He has done extensive dimensional traveling and has small safe houses in various locations on numerous worlds, including Phase World and Splynn.

Skar's reason for being in Hades is no mystery. He has been on a lifelong quest for knowledge, especially knowledge of the arcane order. He is obsessed with spell magic and mastering its intricacies. During his travels he has learned about a powerful Wizard from the Palladium World who came to Hades with a legendary spell book. In this ancient tome, he believes, is revealed the secrets of magic that can propel a common spell caster to near god-like status. And he believes that book may be hidden somewhere in this, or one of the other, ruins.

Supposedly the book reveals short cuts in spell casting, modifying spells, increasing their damage, range and the duration, making new spells, and converting Elemental spells into usable Wizard incantations. This must all come at some cost, but Skar doesn't care what it is, he's willing to pay it.

The dungeon under the lake runs about 2,000 feet (610 m) below its surface. It is very large and has multiple levels to it. (G.M.s, this is your chance for some good old fashion dungeon crawling; have fun and whip up a doozy of a dungeon.) Skar is located in the deepest levels and over the centuries, has amassed a fortune in gems, gold, magic scrolls, magic items, and the type of treasure that would make a dragon blush. He still has yet to find that book, but his search continues.

Skar, Quick Stats

Skar is a red skinned humanoid from Rifts Earth. He has a snake-like snout, yellow stripes on his face and six stingers sticking out of his back. He is often adorned with a fancy black hooded robe that has mystical properties. Skar has several allies and associates who work with him. His head of staff is a Srrynn Cannibal. In addition, he has a dozen Gargoyles who work for him.

Race: C'ro Demon Mage.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 22, M.A. 19, P.S. 16, P.P. 18, P.E. 19, P.B. 7, Spd 15.

M.D.C.: 700. (On S.D.C. worlds Skar has 190 Hit Points, 80 S.D.C., and A.R. of 14.)

Experience Level: 12th.

Disposition: Quite obsessed with magic and understanding it. This has made him look down on many a would-be mage and laugh at their meager powers. He is extremely arrogant and has little patience with outsiders unless they have some knowledge to trade, especially spells. If he doesn't get what he wants he will kidnap, blackmail, or do whatever it takes to get it.

Skills of Note: Lore: Magic (all) 98%, Lore: Dimensions 98%, History (Palladium) 80%, and Lore: Demons and Monsters 90%.

Weapons and Equipment: In addition to his mystic robe which has a dozen Dimensional Pockets, he also wears a Splugorth Talisman of Armor, and carries an Eylor Assault Staff.

Northern Fire Bog Terrain

The Northern Fire Bog is a huge place. Traveling via foot is a dangerous prospect as all kinds of dangers await, and even flying is by no means a guaranteed way of being safe. Game Masters should roll once for every day of travel or at their own discretion.

01-10% No Terrain modifiers. For once the ground is relatively firm, dry and stable to walk on. It's a great place to pitch camp.

11-19% Deep Water. All of a sudden the ground just drops out. There is a deep, murky lake of water before the characters. The lake is 1D4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km) in diameter and finding its edges will be very difficult. The average depth is 1D4x10 feet (3 to 12 m) and in most cases, this will be over anyone's head. Circumnavigating will take at least a day, or roll 3D6+6 hours.

20-27% Fire Water! That's right, just ahead of the characters are pools of water that are on fire. Liquid petroleum or natural gas is fueling the fire and bars the characters path. The fire burns pretty hot and damage from contact is 4D6 S.D.C.

28-35% Quicksand or mud! The ground is soft and porous. Those walking over it will find that they are suddenly sinking and are caught in quicksand that has the consistency of mud. Struggling only makes it worse and speeds up the sinking process. It takes 4D4 melees before the mud is over the character's head and struggling cuts that time in half. The only way out is via magic, psionics, or rope to pull oneself out. It is also possible to form a human chain, but depending on the size of the quicksand the rescuers may become trapped as well. For every 10 feet (3 m) wide the quicksand is, two people will be needed to form a human chain. So an area that has quicksand that is 20 feet (6 m) in diameter will require a minimum of four people. The pools of quicksand vary in size from 10 to 60 feet (3 to 18 m), roll 1D6x10. More than likely the area is littered with pools of quicksand and it will take an extra day of cautious travel to avoid them, otherwise there is a 01-60% chance of getting stuck once per hour.

36-43% A field of Fire Jets or Fire Geysers blocks the path. Like a minefield, there are 6D6+20 and they are spread out through a large area. Going through is the shortest path, while going around adds a day to the journey.

44-51% Gas! Several vents are robbing the area of precious oxygen. While demons are not affected, mortals are. To avoid the effects, two days travel around the area is advised, otherwise, proceeding through is dangerous.

52-59% Tar Pits! Concealed under some greasy water are a series of Tar Pits. There are 3D6 in the area that need to be avoided. Trying to find a way around adds a day to the journey.

60-67% A lake of lava. Several huge lakes of fire and lava are found within the Northern Fire Bog. This one is so large that it will take 1D4 days to go around. Traveling over via magic or by natural means is an option and only takes half a day to get past this section.

68-75% Acid Pools. With all the concentrated sulfur and other toxic chemicals in Hades, pools of acid are commonplace and easily mistaken for boiling water. The pools are only 1D4x10 feet (3 to 12 m) in size.

76-83% Hydrogen Gas Pods! A whole field of the deadly plants is ahead of the characters. There are 4D6 patches scat-



tered throughout the next several miles. They're potential land mines waiting to go off. Trying to find a way around will take 4D6 hours.

84-92% Green Mold typically occurs in small mounds ranging in size from 2 to 20 feet (0.6 to 6.1 m). If the characters are not careful they can become exposed and eventually consumed.

93-00% Yellow Mold. Several large patches are found for the next 1D4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km). Each patch is 2D4x10 feet (2D4x3 m) in area.

Northern Fire Bog Weather

The Northern Fire Bog is a chaotic place. The swamp fills the atmosphere with all kinds of chemicals. Add the heat and you get a volatile mix. The Fire Bog has a lot of moisture, which triggers most of the chaotic conditions in the north. While traveling in the Northern Fire Bog it is suggested that Game Masters roll twice per day of travel, as conditions can rapidly change from one hour to the next.

01-35% Clear. Well, at least as clear as it can get in Hades. The clouds overhead are constantly churning, threatening rain, but for the most part, there is no weather.

36-45% Light Rain. Surprisingly, it's not acid rain at the moment, although the water only has a 01-40% chance of being drinkable, and it still tastes awful.

46-55% Acid Rain. There are scattered showers that occur 1D6 times throughout the day.

56-65% Acid Rain, however they are heavy showers that occur 1D4 times throughout the day.

66-70% A single bout of Fire Rain sweeps through.

71-75% The day is riddled with 1D4 brief showers of Fire Rain. During each Fire Rain shower there is a 01-40% chance that it erupts into a Fire Storm.

76-80% The day is relatively clear when a Fire Storm erupts. The winds are quite extreme and there is a 01-40% chance of 1D4 Fire Tornadoes erupting.

81-85% Throughout the day Fire Rain constantly threatens. When it looks like its finally coming an end, a Fire Wall ignites instead.

86-94% Acid Fog. The same fog that envelops the Forest of Stone appears in small patches around the Fire Bog. Fortunately, because of the intense heat, it only lasts for 1D6 hours. The fog cloud is 2D4 miles (3.2 to 12.8 km) in size.

95-100% Toxic Gas. There is little warning save for the bubbling water or perhaps a peculiar smell. However, as the entire swamp is like this, it is usually too late to tell.

Northern Fire Bog Encounters

Many creatures roam the swamps of the Fire Bog, and columns of demons heading towards the Demon's Gate are a common sight. There are no roads per se, but some well defined paths and trails that cut right through the center of the swamps. So encounters there are more likely than the rest of the Fire Bog. Also, the swamp is a relatively flat and open area, making for farther visibility. At the Game Master's discretion, if traveling on the main path to Demon's Gate, they may wish to roll twice for every day of travel. If off of the beaten path, then roll once per day.

01-05% Deevil spies! A Devilkin, two Fenry, and a Fiend. They've been using Getrix's pyramid to come and go. They are up to no good and part of a bigger plot.

06-10% 1D4 Tauris with a hate on for the world. If a battle ensues, these demons will fight to the death.

11-20% 2D4 Gargoyles or Demon Flies. They'll try to capture any outsiders and bring them to a local associate for questioning, but only after they have robbed the characters first.

21-30% 2D4+3 Gargoyle or Lesser Demon troops! Except they are deserters who don't want to fight in the Minion War. They'll give our heroes two Demon Bone weapons (G.M.'s discretion as to what they might be), and 43 Modeus coins, which is all they own, if the player characters will go back on the road and ambush the team looking for them. This distraction should give the fugitives the chance they need to get away. They can also offer the player group information about the region, notable personalities, and the latest rumors about the Minion War. One of the demons might even be willing to join the group and help them (in this skirmish and future adventures). The team tracking them is made up of 1D4+1 Alu (or Shedim), two Lasae, and a Gallu Demon Bull.

31-40% Worms of Taut. These creatures are all over the swamp, but most notably the Blow Worms. Characters are most likely to encounter one of the following: 2D6 Fire Worms, 2D6 Nippers, 2D6 Tri-Fangs, 1D6 Blow Worms, or 1D6 Serpent Beasts.

41-50% Stalking the waters of the swamp are 1D4 creatures from another world (Kelpies, etc.). They will try and pull anyone underwater to drown them and if they outnumber the opposition, will move in for the kill.

51-60% Circling the area are 1D6 Black Vultures. They will either follow the characters if anyone appears wounded or sick, or they will try and pick off the weakest member.

61-70% A single rogue demon. Is he a deserter from the Minion War, a freak from the Fire Flats of Hades, or just some lost demon who decided to set out on his own? Game Masters, this is your chance to be creative and let that imagination flow. Does the rogue demon see the characters as potential allies, pawns, or just his next meal? Game Master's choice on the type of demon. In the alternative, he could be a minion of Dyval separated from the rest of his teammates.

71-80% 1D6 Entities find and harass the characters; probably 1D6 Poltergeist, Possessing, Haunting, or Tectonic Entities.

81-90% Minion War Light Recon Squad. See Specialized Demon Squads on page 25.

91-96% Minion War Commando/Special Forces unit such as the Brass Guard. See Specialized Demon Squads on page 25.

97-99% Minion Elite Seek and Destroy Squad. See Specialized Demon Squads on page 25.

100% Several demon regiments marching towards Demon's Gate. There are 1D4x1,000 demons!

Demon's Gate

& Demon Spine Mountains

Cutting the last third of the Abyss completely off from the rest of the continent is a massive mountain chain that stands like an imposing wall. Jagged peaks thrust up from the black and gray mountain chain that dominates the western horizon. The mountains make for an impenetrable barrier for mortals and most ground based creatures. However, these mountains have a huge pass in the dead center of the chain that allows people to come and go. Considering the amount of rubble strewn everywhere, and the blast marks on the sides of the mountains, the passageway must have been carved by the gods themselves because the pass is not natural.

Demon's Gate is a mountain pass roughly ten miles (16 km) wide and that's only at ground level. The blast that created the pass cleared mountains for another 50 miles (80 km)! However this terrain is uneven and not very well suited for travel. The main pass leads directly into the Great Abyss.

The lower bowels of the **Great Abyss** are filled with an assortment of dimensional anomalies as well as hundreds of dimensional portals. It is the counterpart to the Great Rift in the *Palladium World*, and the majority of the portals end up in the Great Rift in that world. Exactly how or why these two worlds, one mortal, one infernal, are linked is a mystery that has defied explanation. The worlds even look similar, topologically, as if Hades was the demonic and nightmarish twin of the other.

