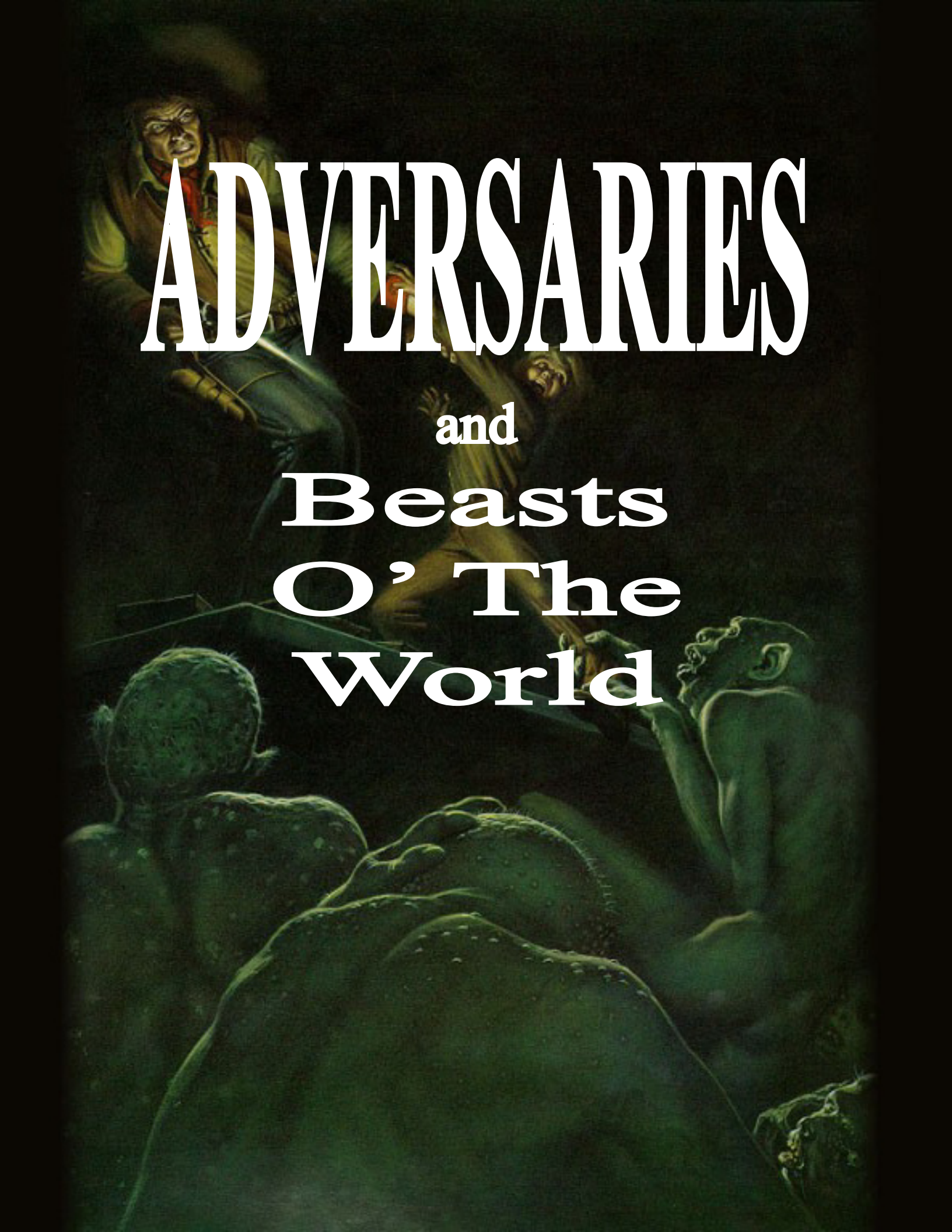




ADVERSARIES

and

Beasts O' The World

I once knew a fella named George Kelso, who worked for the Bangor Public Works Department. He spent fifteen years fixing water mains and mending electricity cables and all that, an' then one day he just sat up an' quit, not two years before his retirement. Frankie Haldeman, who knew him, said George went down into a sewer pipe on Essex laughing and joking just like always and came up fifteen minutes later with his hair just as white as snow and his eyes staring like he just looked through a window into hell. He walked straight down to the BPW garage and punched his clock and went down to Wally's Spa and started drinking. It killed him two years later. Frankie said he tried to talk to him about it and George said something one time, and that was when he was pretty well blotto. Turned around on his stool, George did, an' asked Frankie Haldeman if he'd ever seen a spider as bit as a good-sized dog setting in a web full of kitties an' such all wrapped up in silk thread. Well, what could he say to that? I'm not saying that there's any truth in it, but I am saying that there's things in the corners of the world that would drive a man insane to look 'em right in the face.