The Demon Lords have managed to manipulate several of the portals within the Great Abyss, and direct them to specific locations in other dimensions. Here demon troops are sent to fight in various battles around the Megaverse, and it is here where the Minion War was started by sending Worms of Taut to Dyval. For now, millions of troops are dispersed throughout the Great Abyss, heading to their assigned battlefield to wage war on the Deevil Hordes wherever they may be assembled.

The Gate

On the eastern side of the mountains, right as you enter Demon's Gate, are a pair of statues that rise to the sky. On the south side is a very impressive likeness of Modeus, and to the north is one of Andras. Each statue is over 500 feet (152 m) in height and constructed of solid steel. Stone was not good enough, and the two Demon Lords wanted the statues to endure the elements and stand the test of time, which they have for thousands of years. Each statue has a slight magic enchantment and arcane markings all over it.

Near the statues of Modeus and Andras are small statues only 100 feet (30.5 m) tall of each of the other Demon Lords. They are also constructed of black steel, radiate magic and are covered in arcane markings. The small statues line the interior pass of Demon's Gate and are spread out every few miles. They are facing each other in two rows, with half on the north and the other half on the south facing wall.

The statues are meant to be true to life representations of the various Demons Lords and are there to look down on their minions as they pass beyond Demon's Gate and head to the front lines. A last bit of motivation if you will. Each statue also acts



as an impromptu shrine for the demons to worship at. Finally, the statues also serve another purpose. They are Hades first line of defense against invasion. While there are hundreds of thousands of troops in the Great Abyss at any given time, most are either coming from or going to the Minion War, and this is where Hades is most vulnerable to large scale invasion. As a precaution, special enchantments were added to the statues to serve as this first line of defense. One that the Demon Lords could use to personally partake in the battle, or the statues can be automated if necessary.

The statues of Modeus and Andras are the most powerful and heavily armored. The two Demon Lords can, if they desire, temporarily transfer their essences into the giant statues and pilot them like some sort of power armor. The same holds true for the other statues of the various other Demon Lords. However, they are smaller, lighter versions of the statues of Andras and Modeus. If the Demon Lords are busy, or do not wish to partake in any battle, each statue has a dormant Greater Demon. They can be awakened anytime to pilot the giant behemoths into battle and rain down godly might on any Deevils who try to invade Hades.

Gate Defenders

Modeus and Andras are fearing a major counter-offensive into Hades from Dyval. Demon's Gate and the Great Abyss is the most vulnerable region in Hades and they have taken steps to fortify this weak point. A whole regiment of Magots lingers in the area to zap any intruders that come through the portals. So far, they have gotten about a dozen deevils and their arrival was

most likely the result of some random accident. In addition to the Magots, there are always hundreds of demons coming and going through the gates. So the area is pretty secure, at least for now. If the demons are unable to hold back an invasion of Deevils, then everyone knows that the fallback point is to the demon statues that line the entrance to Demon's Gate. There the statues will come to life and act as a buffer until reinforcements can arrive.

Youngpuss, Quick Stats

Youngpuss is in charge of the regiment of Magots in Demon's Gate. It's a boring assignment and he and his fellow Magots have considered jumping through a dimensional portal to have a little fun.

Race: Magot.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 14, M.A. 5, P.S. 42, P.P. 13, P.E. 20, P.B. 1, Spd 110.

M.D.C.: 3,000. (On S.D.C. worlds Youngpuss has 50 Hit Points and 44 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 14).

Experience Level: Fifth.

Disposition: Short tempered, impatient and always wants instant gratification. It's always now, not later, and he rarely takes no for an answer.

Description: Looks like your typical Magot.

Skills of Note: Land Navigation 80% and Track Humanoids 45%.

Weapons and Equipment: None.

Modeus and Andras Statues

Model Type: None, dark demon magic weapons.

Class: Mystic Automaton.

Crew: One Greater Demon.

M.D.C. by Location:

Arms (2) – 1,500

Legs (2) – 2,500

Wings (Andras only) (2) – 1,800

* Head – 500

**Main Body – 5,000

*Destroying the head has no effect for Modeus or Andras. However the demon pilot will now have to rely on his own demon senses.

**Destroying the Main Body shuts down the mystic statue, rendering it useless.

Note for S.D.C. Stats: Reduce all M.D.C. by half, and use an Armor Rating of 17.

Speed:

Running: 300 mph (480 km).

Leaping: Can't.

Flying Speed: Only the Andras statue can fly at 100 mph (160 km).

Flying Range: Unlimited.

Statistical Data:

Height: 500 feet (152 m).

Width: 125 feet (38 m).

Length: 75 feet (23 m).

Weight: 50 tons each.

Cargo: None.

Power Systems: Mystic Generator.

Market Cost: Not available on the market.

Weapon Systems:

1. God Blast Cannons (2): These are the main weapons of the statues and their purpose is to decimate large groups of troops and to destroy any Deevil Lords or Sovereigns who come through the portals. The beams can come out of the eyes, mouth, or simply by pointing the hand at the desired target.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Deevil.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Deity and defense.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the statue.

Mega-Damage: 1D4x100 M.D. to a 60 (18.3 m)foot area! (4D6x10 S.D.C. damage.)

Rate of Fire: Two shots per melee round.

Maximum Effective Range: 1000 feet (305 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

2. Hell Sword: Each statue is armed with a massive melee weapon that can cut through just about anything.

Primary Purpose: Anti-God/Deevil.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 4D6x10 M.D. (same in S.D.C. environment).

Effective Range: Melee combat only.

3. Hand to Hand Combat: If the giant statues should engage in hand to hand combat they do the following damage.

Attacks per Melee: Six; 4 attacks for the smaller statues.

Punch: 2D6x10 M.D.

Power Punch: 4D6x10 M.D.

Kick: 3D6x10 M.D.

Stomp: 2D6x10+40 M.D.

Bonuses:

+5 to strike with the sword, or energy blast.

+3 to strike with punch, kick, or physical attacks.

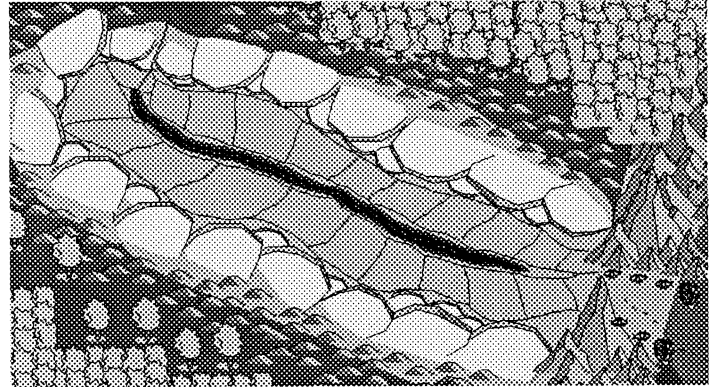
+6 to parry with the sword.

+4 to parry without the sword.

No dodge bonus.

4. Sensor Systems Note: See the invisible and nightvision 2,000 feet (610 m) only.

5. Note: If Modeus or Andras take control of their respective statues, they use only their own bonuses, and they are not added to those of the magic statues. The stats and bonuses for the statues of the other Demon Lords are all at half those of Andras and Modeus. Round down any fractions and the Armor Rating is 16. Those with wings are able to fly at 100 mph (160 kph).



Terrain of the Great Abyss and Demon's Gate

The terrain through Demon's Gate and into the Great Abyss is relatively clear and open. This is by design as the demons have been marching thousands of troops through the pass for centuries. There are few places to hide and escape the demons' notice in this part of Hades.

The gate of the mountain pass is like a large carved out trough with small bits of rubble everywhere. The rubble is no bigger than a few feet and line of sight is always clear, well at least for demons. Within the Great Abyss, cavern walls reach for the sky as far as the eye can see. Within the Great Abyss massive lava falls run down the sides of the cavern walls forming a river of lava that cuts the Great Abyss in half. The lava runs almost to Demon's Gate and then disappears into some dimensional void. The size of the river varies greatly. For most of its length it is 30 feet (9.1 m) across and towards the end it widens to double that length.

Weather in the Great Abyss and Demon's Gate

There are only the remnants of storms and such along the borders of Demon's Gate and the Northern Fire Bog. Upon en-

tering Demon's Gate, there is this unearthly calm with only the sound of thunder rumbling in the distance. That's it! The Mountains act as a natural barrier, and once you enter the Great Abyss, the dimensional nuances keep the weather at bay. Travelers are more likely to encounter a Ley Line Storm than any of the weather found in Hades.

Encounters in the Great Abyss and Demon's Gate

Let's face it. In these heated times the chances of not having some kind of encounter in this part of Hades are slim to nothing. Demons are everywhere as they are coming and going, and we're not talking a few demons, but it's more like hundreds to thousands. Camps are scattered everywhere making travel in this part of Hades the most treacherous. Hey, if your front door was wide open it's where you'd want a lot of troops on standby. Each portal, at a minimum, has 2D4x100 Lesser Demons and 2D6x10 Greater Demons. That's also roughly the size of the various camps, and they can increase by a thousand as regiments join them temporally between battles and various duties.

01-05% 1D4x10 Gallu Bulls riding Netherbeasts! They are ready for combat and spoiling for a fight, so what are you doing here, mortals?!

06-10% A Gargoyle Lord, a pair of Gargoyle warriors, and a pair of Gargoylites. They're supposed to be going to war, but they have no love for their demon masters, so they are robbing troops and supply stations in the staging area. They just accidentally got caught in the act when the player group stumbled upon them. Both the Gargoyles and our heroes are, in effect, outlaws, but a confrontation may ensue unless one of the player characters starts talking fast or the group takes them down fast. In the alternative, the player group could try to make a run for it, or join forces with these misanthropes; an uneasy alliance at best.

11-15% 2D4x10 Shedim demon troops! They don't allow anyone to enter or pass their point without a thorough questioning. Mortals are seen as spies or assassins and will be taken into custody for observation and further questioning. Alu, Taursis, or Demon Flies may be substituted.

16-20% 2D6x10 Gargoyles or Gurgoyles led by a Gargoyle Lord ready for combat. Mortals are seen as spies or assassins and will be taken into custody for observation and further questioning.

21-25% Elite seek and destroy team (any, see page 25), and guess who they just found?

26-30% 2D6 Baal-Rogs riding Infernal Mastodons. They are hungry for battle and eager to destroy the enemies of Hades. Are you friend or foe?

31-35% Netherbeast pens with 4D6+6 Netherbeasts (all the same or a mixed group) eating as they wait for their riders. Of course, they are eating the corpses of the demons' enemies or slaves! 1D4 could still be alive (like white mice dropped into the cage of a pet snake) and are screaming for help. How do our heroes respond?

36-40% The characters come across a nest of either 4D6 Fire Worms, Nippers or Tomb Worms.

41-45% Bone Yard with 2D6x1,000 bodies of Dyval mortal henchmen from a recent incursion at the Great Abyss! 2D6x100

Ghouls and Nasu, 2D6x10 Demon Flies, and 2D6x100 Black Vultures are busy devouring the dead. Meanwhile, 2D6 Gallu Demon Bulls and 10 Shedim (or Alu) are spot-checking the bodies to make sure all are, indeed, dead. 5D6 Haunting Entities wander the grim scene. There could be some treasure on the bodies if our heroes are brave enough to go searching. They won't be noticed at first 2D6 minutes. The longer they're out there, the more likely someone will notice. All they may find is trouble, including a live enemy or two or possibly a few, very alive Fenry or Deevils hiding among the dead.

46-50% A Demon High Priest (1D4+2 level) and 10 worshipers attend their demon masters trying to help in whatever way they can. They are suspicious and jealous of any unknown mortals they might encounter, will ask questions and may follow the player characters, watching their every move.

51-55% 1D6 Psi-Hawks (or other flying predator) swoop down to try to grab an innocent and unsuspecting slave or a dead body off a pile of dead enemies.

56-60% The characters encounter a light Shedim patrol. (Roll 1D6.) They are either part of Lord Karnack's minions, or a group from the mountains.

61-65% 1D4+1 beautiful slave girls! They are skilled concubines who offer themselves to the Greater Demons before they go to war. They smile and walk over to our heroes offering them the same free service. Too bad they are all really Succubus (and Incubus for any females in the group).

66-70% A scouting party of Karnack's minions. It is led by one of his Night Owls, with six Shedim.

71-80% The characters have come across some (or one) of Karnack's Magots; 1D4 of them are roaming around looking to cause some mischief.

81-85% 1D6 Lasae spies have found the player characters. What do they do and who are they spies for? If they are Karnack's then they will follow the characters and report on their position. Or they could be a spy for another Demon Lord or Great Demon looking in on Karnack's realm. Being in the spy game, their master may try to recruit the player group for one of his own schemes against Karnack, or a secret mission in Hades or Dyval. (Or elsewhere in the Megaverse!)

86-90% A greater minion of Dyval, probably a Beast or Serpent, approaches the players characters and offers a juicy reward (and a way home?), if they will do a wetwork mission for him. It will be dangerous and involve sabotage, assassination or a surgical assault against the demons. However, the mission may not take place in Hades, it could be on another world (Rifts Earth, the Palladium World, Heroes Unlimited Earth, Phase World or almost anywhere), at the Game Master's discretion.

91-00% It's a Deevil assault! 1D6x1,000 Dire Harpies are the first to come soaring in. They are followed by 2D6x100 Fenry and Deevils, 2D6x10 Gorgons and an assortment other minions of Dyval, Greater and Lesser. Chaos reigns as the invasion force is met by Gargoyles, Baal-Rogs and other demon defenders. Don't look now, but a mixed squad of minions of Dyval (one Lesser being for each character, plus one Greater) are charging toward the player characters. They assume they are demon allies, but don't care whose side our heroes might be on, they just want them dead!

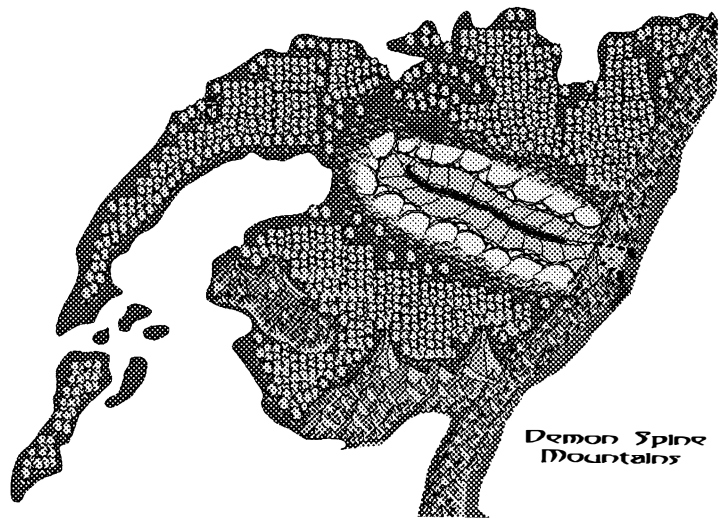


Forest of Pain

Located in the northwestern section beyond the Demon Spine Mountains lies the Forest of Pain. The name is a little misleading as it is really not a forest, but a sweltering jungle like environment. The trees all seem gnarled and twisted as if they are some kind of frightening mutation. Few demons are ever seen here and it is considered a demons no man's land. This was not always the case. The jungle at one point was filled with thousands of demons, particularly the Taursis and other demon renegades. However the jungles were the first places where demons were conscripted for the Minion War. Now all that's left are all kinds of monsters as well as evil Faerie Folk and a few remaining Werebeast clans.

The region itself is typical of Hades and subject to the brutal nature of the environment. The mutated forest seems relatively resistant to all that Hades can throw at it. Even when patches of forest are wiped out they seem to regenerate at an exaggerated rate. The forest produces a lot of moisture, which gets turned into acid rain. So the rains come daily and are typically a down-pour. This, of course, produces numerous acid pools around the forest which most of the monsters living in the area have learned to avoid. Fire Rain is far less frequent and may occur once every two or three weeks with a major Fire Storm once a month. During what would be considered summer is Hades' equivalent of the monsoon season, at least in this region of the world. For three months Fire Storms batter the forest in different regions with two or three Fire Tornadoes as well as Fire Walls. The Fire Season as it's called decimates the forest and large tracts of it for miles are laid waste. All that remains are twisted and burnt stumps where the trees once stood. During the last month of the season from a distance the whole area seems engulfed in flames and thick black smoke pours out of the area and can reach as far south as the Fire Flats of Hades. This, however, does not mean the end of the forest, rather it is a time of rebirth and like the phoenix, the forest quickly reclaims these patches of barren land, growing back at an astounding rate. Within six months of the Fire Season there are no signs that it ever occurred. The Fire Season lasts for about three months and anyone caught in it will not find any reprieve. The storms rage constantly and usually cut a swath right through the forest, or when the storms do abate temporarily, then large, barren patches appear around the forest, seemingly at random.

The only demons to frequent this region are the Fallen, or banished. The only reason they would even come this far north is to live a life of solitude away from the rest of demon society. They rarely gather in large numbers and most compete for a favorite cave, or location. Some try and find the ruined Necropolis site that is said to exist in the region. If it does exist, it is difficult to locate and probably covered with the native foliage. The Necropolis could hold untapped power in the form of rare magic, a Rune Weapon, or even an artifact that could propel a Fallen to the top of the demon ranks. Whatever the case may be, demons are actually few and far between and then are not your common demons, so they may be mistaken for one of the local monsters found in the region.



Invasion

Perhaps because of its remoteness, or lack of resources, or general disinterest to the demons of Hades, the Forest of Pain has become the perfect staging area for the first wave of Deevils. It was the Deevils who found the only Necropolis in the area. The structure is only a single tower that at one point must have had over a dozen portals to various worlds throughout the Megaverse. Only a third of it stands now, with only two portals which remain functioning. Ironically, one of those portals leads directly to Dyval, and the other to Rifts Earth.

Since the Taut offensive, over 100 Deevils and Devilkins have infiltrated into demon society. Disguised as a variety of supernatural creatures, they have scattered all over Hades and report back at regular intervals. Having seen the vast number of beings in Hades has given the rulers of Dyval reasons to further spread their influence throughout the Megaverse. Their number of worshipers in their home dimension is less than a third of those found in Hades, with the majority being found in a variety of dimensions, including Palladium and Rifts Earth. The number of followers in Hades was grossly underestimated and this has sent the rulers of Dyval into a frantic rush for more followers. In the meantime, the Deevils in Hades are trying to cause chaos and dissent. They have already infiltrated several key areas in Hades. Most notably, they are supporting the Order of Light. Surely, without this support their efforts would have failed long ago. Of course the Order of Light has no idea that they are mere puppets working for another taskmaster. The leaders of the Order are never even likely to find out, as a Devilkin sits within the lead cell of their order.

In addition, small pockets of Devil worship have cropped up all over Hades. Most notably within the slave populations, where the Deevils offer salvation to the masses of slaves. When demons do learn of the Devil worship there is generally a purge where hundreds of slaves are killed and this plays right into the Deevils' hands. While they may have lost a few worshipers, usually one or two survive to pass the word along and start another cult. In the meantime the demons have succeeded in whipping out the "undecided" or innocents, if there can be any in Hades. The cells of Devil worshipers are usually no more than a dozen, so the demons end up killing more demon worshipers than Devil worshipers.

Without the demons even realizing it, the Forest of Pain has become the next battleground. With so many Deevils having in-

filtrated into demon society, they can keep the demons off balance long enough for Deevil forces to begin massing in the Forest of Pain. The site of the Necropolis has already become a key Deevil base and soon hundreds of Deevils will start arriving. In the meantime, while preparations are made for a counter-attack, the few Deevil teams in Hades are beginning to take guerilla action. There have already been several accidents in Gamora delaying the weapons that the demons are producing there. This has put production behind what the demons had anticipated having. The Deevils are being clever too by using slaves to conduct the sabotage, leaving the demons to think it's the incompetence of slaves. Meanwhile shipments of precious components get delayed, or even "disappear." The Deevils are trying desperately to capture a weapon for study, but that may not be possible in Hades. So for now, the number of Deevils grows in the Forest of Pain and it's only a matter of time before the Deevils pay back the Demon Lords for attacking Dyval!

The Necropolis

The Necropolis seems to be from a bygone age in Hades, as at one point there were hundreds located around the dimension. Who or what built them is unknown, but they correspond geographically to the Necropolises in the Dimension of Crus, which is the Realm of the goddess Tolmet, best known on the Palladium World. Perhaps since she spent a considerable amount of time in Hades during her youth, she had them built. Regardless, now most are destroyed or claimed by the Demon Lords. It seems that the one in the Forest of Pain has long since been forgotten. This is evident by the amount of damage the structure has sustained. At one point it was three mighty towers joined together with each tower taller than the next. Now all that remains is the tallest of the towers, and it has been reduced to less than half its original height and the remaining towers are so much debris scattered around the structure. It looks as if the building sustained a direct hit from a Fire Tornado as the stone looks black and blasted to bits.

The tower used to have numerous dimensional portals on several different levels. The towers were not too unlike Atlantean pyramids with respect to the power they wielded. Today there are two portals in the grand room on the base floor. One portal goes directly to Dyval, and the other to Rifts Earth. This building has become an impromptu command center and it is here that the counter-attack on Hades will begin.

The current leader of the faction in Hades is Sovereign Casteel. He is quite an impressive figure, and after a successful attack on Demon's Gate, managed to be assigned to the covert activities in the Forest of Pain. He is a Beast with an impressive track record and has fought demons all over the Megaverse, finally winning the assignment he had always wanted. To attack Hades directly for a little payback! He slowly gathers his forces in the once abandoned Necropolis. Currently, he is gathering as much info on Hades as possible. His best agent, Kendal, has provided invaluable information and reconnaissance.

Sovereign Casteel, Quick Stats

Imposing for a Deevil Beast, however what makes him stand out are his ram horns. They are not like those of normal Beasts, rather they are a steel color and texture and Casteel won't say what it's from. He always wears a black cape that goes down to

the floor between his wings and he wears several pieces of jewelry from rings to a brooch on his cape. Finally, on his hip he carries a very fine steel sword that is said to be able to slay even the strongest of demons.

Race: Deevil Beast.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 15, M.A. 15, P.S. 38, P.P. 20, P.E. 24, P.B. 14, Spd 31, or 90 flying.

M.D.C.: 280. (On S.D.C. worlds Sovereign Casteel has 84 Hit Points and 58 S.D.C. with an A.R. of 15.)

Experience Level: Eighth.

Disposition: Cruel, vengeful, and will do whatever is necessary to get ahead. He loves to torture and maim and takes great delight in making demons suffer, and has a thing for cutting opponents' limbs off while still alive, taunting them the entire time.

Skills of Note: Strategy and Tactics 90%, Land Navigation 80%, and W.P. Sword.