"How big is the desert?"

"Big." Kennerly endeavored to look serious. "Maybe three hundred miles. Maybe a thousand. I can't tell you, mister. There's nothing out there but devil-grass and maybe demons. That's the way the other fella went. The one who fixed up Norty when he was sick."

"Sick? I heard he was dead."

Kennerly kept grinning. "Well, well. Maybe. But we're growed-up men, ain't we?"

"But you believe in demons."

Kennerly looked affronted. "That's a lot different."

CREATURES OF THE PRIM



Can Tam (Doctor bugs)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1	2	5	3	8	1	1	1	1

Now clattering bugs came pouring out from under the table. They were of a sort Roland had seen before, and any doubts he might have held about what was behind that tapestry departed at the sight of them. They were parasites, blood-drinkers, camp-followers: Grandfather-fleas. Probably not dangerous while there was a bumbler present, but of course when you spied the little doctors in such numbers, the Grandfathers were never far behind.

Oy took no notice of Jake's cry. He crunched three of the bugs in rapid succession, the crackle of their breaking carapaces gruesomely clear in the new stillness. He made no attempt to eat them but simply tossed the corpses, each the size of a mouse, into the air with a snap of the neck and a grinning release of the jaws.

And the others retreated back under the tables.

He was made for this, *Callahan thought*. Perhaps once in the long-ago all bumlbers were. Made for it the way some breeds of terrier are made to—

A hoarse shout from behind the tapestry interrupted these thoughts: "Humes!" one voice cried, and then a second: "Ka-humes!"

Fight Bonus: -1d6

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d2

Armor:

1 HP (shell)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Mid-World, any

Move: 5

HP: 1

Sanity Loss: 0 (single bug); 1/1d3 (swarm)

Powers of the Red:

Knit

Empathic Vampire

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
16	20	15	15	20+	*	10*	12	3+

It had come here long after the Turtle withdrew into its shell, here to Earth, and It had discovered a depth of imagination here that was almost new, almost of concern. This quality of imagination made the food very rich. Its teeth rent flesh gone stiff with exotic terrors and voluptuous fears; they dreamed of nightbeasts and moving mounds; against their will they contemplated endless gulphs.

Upon this rich food It existed in a simple cycle of waking to eat and sleeping to dream.

An empathic vampire's size in the physical world is normal human range in human or monstrous form (11-14). In the todash-like dimension of the Deadlights, its Size is equal to its Anima.

An empathic vampire's human form is generally unattractive, though not repulsive. Unlike the Can-toi, they can pass unnoticed among humans, even at close range. In monstrous form, their Appearance drops to 1.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

varies

Armor:

3 HP (carapace)

Skills:

Persuade 90%

Psychology 75%

Habitat: End-World, any

Move: 8+

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3+1*

*when seen in monstrous form

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Sup

Glam

Dim

Telepathy

Guardian Knight

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
24	19	6	8	8	18+	1	8	2

Standing on the other side of the drop-gate was a figure in blackish, rusty armor. Its cylindrical helmet was broken only by a black horizontal eye-slit no more than an inch wide. The helmet was topped by a frowzy red plume—white bugs squirmed in and out of it. They were the same sort, Jason saw, as those which had come out of the walls first in Albert the Blob's room and then all over Thayer School. The helmet ended in a coif of mail which draped the rusty knight's shoulders like a lady's stole.

Its armored fists were crazy with spikes.

The spike-studded hands came up and grasped either side of the cylindrical helmet. They lifted it slowly off, disclosing the livid, haggard face of a man who looked at least three hundred years old. One side of this ancient's head had been bashed in. Splinters of bone like broken eggshell poked out through the skin, and the wound was caked with some black goop which Jason supposed was decayed brains. It was not breathing, but the red-rimmed eyes which regarded Jason were sparkling and hellishly avid. It grinned, and Jason saw the needle-sharp teeth with which this horror would rip him to pieces.

It clanked unsteadily forward... but that wasn't the only sound. He looked to his left, toward the main hall.

(lobby)

of the castle

(hotel)

and say a second knight, this one wearing the shallow, bowl-shaped head-guard known as the Great Helm. Behind it were a third... and a fourth. They came slowly down the corridor, moving suits of ancient armor which now housed vampires of some sort.