Weapons and Equipment: Counted among his several magic items is a ring that boost his strength by 10 points (note that P.S. has already been modified). This ring is constant, and Casteel claims it's from the *Palladium World* during the Time of a Thousand Magicks. He also has a magic armband that has several chain mail links connecting to three rings he wears on his right hand. The armband allows him the *Phase Magic* power of Quick Draw and wherever his Katana is, he can summon it instantly to his hand. Finally, he has a magic Katana made of a mysterious alloy that was found by one of the Deevil Lords. The weapon does 6D6 damage to all creatures, except demons, to which it does 1D6x10 points of damage. The metal has a blue sheen with hints of red to it. In addition to doing extra damage to demons, it can teleport to its owner (same rules as Teleport: Superior) twice per day to a range of 500 miles (800 km) and three times per day it can fire a Power Bolt for 5D6+10 M.D. with a range of 2,000 feet (610 m).

Environmental Tables

Weather Table for the Forest of Pain

The weather in the Forest of Pain does have some regularity. Like a rain forest, it does rain every day for a few hours. So once per day there will be 1D4 brief acid rain showers that last for 1D4 minutes per shower. Anything else rolled below is in addition to this normal cycle. Because of this continuous cycle, the region is somewhat stable and Game Masters can roll once per week.

01-40% Except for the usual 1 to 4 acid showers there is no other weather to worry about this day.

41-60% A wetter day than usual, the duration of the normal showers is increased to 3D6+4 minutes.

61-70% A stormy day. The usual showers are storms that pelt the region and each lasts for 6D6+12 minutes.

71-80% Fire Rain! In addition to the normal acid rain showers, 1D4 sporadic Fire Rain showers occur throughout the day. However their duration is reduced to only 1D4 minutes because of all the moisture.

81-90% A full-fledged Fire Rain Storm hits the area that lasts for 1D8x5 minutes.

91-98% Hades Lightning Storm plagues the area between the acid storms.

99-100% Either a Fire Tornado or Fire Wall hits the region. The players may have a little warning as trees are smashed to bits or begin to burn.

Terrain for the Forest of Pain

The Forest of Pain has endless tracts of jungle. It is suggested that Game Masters roll for every three days of travel.

01-30% Relatively clear going. Either the jungle is not that dense, or this portion is regrowing from Fire Tornado damage.

31-40% Dense jungle, reduce speed by 1/3.

41-50% Super-dense jungle and the only way to go forward is to cut and hack your way through.

51-60% A field of Fire Jets or Fire Geysers is intertwined throughout the jungle ahead.

61-70% A raging river of lava or a lake of fire.

71-80% A lake of acid. Steam constantly rises and there is an acrid smell in the air.

81-88% Tar Pits. There are a 2D6 hidden under the jungle foliage, making for a difficult area to get through.

89-97% Acid Pits. These are areas where the bedrock was corroded by the acid, forming a deep pit. Typical depth is 4D6+6 feet (3 to 9.1 m). They are often grown over with dense jungle foliage, making them relatively concealed. At the bottom of the pit there 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m) of acid still burning away. Damage is 1D6 points of damage per melee while in the pit.

98-00% An Acid Pit. However, the acid has boiled away, leaving a pit that leads directly to the Hades underground.

Encounter Table for the Forest of Pain

01-05% 1D6+1 Demon Bats using hit and run tactics to grab a slave or player character to eat, as well as snatch supplies and valuables. They won't fight long before taking wing and vanishing into the twilight darkness.

06-10% A pair of Serpent Beasts or Tri-Fangs (Worms of Taut) in a foul mood and spoiling to kill somebody. They are a mated pair and fight to the death.

11-20% 1D4 Psi-Hawks are on the lookout for a meal. If there are no Worms of Taut, the characters are the next best thing.

21-25% 1D4 Fenry Deevil wolves on the prowl. They see the player group as intruders or spies and attack to kill.

26-30% Worms of Taut. There are either 1D6+1 Fire Worms, Nippers, Tomb Worms, or any combination of the three.

31-35% Two Deevil Horrors, a Gorgon and a pair of Deevils ambush the player group and attack with murderous fury. They've heard assassins working for Modeus and Radha are coming to kill Sovereign Casteel. These assassins are said look like . . . well, the player characters! This fight will be brutal.

36-40% 1D4 Netherbeasts (any) hungry and on the prowl.

41-50% 1D4 Tauris! They are a small group doing a patrol for Succor-Bemoth. If the group proves too powerful they will retreat to report the trespass.

51-60% 1D6+1 Netherbeasts (any) hungry and on the prowl.

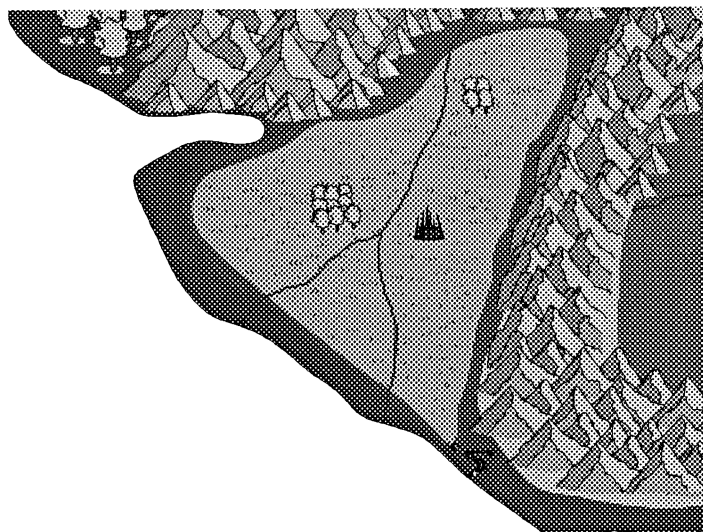
61-70% 1D4 Greater Demons. They are either here on an errand for a Demon Lord or on a hunting expedition.

71-75% 1D4 Magots.

76-80% 1D6 Tauris (or other Lesser Demon or Fallen) on patrol.

81-90% Escaped Demon(s)! They were prisoners of Succor-Bemoth and have escaped. They are willing to work with the characters; however they will betray them in a heartbeat if it helps them in any way. The number of escaped demons is 1D6.

91-00% A herd of Infernal Mastodons! There are 5D6+3 heading, the characters' general direction. If they're lucky they can get out of the way and hide.



Lord Karnack's Realm

The final realm of the Abyss is a relatively small section located between the southern forks of the Demon Spine Mountains. The southern border faces the Sea of Fire, while the rest of this land is surrounded by mountains in the north and east, making this realm effectively isolated and cut off from the rest of Hades. Just the way Karnack prefers. Officially, it's considered a part of the Forest of Pain, unofficially the self-proclaimed Demon Lord, Karnack has claimed the land for himself. Getting to it is no simple task. The mountains are treacherous and filled with all kinds of dangers from monsters and demons, to natural dangers such as Fire Geysers and rivers of lava. Not to mention the thousands of Shedim living there.

The occasional underground tunnel might provide for a way into the territory, but that is no easy task either as traveling underground is just as treacherous. The mountains have several underground springs. Because of Hade's intense heat, these are often boiling springs that send super-heated water through the mountains killing just about everything in its path. Traveling through these confined underground areas is like going through a steam bath from Hell and no less dangerous than traveling through the mountains.

The terrain is relatively the same as the Forest of Pain. The only difference is there are two separate forests located in these lands, one in the north and the other in the southwest. Karnack's castle lies about 10 miles (16 km) east of the southern forest. The rest of the land is relatively flat and covered by Razor Grass. Plus a river of lava cuts the small territory in half and it has numerous little tributaries that branch off throughout the land. Along the mountains the land is scorched from the constant battering of Fire Storms. The terrain has a black, charred appearance from the mountains to the razor grasslands.

Aside from the occasional Fire Storm, the area is relatively dry and free of any major weather disturbances. Once or twice a year an acid rain storm might sweep through the area, but they are extremely rare as the mountains bordering the Fire Bog usually act as a barrier to any such storms.

The northern parts of Karnack's lands do have the occasional Gas Vent or Fire Geyser, but they are far and few between. The real threat comes from minions of Lord Karnack, who constantly patrol his lands looking for intruders and any other threats. In addition to Karnack's personal minions, thousands of Shedim live in the mountains to the east. Over the years Karnack has been able to win them over, either through sheer brutality, or with his cunning Raksasha abilities. A good third are loyal and actually worship the Greater Demon. These numbers seem to be increasing daily and if they continue at a steady rate, Karnack may actually achieve his goal of becoming a Demon Lord.

Lord Karnack, Self-Proclaimed Raksasha Demon Lord

Lord Karnack, as he calls himself, is a self-proclaimed Demon Lord. He was able to establish a small kingdom in a remote region of the Abyss south of Demon's Gate. Over the years he has been gaining supporters and worshipers from the thousands of Shedim who live in the southern portion of the Demon Spine Mountains. His influence is increasing greatly from the fact that he holds in his possession a powerful magical artifact called the *Eternity Crystal*. This magic crystal is able to manipulate the very fabric of dimensions and has granted the Raksasha great power. With this magic artifact alone he is able to protect his territory from any type of invader that would try to teleport or Rift in. This is a huge advantage and it has protected him for years. The magic barrier only comes down when Karnack wishes and that's usually only to call in more Shedim reinforcements or to gather supplies. Luck has been on Karnack's side as well, for he has not drawn the attention of any of the Demon Lords of Hades, at least not that he is aware of. Other Raksasha who knew of Karnack have tried to overthrow him or blackmail him, but each has failed thus far. For now it seems as if Karnack's enemies have vanished. However, demons have long memories and are good at biding their time until opportunities arise. In the meantime, Karnack is an up and coming Demon Lord who will do anything to obtain that title.

Lord Karnack has the familiar Raksasha visage of a feline head and black humanoid body. His fur is white with black stripes, and he has green eyes. When he becomes angry (which is most of the time these days) his eyes glow a dark green color. Karnack also likes to adorn himself with his magic items (noted

below) and wears them all the time. He has numerous rings, amulets and a Cloak of Armor that he wears constantly.

Race: Raksasha.

Real Name: K'narn

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 20, M.A. 17, P.S. 28, P.P. 18, P.E. 24, P.B. 14, Spd 50.

Size: 8 feet, 5 inches (2.6 m) tall and weighs 700 pounds (315 kg).

M.D.C.: 1000, plus he also wears a Cloak of Armor with a magic amulet that increases the M.D.C. of the armor from 200 to 400. (On S.D.C. worlds, Lord Karnack has 84 Hit Points, 120 S.D.C. and A.R. of 10. His Cloak of Armor has 200 S.D.C. and an increased A.R. of 16 thanks to the Amulet of Armor combined with it.)

Horror Factor: 14

Disposition: Clever and conniving, but obsessively protective of the Eternity Crystal. Karnack is a power-hungry megalomaniac who just can't figure out how to go about gaining the power he covets to become a Demon Lord.

Age: Effectively Immortal.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m), keen normal vision, see the invisible, turn into mist at will, track by smell 45%, bio-regeneration 4D6 per minute, teleport self at will and 300 pounds (135 kg) with a range of 5 miles (8 km) at 98%, dimensional teleport at 80%, resistant to fire and cold (½ damage), and magically knows all languages. Like all Raksasha, Lord Karnack is able to metamorph at will, and shape change into a specific individual. With his growing power base of worshipers, Karnack has become on par with a Demon Prince and has developed the Prototypical Deific Power of Mobile Sphere of Destruction.

Skills of Note: Karnack, like all Raksasha, is very educated and has extensive knowledge in numerous disciplines, including the abilities of a Palladium Wizard and Diabolist. (See **Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®, Second Edition**, pages 104 and 117 respectively, for these abilities.)

Karnack also has the following skills: Basic and Advanced Math, Literacy in Dragonese, Elven, American, Palladium Eastern, Western, Wolfen, and Dwarven, all at 98%. W.P. Sword. Karnack has the following Lore skills at 90%, Magic, Psychic, Demons and Monsters, Geomancy and Ley Lines, Dimension, and Faerie. The following skills are also known; Forgery 75%, Intelligence 85%, Wilderness Survival 60%, Land Navigation 60%, Swim 60%, Climb 80%/70%, Dance 90%, Sing 75%, Streetwise 80%, Astronomy and Navigation 75%, Anthropology: Ancients 70%, and Horsemanship: Exotic 70% and General 70%/55%.

He has spent little time in dimensions with high technology, and as a result, has a poor understanding of high-tech skills. He could easily adapt and pick up most skills, but he has little inclination to do so.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: With his possession (some would say his obsession) of the Eternity Crystal, Karnack has developed a phobia of being summoned by a Demon Lord, or anyone else for that matter. He is especially fearful of what will happen if the other Demon Lords learn about his treasured Eternity Crystal. No doubt they would use it in some capacity

in the Minion War as a secret weapon. For this reason, Karnack has constructed, below his abode, a massive dungeon filled with all sorts of traps and wandering demons to protect his investment. He is becoming increasingly paranoid and checks on the crystal daily. He is slowly getting to the point where he doesn't even trust his own minions and watches them like a hawk. This obsessive possession of the gem has made it so he rarely leaves his abode and is becoming increasingly irritated as a result of his self-imposed confinement.

P.P.E.: 700

Level of Experience: Karnack is a 12th level Palladium Wizard and a 5th level Diabolist.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural P.S. or by psionics, magic or weapon. 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 3D6 M.D. on a full punch, and 6D6 M.D. on a power punch. His claws add 1D6 points of damage if used.

Bonuses (Includes attribute bonuses): +4 on initiative, +3 to Perception Rolls, +6 to strike, parry, and dodge, +4 to roll with fall or impact, +9 to save vs magic, +7 to save vs psionics, and +10 to save vs Horror Factor. W.P. Sword total bonuses: +11 to strike, and +10 to parry.

Psionics: All Physical, Sensitive, and Healing plus Psi-Sword (30), Psi-Shield (30), P.P.E. Shield (10), Mind Block Auto-Defense, Mentally Possess Others (30), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mental Illusion (20), Mind Wipe (special), Telekinesis Super (10+), and Telekinetic Force Field (30). I.S.P.: 500.

Magic: Karnack is a student of the mystic arts and is considered a 12th level Wizard. He has an extensive spell repertoire and knows all first and second level spells, plus numerous spells all the way up to Spells of Legend. Spells of note are: All illusion spells as well as Circle of Travel (600), Energy Sphere (120), Firequake (160), Sorcerous Fury (70), Spinning Blades (20), and Lightning Arc (30). Game Masters can choose an additional 20 spells from levels 3 through 10. Lastly, Karnack knows the following Spells of Legend: Blood and Thunder (770) and Sanctuary (1,500). For a mega-list of all spells, consult the **Rifts® Book of Magic™**.

Karnack is also a 5th level Diabolist. At any time he has on him enough components to use two simple Ward phrases. Within his laboratory he has millions of credits worth of rare components, including demon and dragon bones as well as the horn of a Unicorn. There are enough in rare components alone to make a person very wealthy.

Lastly, Karnack has considered studying magic circles and is almost a first level Summoner. As a result, he has numerous books on the subject at hand in his personal library that are worth a small fortune. There is also a small collection of magic circle components, but nothing as vast as his ward components.

Alliances and Allies: Despite his paranoia and mistreatment of his minions, they are actually fairly loyal. They know for some reason that they are under Karnack's protection and they can't be summoned by anyone else, and that has big appeal to the lot of demons, especially so they don't have to be dragged into the Minion War. Only Karnack's six lieutenants know about the Eternity Crystal and its power.

Enemies: Few other demons know of, or would even recognize, Karnack, let alone acknowledge him as a Demon Lord. To this end, Karnack has no real demon enemies, however once word gets out that he has the Eternity Crystal, Karnack may find that being a Demon Lord is more than what he bargained for. Karnack also considers two individuals who escaped his clutches to be enemies. All he knows is that one is a Demigod who possesses magic powers of his own, and has an extensive military background, and his companion is an Elven Shifter. He knows they will come back, as both left powerful magic items behind that are now in Karnack's possession, deep in a vault under his castle. **Note:** Conan Schmidt and Kirsten Kurst are planning on returning to Hades and paying Lord Karnack a visit. Any takers?

Magic Items: The following items are worn by Karnack at all times and do not include the numerous items he has in his vault. He wears an elaborate Cloak of Armor that has an Armor Rating of 14 (increased to 16 because of the Amulet of Armor) and 200 S.D.C. The cloak has two D-Pockets built in as well. Karnack wears a ring of Tandem Telepathy (See **Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 8: The Western Empire** for details). His chief of security, Lomak, a Night Owl, wears the other. Karnack recently acquired an Impaler Rune Sword. Its previous owner (the Demigod mentioned above) barely escaped Lord Karnack's realm. The Impaler has Fire Elemental powers. Lastly Karnack has an Amulet of Armor. He has the amulet attached to the Cloak of Armor like a brooch to increase the Armor Rating.

Note: While within the sphere of the Eternity Crystal, Lord Karnack is unable to use his teleporting abilities, as are all of his demonic minions. This is fine with Karnack, as he does not like to be summoned by any of the Demon Lords, such as Modeus, or by anyone else for that matter. This also prevents others from teleporting into his realm.

The Eternity Crystal

Karnack and the Eternity Crystal go back a long time. Karnack's first experience with the crystal happened the last time he was summoned. The summoning was done by a group of human adventurers looking to make their mark in the world. A powerful Summoner was able to conjure Karnack directly from Hades and force him to do his bidding. The Raksasha was forced to travel with this group for some time and loathed every minute of it. On one adventure, Karnack and his "masters" went to a different dimension and found they were overmatched. It seems they came upon an elder Great Horned Dragon's lair. It was loaded with treasure and magic artifacts, but the dragon arrived home while the group was in the middle of plundering. In an attempt to save their own skins, Karnack was ordered to fight while the group began making a hasty retreat. It was at that moment that Karnack found he was free, the hold over him broken, and in his own fury he began attacking his former captors.

The dragon was dumbfounded, and watched with amusement. When it was all over, Karnack stood battered and bruised over his former captors and staring down the snout of a Great Horned Dragon. Entertained and pleased, the dragon let out a loud, rumbling laugh and allowed Karnack to live – as his servant. Karnack was not pleased with this turn of events and, in his arrogance, openly defied the dragon by attempting to



teleport home. Nothing happened and Karnack received a beating the likes of which he had never experienced. For the next hundred years, the Raksasha was forced to serve the dragon and bided his time. Whenever the dragon was away, Karnack would take stock of the items in the dragon's possession, and what he could use. He quickly learned that among the dragon's treasure trove was a large, 14 foot (4.3 m) tall amethyst colored crystal. It didn't take him long to determine that it was the source that prevented his escape via teleportation. It also explained why the dragon never teleported in or out of his lair, somehow the crystal prevented it. After some time, Karnack was able to gain control over the magic crystal and learned how to operate it. Careful planning, and taking great advantage of the dragon's long absences, gave the demon time to plot his revenge. He was able to make a deal with a clan of Shedim and brought in a couple hundred to the dragon's lair. Using the dragon's own magic items and the Eternity Crystal, Karnack slew the great beast upon his return, and took the crystal, some other magic artifacts, and a large portion of the treasure into his possession. The rest of it went to his Shedim allies.

The Powers of the Eternity Crystal

- The crystal is 14 feet (4.3 m) in height, 5 feet (1.5 m) in diameter and weighs approximately one ton.
- The Eternity Crystal can manipulate the fabric of a dimension (well, a small area in the dimension) and change the fabric dimension to be at its weakest, impenetrable, or anywhere in between. This only affects a 500 mile (800 km) area, with the crystal at the center. The duration is indefinite. Karnack currently has it set to be impenetrable and only lowers it to travel or summon additional minions.
- Repel Ley Line Storms. This only works if the Eternity Crystal is on a ley line or nexus, and can be done twice per day. It can also keep away natural storms on a regular basis, including Fire Storms and others that plague Hades.
- Open Dimensional Portal can be done twice per day. Duration is 30 minutes. The portal can also be manipulated to be as small as a Communication Rift (see the *Shifter O.C.C. in Rifts® Dimension Book™ Seven: Megaverse® Builder*) or as large as 20 feet (6.1 m) in diameter.
- Increase the range of any type of Teleportation spell or ritual to triple the normal range. This can be done once per day and the spell caster must be in direct contact with the crystal.
- Repel any type of dimensional storm such as Displacement Storms, Dimensional Maelstrom and Dimensional Vortex. This is limited to twice per day.
- Acts as a crystal ball, except it can only look into other dimensions and not on the same plane where it resides. There is no limit to this except the user must peer into the crystal and must at least know, or know much about, the person in question (i.e. a public figure, or someone the user has personally seen from a distance on numerous occasions). The same rules and limitations of a *crystal ball* apply, except those listed above. (See the *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*.)
- Open a two-way portal to an area being viewed for at least 30 minutes. This can be done twice per day. The portal is limited to transporting one or two people and only remains open for one minute.

- Value: Priceless, possibly worth hundreds of millions of credits or Modeus coins.

Note: The Eternity Crystal is *not* indestructible, but there are only a few ways to destroy it. First, it is susceptible to any type of magic attack, with double damage from any type of sonic attack. Other than magic and sonic attacks, the crystal is impervious to any other type of damage. It should also be noted that small fragments from the crystal will not provide any powers and they become inert pieces of amethyst. M.D.C. 5,000. (In S.D.C. environments it has 1,600 and an Armor Rating of 19.)

Karnack's Minions

Over the years, Lord Karnack has been able to gather quite an ensemble of demons. When he was a prisoner long ago, Karnack was able to get in contact with a clan of Shedim. Almost a hundred perished the day Karnack fought for his freedom and ever since they have been his minions of choice. The clan he originally contacted resided in the southern half of the Demon Spine Mountains. With his good relations, Karnack has an almost inexhaustible supply of Shedim. He regularly maintains at least three dozen at any given time. At least half will be on patrol looking for any intruders. Each patrol of six is usually led by a Night Owl. Six Night Owls in total are counted among Karnack's troops. The eldest of the Night Owls, Lomak, is the chief of security. He is constantly patrolling the grounds as well as the surrounding area, looking for intruders to have fun with before turning them over to Lord Karnack.

Patrolling the immediate grounds of Lord Karnack's castle are a pack of six Magots. They take a perverse pleasure in turning anyone they find to stone and then trampling them. The courtyard, as well as around the castle, has dozens of statues in various states of decay. A few are whole, but the rest are mostly smashed. Karnack leaves them as a warning to any would-be intruders.

Karnack was able to recruit two Gallu Demon Bulls. They are always in the castle and serve as Karnack's personal bodyguards. It's not that Karnack is a coward; he simply feels there's no reason he should fight when the Gallu can do it for him. Scab and Mox are rarely far from Karnack's side. Of late, they have been feeling the brunt of Karnack's abuse, probably due to their close proximity. Both were treated well in the beginning, but are now having second thoughts. Unless Karnack changes his attitude soon, the Gallu Demon Bulls might be the first to go.

The last group of demons who Karnack can call minions are his six Baal Rogs. Two are always in close proximity to the Eternity Crystal, guarding it. The others either help with patrolling the surrounding area or are sent on missions to do Karnack's bidding. It's not surprising that Karnack treats them the best since they guard his precious Eternity Crystal. Of all his minions, the Baal-Rogs have it the best and are quite content, despite the occasional outburst from Karnack.

Karnack's Goals

Karnack's goals are relatively simple, to be counted among the Demon Lords of Hades and accrue as much power as possible. What Karnack does not realize is that he needs followers to worship him, only then will his supernatural powers truly grow. Magic artifacts alone won't do it. The Eternity Crystal is indeed

a powerful magic item, as are several of the other artifacts he has acquired over the years, but they are not enough. Still, at the very least, he could be considered a Prince, and has the power to back it. His problem is he has not yet caught the attention of anyone powerful enough to care about him. At the moment, Karnack seems content with what he has, but like most evil beings he craves what he does not have.

The possession of the Eternity Crystal, plus the fact that he has several powerful demons at his disposal and his own magic knowledge, makes him a formidable foe. Sure he has not been recognized by Modeus as such and that is Karnack's underlying conflict. He fears that if he reveals his hand the other Demons Lords or even Modeus himself would want the Eternity Crystal for use in the Minion War. Karnack fears losing that edge and is reluctant to stand forward and be recognized. At the very least he might be recognized as a Prince, but for now, Karnack waits for the opportune time.

Unknown to Karnack, a small percentage of the Shedim in the Demon Spine Mountains have taken to worshipping him. If Karnack were to leave his abode more often, he would see this and could fuel the flames of support and spread his influence even farther. However, his paranoia about leaving his castle has hurt him more than he realizes, for a few simple trips to the mountains and a minor display of power would win over hundreds if not thousands of Shedim, propelling him even further towards his goal as a Demon Lord.

Some Notable Characters

Lomak, Quick Stats

Lomak has it good and he knows it. As chief of security he pretty much has run of the place and is in charge. Only Scab and Mox don't pay him any mind, and they are usually around Karnack anyway.

Race: Night Owl.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 17, M.A. 17, P.S. 34 (Supernatural), P.P. 17, P.E. 22 (Supernatural), P.B. 10, Spd 24 running, 140 flying.

M.D.C.: 160. (On S.D.C. worlds Lomak has 82 Hit Points, 50 S.D.C., and A.R. of 11.)

Experience Level: Seventh.

Disposition: A sociopath who loves to torment and play with his prey.

Description: Lomak looks like your typical Night Owl except for the ring (the Ring of Tandem Telepathy) that pierces his ear.

Skills of Note: Intelligence and Track Humanoids at 90%, and Land Navigation 80%.

Weapons and Equipment: None except for the Ring of Tandem Telepathy. He prefers to use his own natural abilities.

Scab, Quick Stats

Fairly loyal as he has been rewarded well in the past, however now with Karnack's near obsession with the crystal and mistreatment of him and Mox, Scab is considering leaving and heading for Demon's Gate for some fun in the Minion War. Mox has the same feelings as well. Both Gallu demons are practically identical as far as stats go.

Race: Gallu Demon Bull.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 16, M.A. 14, P.S. 36 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 20 (Supernatural), P.B. 5, Spd 160.

M.D.C.: 450. (On S.D.C. worlds Scab has 36 Hit Points, 80 S.D.C. and A.R. of 15.)

Experience Level: Seventh.

Disposition: Easy going and laid back, he knows who the boss is and follows orders like a good soldier.

Skills of Note: Land Navigation and Detect Ambush at 85%, W.P. Pole Arm, and W.P. Heavy M.D. Weapons.

Weapons and Equipment: Scab and Mox are equipped with some fancy gear from Karnack. Each wears a suit of gold and blue armor with some pretty heavy weapons. Magic full plate armor that adjusts to the size of the owner. It's energy resistant, taking half damage from most forms of energy (full from magic however), and it regenerates damage at a rate of 1D6 per melee. The suit is somehow bonded with the owner and with a thought, the helmet covers the head almost instantly like liquid metal growing around the head. It takes one melee action to do so. The suit has 300 M.D.C. (300 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 17). Each Gallu is also equipped with a TW Nova Rifle, and a Magic Sabre Halberd which it does 6D6 damage, returns to the owner when thrown, and is lightweight giving the user +2 to strike and parry.

Nax, Quick Stats

Nax is the original Shedim who Karnack made a deal with. Now Nax acts as an intermediary between Karnack and the Shedim in the Demon Spine Mountains.

Race: Shedim.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 12, M.A. 8, P.S. 21 (Supernatural), P.P. 25, P.E. 25 (Supernatural), P.B. 5, Spd 24.

M.D.C.: 140. (On S.D.C. worlds Nax has 49 Hit Points, 40 S.D.C. and A.R. of 12.)

Experience Level: Third.

Disposition: Meticulous and methodical in his patrols around Karnack's lair. He pushes all his Shedim and is pretty much a hard case.

Description: He has a red sash made of some type of tanned skin to denote his rank among Karnack's minions.

Skills of Note: Military Etiquette 50%, W.P. Spear, W.P. Sword.

Weapons and Equipment: All of Karnack's Shedim are equipped with Demon Bone Spears.

Encounters in Lord Karnack's Realm

Since this small area of the Abyss is geographically similar to the Forest of Pain, G.M.s should roll on those encounter tables for terrain and environment. As for demon encounters, roll on the table below. If Lord Karnack or his minions don't know the characters are in the area, then encounters can be rolled once every twenty-four hours. However, if the characters' presence is detected then encounters are likely to occur every ten hours.

01-05% No encounters at all! The characters have either been very lucky, or have hidden very well.

06-10% A hungry Blow Worm. Run!

11-20% 2D4 Demon Bats (or Demon Flies) looking for easy prey.

21-30% 2D4 Shedim loyal to Lord Karnack. They'll take any outsiders to him.

31-40% The characters come across a nest of either 4D6 Fire Worms or Tomb Worms.

41-50% 1D6 flying predators swoop to attack.

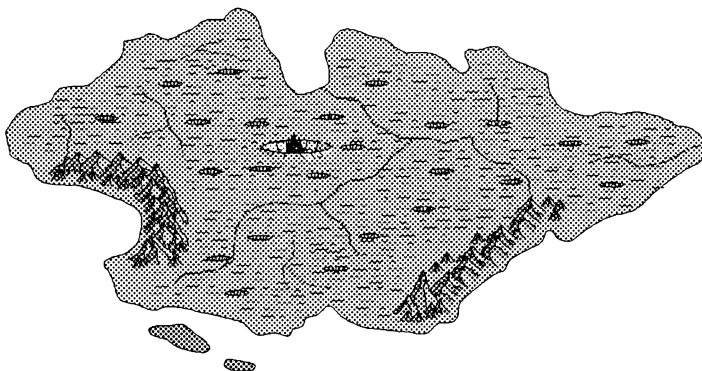
51-60% The characters encounter a light Shedim patrol (roll 1D4). They are either part of Lord Karnack's minions, or a group from the mountains.

61-70% A scouting party of Karnack's minions. It is lead by one of his Night Owls, with six Shedim.

71-80% The characters have come across some (or one) of Karnack's Magots. 1D4 of them are roaming around looking to cause some mischief.

81-90% 1D6 Lasae spies have found the characters. What do they do and who are they spies for? If they are Karnack's then they follow the characters and report on their position. If they are spies for another Demon Lord looking in on Karnack's activities, they'll report to him, and the master might try to use/manipulate the player characters for his own agenda.

91-00% 1D4 Netherbeasts have picked up the characters' trail and are closing in for the kill.



The Fire Flats

Some call it "Hell," others call it the "Pits of Hell." Whatever you call it, the Fire Flats of Hades are such a harsh environment that even slaves are not sent there. Few would survive a week, let alone a lifetime in the Flats.

The third continent of Hades is a barren expanse where the ground constantly rumbles and cracks, Fire Jets are everywhere, and Fire Geysers burst through the ground without warning. Fire Rain constantly falls from the sky in some parts of the Fire Flats, and eventually turns into Fire Tornadoes or Fire Walls. It's the worst of Hades all in one location, with an average temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 C).

Pits of all sizes are scattered all over the land. They look like massive impact craters from some cataclysmic war. Rubble is all around them, and usually within are hundreds if not thousands of demons. Some claw at the sides to get out, while others

have accepted their lot in life. The giant **Magots** who roam the Fire Flats keep a constant vigilance over the demons who are forced to eke out an existence here. Other pits are filled with other things, such as boiling oil, or tar, or lava, and some just have a constant fire like some massive furnace. Still others are bottomless pits – dimensional anomalies at the bottom send people or demons somewhere in the Megaverse, or perhaps just to oblivion, never to be seen or heard from again.

The terrain is hard to cross and there is constant danger. The ground constantly shifts, and then settles just as quickly. It's as if the whole continent is in its death throes. Unstable Fire Jets burn constantly all over the flats, and disappear just as quickly as they burst to life. The same holds true for Fire Geysers, one minute the ground is clear, then all of a sudden you are surrounded by a dozen Fire Geysers gushing lava. Rivers of Lava cut through the continent like raging rivers, always threatening to overflow their banks, bubbling and boiling with heat and activity greater than anywhere else in Hades. The lava moves swiftly, and often rivers swell over their banks, expanding their sizes twofold. Even the mountain ranges constantly grow and burst forth from the ground. Then when they get to a certain height they shatter, and fall into the lava sea below. Peaks that seem to manage to endure often explode from the constant steam that builds up within. Like a cork under pressure, it can only last so long before it pops, only in this case, it is the whole mountain top that explodes, raining bits of rocks and boulders all over the Fire Flats.

It is a frightening land even without its demonic inhabitants, and yet this region of Hades is home to demons – at least those with no other recourse. Thousands would flee given the chance, but often they don't have the mighty wings like a Baal-Rog to cross the fiery seas, and the underground tunnels are too well guarded by Magots to go underground.

Demons of the Fire Flats

Even the demons who reside in the Fire Flats of Hades consider it a living hell. By comparison, the rest of Hades is a paradise where most yearn to live, and be accepted by the other demons. Several million outcasts and the Fallen call the Fire Flats home. Some are allowed to wander around (the least dangerous), while the more unstable are kept in the various pits in the region, like some kind of internment camps. Magots guard the pits so these mutant demons must endure being captive, or else risk being turned to stone by their captors. This gives Succor-Bemoth an unlimited supply of subjects to experiment upon, and it is how he learned that by sacrificing Greater Demons, the Demon Lords could reduce the cost of using their deific powers. The demons in the Flats are forced to endure many tortures, experimentation and suffering at the hands of Succor-Bemoth. His goal: knowledge through the suffering of others. Though truth be told, sometimes he just likes to inflict pain and suffering upon those under his heel. They are the rejects of Hades who he can use as he pleases without consequence for their demise or disposal. The Tauris are found everywhere in the Fire Flats. Several hundred of the strongest are used by Succor-Bemoth as expendable troops, while the weaker ones are the subjects of his experimentation or let to roam free until he should need them. **Note:** For Game Masters who want to introduce one-of-a-kind monsters and weird variant demons of their own, this is where they were probably conceived.

The Fortress of Succor-Bemoth

In the center of the Fire Flats is the largest of the *pits* in the region. Within that pit is Succor-Bemoth's fortress. The fortress is an unusual structure made from black crystal that is very similar to black amethyst. It looks as if it was thrust right out of the ground, and it probably was. Rumors tell of how the fortress can come and go all over the Fire Flats, always appearing in one of the large pits scattered across its surface.

Those who have been inside say that the crystal walls seem clear and in pristine condition. It is always dark and shrouded in shadows, with only the cries of the damned being heard in the darkness. All of the halls are large enough to allow a pair of Magots to travel down them side by side with room to spare. These hideous creatures are all over the fortress and serve Succor-Bemoth at his beck and call.

The crystal fortress is roughly 500 feet (152 m) tall and has numerous towers that end in wicked points, making the structure look like a crown of thorns. Scattered throughout the various towers are large entrances that can accommodate the largest flying demons, and Succor-Bemoth always seems to have a flock or two of Gargoyles at his disposal.

The lower floors are said to be large, cathedral-sized rooms, with the largest being a throne room for Succor-Bemoth to meet with whomever. Below this level, and for several additional levels, is an underground dungeon that is supposed to be large enough to contain thousands of demon (and Dyval) prisoners. Here, beings suffer for what feels like an eternity as they are experimented on, tortured, or just left to rot. The cells are all magically reinforced, so that even a Baal-Rog couldn't break out, and for those with magic abilities, wards that mystically drain their energy prevent them from working magic. For those with other, more unusual powers, Succor-Bemoth will use Splugorth devices like the Mystic Leeches, Living Shackles or debilitating torture.

The Hidden Army

Succor-Bemoth has pledged his support to the Demon Lord, Charun, should he make a bid for the throne of Hades. In anticipation of this, Succor-Bemoth has been preparing an army, not only of Magots, but of the Fallen. Charun, it seems, has a few connections in Splynn, especially with Lord Splynncryth. While the crafty Splugorth won't reveal any of their secrets, Splynncryth has loaned the Demon Lord a dozen Bio-Wizards and a trio of Bio-Wizard vats. One vat is for normal humanoids, and the other two are large enough to fit a Magot! With their help he has managed to augment several "chosen" demons using Splugorth Bio-Wizardry. This should provide a nice edge in any coup attempt. So far, he has augmented one thousand demons. He is keeping this hidden army in waiting and won't reveal them for use in the Minion War. When the time comes, there will be a fresh army ready to conquer the Lord of Hades. The only drawback is their lack of experience. Each demon's abilities are only equal to one to fourth level (roll 1D4 if creating a Bio-Wizard augmented demon) and most only use their newfound powers on a fundamental level. Others have been driven insane by the experiments or the transformation process, and fight driven by instinct or raw emotion.

Below are a few examples of his handiwork. Game Masters wishing to augment demons using Bio-Wizardry should go ahead and have a little fun. However, the demons lose a few levels of past experience as a result and don't regain that experience very quickly. This should be applied to their magic and psionic abilities if they have them. All should have one Random Insanity and one Phobia or Obsession.

Bygone, Quick Stats

Bygone was one of Succor-Bemoth's first experiments. The Magot has several of his attributes boosted, especially his I.Q., armor grafted on to his body, and his size doubled. This Magot is huge, towering over 40 feet (12.2 m) tall!

Race: Augmented Magot.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 16, M.A. 8, P.S. 50 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 22 (Supernatural), P.B. 2, Spd 120 (82 mph/131 km).

Size: 40 feet (12.2 m) tall and weighs 30 tons!

M.D.C.: 5,000. (On S.D.C. worlds Bygone has 300 Hit Points, 200 S.D.C., and an A.R. of 16!)

Experience Level: Third.

Disposition: A bully! Bygone bullies just about everyone he meets, and even tries to stare down Demon Lords. He loves to get people to do things for him and he has taken charge of the Magots in Succor-Bemoth's fortress on his own without any orders from Succor-Bemoth.

Special Powers: Gigantic size, an incredible amount of M.D.C. and increased intelligence. The damage he inflicts is tremendous, as per Supernatural P.S.

Description: A huge Magot towering just over 40 feet (12 m) tall, covered in a black rhinoceros hide!

Skills of Note: Land Navigation 50%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 30%, Detect Ambush 35%, and Intelligence 44%

Weapons and Equipment: None.

Rubiz, Quick Stats

A large Gallu Demon Bull with oversized horns, bulging muscles and giant, black bat wings!

Race: Augmented Gallu Demon Bull.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 13, M.A. 10, P.S. 41 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 20 (Supernatural), P.B. 8, Spd 120 (82 mph/131 km), 77 flying (53 mph/85 km).

Size: 14 feet (4.2 m) and weighs one ton.

M.D.C.: 750. (On S.D.C. worlds Rubiz has 44 Hit Points, 80 S.D.C. and A.R. of 15.)

Experience Level: Third.

Disposition: Not very confident he made the right choice in going through with this process. While it has made him more powerful, he knows that he will never be accepted among his kind again.

Special Powers: Rubiz has had his strength and agility modified. In addition, he has a pair of bat wings like a Baal-Rog, allowing him to fly, and his horns have been greatly increased in size. We're talking on par with a Thorn Head demon.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 48%, Wilderness Survival 45%, W.P. Chain, and W.P. Sword.

Weapons and Equipment: He has been equipped with a standard giant sized Demon Bone long sword, and a suit of bone full plate armor.

Zipit, Quick Stats

Zipit has had a stinger-tail added that does the same damage as his punch, an augmented version of the chemical spray, however he can inject it with one of his various spikes, or the stinger tail, and a set of 8 spider legs which replaces his lower torso.

Race: Augmented Lasae.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 13, M.A. 4, P.S. 11 (Supernatural), P.P. 20, P.E. 15 (Supernatural), P.B. 5, Spd 57 (38 mph/60.8 km).

Size: Two feet tall (0.6 m) and 30 pounds (13.5 m).

M.D.C.: 56, (On S.D.C. worlds he has 25 Hit Points, 18 S.D.C. and A.R. of 13.)

Experience Level: Second.

Disposition: Zipit is a bit used to having a good time and indulging in his own whims. Now he has a measure of responsibility as he is used as a spy and assassin.

Special Powers: A Lasae, but with the lower half of a spider (can scale walls like a spider) and a scorpion tail that can induce paralysis for 2D6+2 melee rounds or pain, and 1D4 points of actual damage (M.D. to Mega-Damage beings, S.D.C. to mortals), but the agony reduces the victim's attacks per melee, bonuses, Spd and skill performance by half; lasts for 2D6 melee rounds, or just a stabbing or slashing attack that does 2D6 M.D. (or S.D.C.). Also, his spikes always seem to ooze some type of putrid chemical that overpowers and negates the scent and tracking abilities of creatures with a keen sense of smell.

Skills of Note: Prowl 80%, Recognize and Use Poison 50%, and Land Navigation 45%.

Weapons and Equipment: He has a small Demon Bone dagger that has the venom blade ability.

Environmental Tables

Fire Flats Weather

The weather is crazy and unpredictable in the Fire Flats and the sky always seems to be opening up with something. Like the terrain table, conditions vary dramatically and Game Masters are advised to roll for every 6D6 hours of travel.

01-10% The calm before the storm! This reprieve will not last long and it's only a matter of time before something begins to rain down.

11-20% Acid Rain. Not very common in the Fire Flats, all acid rain storms are intense, but only last for half their normal duration.

21-60% Fire Rain. It will fall 1D6 times before the next roll (see the 6D6 hours above).

61-70% Fire Storm. Far more intense than Fire Rain, the Fire Storms hit with a fury 1D4 times before the next G.M. roll.

71-80% A Hades Lightning Storm rocks the area.

81-90% A major Fire Storm runs for its normal duration then turns into 1D4 Fire Tornadoes.

91-95% A wave of 1D4 Fire Walls forms. They are all traveling in the same direction and each is the same width, so if one can be avoided they all can. The only saving grace is that each successive wave is weaker than the one before it. Reduce the damage of the second Fire Wall by 25%, the next by 50%, and the last by 75%.

96-00% Roll twice, combining the results and respective durations. At the Game Master's discretion, they can all hit at once or in succession.

Fire Flats Terrain

Traveling in the Fire Flats is no easy task since the terrain will challenge the hardest of adventurers. Conditions can change at a moment's notice, and at random intervals. It is suggested that the Game Master roll for every 4D6 hours in the Fire Flats. This means conditions can change several times daily, or just once per day. In the alternative, the Game Masters can roll at their discretion. The duration of the various ground tremors is 2D10 minutes! The typical radius of the trembling is 1D10 miles (1.6 to 16 km).

01-10% Surprisingly, no changes. Travel should be easy for a while, provided there is no weather or encounters to contend with.

11-40% A minor ground tremble. The ground isn't shaking too badly and it's more of an annoyance than a hindrance. There are no combat penalties, but if this happens during a battle, once per melee the characters should make a Sense of Balance roll to stay on their feet or they fall, losing initiative and one attack next melee. If they don't have Sense of Balance they should roll a D20 under their Physical Prowess at a -2 penalty. Everyone on the ground is affected by these penalties, even demons. Only those flying will not have any problems.

41-60% A major ground tremble. The land is shaking all around and 2D6 giant rocks burst forth from the ground around the characters. If directly over one it will raise the character(s) up 3D10 feet (0.9 to 9.1 m). They will either have to climb or fly down. Jumping characters take normal fall damage. While the ground is shaking all combatants are -2 on all combat bonuses and -1 attack. If knocked down the victim loses initiative and 2 melee attacks the following melee. Sense of Balance rolls should be made every melee at -20%, or roll a D20 under the P.P. attribute at -4.

61-70% A major ground tremble (use penalties listed above), however instead of rocks jutting up from the ground, the ground cracks in several places allowing 3D6 Fire Jets to form and erupt.

71-80% A major ground tremble (use penalties listed above), however 2D6 Fire Geysers burst from the ground and start spewing lava.

81-85% A minor tremble (use penalties listed above) that cracks the ground, releasing gas in the area. Roll for type: 01-33% Steam, same damage as a cloud of steam. 34-66% Sulfur and methane, they smell bad, but otherwise do no harm. 67-00% Harmful gas that if the characters are not careful will suffocate them in 2D4 melees.

86-90% A River of Lava blocks the path of the characters. It varies in width; from 4-40 feet (1.2 to 12.1 m).

91-95% Boiling mud, tar, or acid pits block the characters' way. These are mini pits that vary in size with each being 2D4 feet (0.6 to 2.4 m) across.

96-98% There is an explosion and tremendous rumble as part of a mountain explodes, sending a hail of rocks and hot ash across a 1D4x10 mile (16 to 64 km) radius. Inflicts 2D6 M.D. to everyone caught in its debris field.

99-00% Roll twice, combining the results. For major and minor trembling consider it *minor* and double the duration.

Fire Flats Encounters

The Fire Flats have to be one of the worst places in Hades. There is barely any type of cover or concealment, and demons are everywhere! Danger lurks practically every hour. Travel in this region will by no means be easy and it is suggested that Game Masters roll for encounters every 12 hours! Game Masters, if you're feeling creative you can substitute the Taursis en-



counters for some of your own weird creations, be they monsters or new kinds of demons.

01-05% 2D6 Fire Worms of Taut. Don't know how you did it, but you managed to avoid any contact. Count yourself lucky! Now don't go back.

06-10% 1D6+1 Dire Harpies escaped from Succor-Bemoth's dungeons. They're starving and don't think they are being pursued, so they attack to kill and eat their humanoid prey. All have half their usual P.E. and M.D.C. They fight to the death, figuring it's better than being imprisoned in this Hell.

11-15% 1D4 Pit Vipers, hungry and ready to fight.

16-20% 1D4 Psi-Hawks are on the lookout for a meal. If there are no Worms of Taut, the characters are the next best thing.

21-30% Worms of Taut. There are either 2D4 Fire Worms, Nippers, Tomb Worms, or any combination of the three.

31-35% 1D4 Chimera or other creatures from an alien world are stalking the group, or ambush them!

36-40% 1D4 Brek-Shall. They want weapons and magic, and the player group have what they want. Could substitute with Shedim or a pair of Gallu.

41-50% 1D4 Magots! These creatures roam in herds, so count yourself lucky for encountering so few.

51-60% 1D4+1 Taursis! They are a small group doing a patrol for Succor-Bemoth. If the group proves too powerful they will retreat to report the trespass.

61-65% 1D4 Greater Demons. They are either here on Succor-Bemoth's behalf or for one of the other Demon Lords.

66-70% 1D4 Lesser Demons, the Fallen or Deevils run toward the player group screaming for help. What pursues them? Could be 1D4+3 servants of Succor-Bemoth (any demons) who wants them back for more gruesome experimentation, 1D4 hungry Netherbeasts (any), or a pair of Succor-Bemoth's augmented demon warriors sent out on a little field test.

71-75% A hungry mob of 4D4 Ghouls who can't wait till the next person drops dead, so they attack the living. They'll fight until half of them are slain.

76-80% A Magot and 1D6 Taursis on patrol. They'll want to bring outsiders to Succor-Bemoth's lair for questioning. *Run.*

81-90% Escaped demonic monsters! Prisoners of Succor-Bemoth who have escaped. They are willing to work with the characters; however they will betray them in a heartbeat if it helps them in any way. The number of escaped demons is 1D6.

91-00% A herd of Magots! There are 1D4x10 heading in the characters' general direction. If they're lucky and they engage the Magots, they will only be captured and not slain or turned into stone!

The Hades Underground

The Domain of Mictla

Hades has a vast network of subterranean tunnels that reach just about *every place* in Hades. As one would expect, travel

here is just as treacherous, if not more so, than on the surface. While there is no weather to fear, there are still all kinds of dangers and creatures lurking in the dark. For the most part, the tunnels are forgotten and unused, at least by the countless demons that live on the surface. Only Demon Bats, Demon Flies, Ghouls, and countless *Worms of Taut* roam the passageways freely. And there are lots and lots of Worms of Taut, from Blow Worms and Serpent Beasts to Nippers, Tomb Worms and all the rest. The occasional Ant Lion, Pit Viper, Sand Worm or Netherbeast also prowl the tunnels, and it is said that some exiled demons and dimensional travelers make their homes hidden away in the Underground. However they must remain well hidden to escape the clutches of Mictla the Devourer, and the many Worms of Taut, both of whom will eat anything they find in the tunnels!

The tunnels vary in structure, from natural caves filled with stalagmites and stalactites, to lava tubes which are usually smooth tunnels with few outcroppings. Dwarves and other subterranean races would feel at home underground in Hades, because there are few features that are not like any other underground dwelling. Thousands of enriched mineral veins can be found anywhere and are probably worth a fortune, from gold and platinum to gemstones of all kinds. Unfortunately it will remain untapped as long as Mictla lives in these dreaded tunnels.

The majority of the tunnels seem to collect runoff from the surface, giving them a layer of muck on the ground. Rarely does one find just water. Numerous chemicals are released all the time, and Hades is a very active place with tectonic shifts and ever-changing lava flows. Toxic gasses can condense into liquids, find their way to the surface and be released, or just collect in underground chambers waiting for some unsuspecting victim. Some are even volatile and are, in effect, ticking time bombs. If there's a spark to set them off, well, there won't be much left of whoever ignites it.

Mictla's Parlor

Hidden somewhere deep in the Underground, probably in a location that corresponds to the Infernal Crown, is Mictla's parlor. The cavern is enormous, at least several miles in diameter, and hundreds of feet in height. Hanging from the ceiling are very large stalactites. In the center of the cavern is a pool of water a mile (1.6 km) in radius. It's not very deep, with the outer edge only 1-3 feet (0.3 to 0.9 m) deep, double that towards the center. The water is heated by the geothermal energy of Hades and has a mix of chemicals that makes it oily and slick. Here, Mictla spends the majority of her time relaxing in her hot spring of toxic chemicals and devouring mortals, demons, and whatever comes her way. There are at least a dozen caves in the sides of the walls where Mictla keeps her prisoners/food stock. She covers the entrances with a mucus membrane that traps her prisoners in the cave. The membrane is pretty tough and has 20 M.D.C. She can reach into these caves at will, and pull out her next meal. While she doesn't collect much in the way of treasure, there is a cave devoted to holding all the items that she can't digest. So there are mounds of corroding weapons, rusting suits of armor, large bones, gold coins, and even some magic items.

Terrain Table for the Hades Underground

Traveling underground is a dangerous ordeal and may be as dangerous as traveling on the surface. Game Masters can roll at their discretion on the terrain table as this could dictate the path that the characters take, or you can pick and choose what works best for you. Also note that while similar to the terrain table in the Sulfur Pits, the region of the Sulfur Pits is a unique part of Hades that shares numerous traits with the Hades underground in general.

01-10% No problems so far, and there are no major obstacles blocking the way, allowing for easy travel.

11-20% Waist high sludge. Speed is reduced by 75% as the characters have to trudge through a combination of tar and acid water. Fortunately the water is thinned out enough not to cause any damage. Fighting in these conditions is difficult, imposing a -2 penalty to all combat bonuses and -1 attack.

21-30% A cave full of toxic gas blocks the players' path. The cavern is large (1D4x1000 feet/305 to 1219 m across) and visibility is limited to about 50 feet (15 m). Unless breathing gear is available, crossing is impossible. Finding a different route around may be necessary.

31-40% A vertical drop or climb. Roll: *01-50%* vertical climb, *51-100%* vertical drop. The tunnel either climbs or drops and it presents an obstacle that the characters will have to navigate. Like a waterfall, some type of slime is flowing over the falls. Because of the slippery conditions there is a -15% climbing/rappelling penalty.

41-50% A underground sea of: *01-25%* Tar, *26-50%* Acid Water, *51-75%* Phlegm, *76-100%* Lava. It may be possible to traverse via magic, or with a Thorn Tree Wood boat. Whatever the choice, the sea only extends for 1D6 miles (1.6 to 9.6 km). Several days of travel could be saved by going over the sea, otherwise it will take 2D4 days to go around.

51-60% The tunnel the characters are in opens into a massive cavern that is 1D10 miles (1.6 to 16 km) across. It is riddled with stalactites and stalagmites. The terrain is pretty easy to cross, but there are dozens of places for an ambush!

61-65% Fire Jets riddle the passage ahead. Each blows at different intervals and if the characters don't time it right, they can get roasted. Fire Jets either appear out of the ground, or blowing out of the sides of the cave, like some evil dungeon trap.

66-70% An exit tunnel. It leads to the surface somewhere.

71-80% A good size cavern, but it has a field of Fire Geysers. There are also 2D4 small rivers of lava, but not anything that the characters can't jump over.

81-85% Underground River of: *01-25%* Sludge, *26-50%* Tar, *51-75%* Acid Water, *76-100%* Lava. The only way to cross is by hopping from rocks that are protruding above the stuff. The players will have to cross 2D4 protruding rocks to get across. The distance will vary, but the players should be able to leap across.

86-90% A fissure that is 1D4x1000 feet (305 to 1219 m) across blocks the players path. There are several narrow paths

that the players can cross and all are equally dangerous. Each path is no more than two feet (0.6 m) at their widest and can be as small as half a foot (0.15 m) across! The players will have to make several Sense of Balance rolls, and if they don't have the skill can roll under their P.P. to cross safely.

91-94% Chasm. The path the characters is on turns into a massive chasm. There is only a small ledge for the characters to traverse. Roll 2D4 feet (0.6 to 2.4 m).

95-96% Dead end. Several hours have been wasted as now the characters must turn around and retrace their steps. Dead ends can lead to all kinds of encounters. They could be the lair of some monster or demon or just end at some type of impassible obstacle like a sea of lava, a bottomless pit, or even a cave-in.

97-99% A small spring spouting fresh, clean water is found! Fresh water is extremely rare. Stock up while you can.

100% An underground river is found. The waters are moving swiftly and anyone caught in the water will easily be carried away. Crossing will be difficult at best, and it may be wise to find another way around. There is a 01-60% chance that the water is undrinkable and full of chemical impurities.

Hades Underground Encounters

Game Masters may wish to consult the encounter table under the *Sulfur Pits* as those are the most likely creatures to be found in the Hades Underground. However, from time to time, creatures get Rifted in, or Succor-Bemoth unleashes his latest experiment, so Game Masters, feel free to get creative with your choice of encounters.

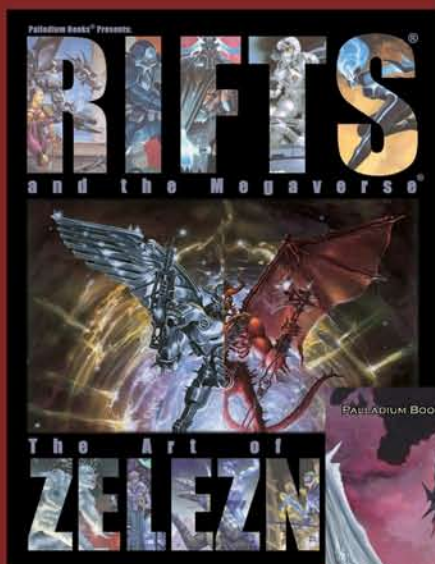
The Islands of Hades

The few islands found around Hades are pretty much no man's lands. The islands to the east are a tropical paradise, and their mountains hold vast reserves of fresh water. Few demons live on these islands because they get a lot of rain and they are deserted (mostly), so there's nothing to do there.

The islands on the western side are also unoccupied as well. They are pretty much forgotten and unused by demons, so they have become havens for runaway slaves. At one point, the larger island had a grand Necropolis, however Succor-Bemoth must have pillaged it long ago as all that remains is a shattered ruin made of black amethyst.

The northern islands are flat, barren wastelands. Lava constantly oozes out of several vents. The islands are reshaped daily as lava flows expand the island at some points and cause others to sink back into the fiery sea. No life could survive there for long.

All but one of the islands to the south are also uninhabited. The only occupant is the **Demon Lord Mormo**. He has quite an elaborate castle constructed of Blood Marble and Black Granite that seems to sit in the middle of a graveyard. Thousands of his Ghouls and Nasu occupy the island guarding his abode, keeping it safe. These days he is rarely on Hades as he is having too much of a good time on the Palladium World. The only time he returns is at the request of Modeus or Andras, or when he is plotting against Murmur.



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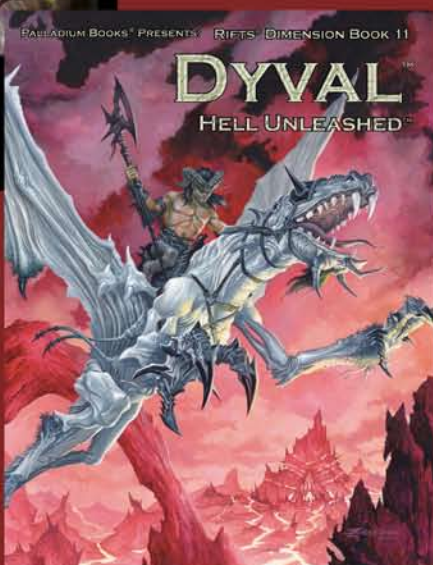
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