Then the hands seized him by the shoulders. The blunt spikes on the gloves slid into his shoulders and arms. Warm blood flowed and the livid, wrinkled face drew into a horrid hungry grin. The cubitieres at the elbows screeched and wailed as the dead knight drew the boy toward itself.

And as the armored hands drew him up and up, he felt freezing cold, as if all the winters that were had somehow combined, had somehow become one winter... and that river of frigid air was now pouring out of that empty helmet.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Melee weapon 75%

Grapple 50%, 1d3 + special*

Armor:

10 HP (armor)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Thin places

Move: 6

HP: 38+

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3 + 1

*If a Guardian Knight succeeds at two consecutive grapples, it can pick a victim up and drain 1d6 Anima per round.

Powers of the Red:

Animation

Sup

Fascinate

Telepathy

Haunted Machine

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
6+	10+	8	3	8+	10+	-	0	2

"Let me tell you about something that happened two years ago in Milton," the inspector said. He took off his glasses and began to polish them slowly on his vest. "Fella had parked an old ice-box out in his backyard. The woman who called us said her dog had been caught in it and suffocated. We got the state policeman in the area to inform him it had to go to the town dump. Nice enough fella, sorry about the dog. He loaded it into his pickup and took it to the dump the next morning. That afternoon a woman in the neighborhood reported her son missing."

"God," Hunton said.

"The icebox was at the dump and the kid was in it, dead. A smart kid, according to his mother. She said he'd no more play in an empty icebox than he would take a ride with a strange man. Well, he did. We wrote it off. Case closed?"

"I guess," Hunton said.

"No. The dump caretaker went out next day to take the door off the thing. City Ordinance No. 58 on the maintenance of public dumping places." Martin looked at him expressionlessly.

"He found six dead birds inside. Gulls, sparrows, a robin. And he said the door closed on his arm while he was brushing them out. Gave him a hell of a jump. That mangler at the Blue Ribbon strikes me like that, Hunton. I don't like it."

"The demon is caught in that piece of machinery. But give it a chance and—"

"It could get out?"

"It would love to get out," Jackson said grimly. "And it likes to kill."

"Holy water wouldn't stop it?"

"A demon called up in conjunction with the hand of glory could eat a stack of Bibles for breakfast. We would be in bad trouble messing with something like that at all. Better to pull the goddamn thing apart."

In the dens north of the desert, men still live among the machines that usually don't work, or that eat men when they do...

Fight Bonus: varies

Weapons:

Varies; 65%, 1d4 + FB

Armor:

1-6 HP (metal body)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Any

Move: *

HP: varies

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

A haunted machines with an Anima of 15 or more can change shape and move itself at a speed of 12.

Powers of the Red:

Clairvoyance

Fascinate

Timoh-lach

Animation

Hell Hound

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
17	24	17	8	15	20	3	6	2

All Doc can see clearly are two red eyes and an open red mouth with a long tongue and a lot of sharp canine teeth. Everything else is smudgy and indistinct, with no more definition than if it were covered in a swirling cape.

When Doc looks into the open red gash, his resolve weakens, his arms get heavier, and he is scarcely capable of holding his head upright. He feels as though he is falling down into that red maw; his pistol dangles from his limp hand.

The weird animal up on the road closes its jaws on Mouse's leg. It is going to rip away a hamburger-sized chunk of muscle, but Sonny hits it with a fucking hollow-point missile from his Magnum, a bit show-offy for target practice but under the circumstances no more prudent, thank you very much. Contrary to all expectations and the laws of physics, Sonny's amazing wonderbullet does not knock a hole the size of a football in the creature's hide. The wonderbullet pushes the animal sideways and distracts it from Mouse's leg; it does not even knock it down.

Dark blood gouts from the creature's brisket. At the center of Sonny Cantinaro's being, a pure, primitive triumph bursts into life. More of the monster melts into visibility, the wide back and a suggestion of its rear legs. Of no recognizable breed and four and a half feet high, the dog-thing is approximately the size of a gigantic wolf.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 1d4+1+FB

Armor:

8 HP (shadow-hide)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Black Houses, any

Move: 16

HP: 22

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3 + 1

Powers of the Red:

Fear

Disease

House Spider

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1	1	19	12	6	1	1	8	1

Something fell into his hair with a flabby thump. Jake screamed in surprise, reached for it, and grasped something that felt like a soft, bristle-covered rubber ball. He pulled it free and saw it was a spider; its bloated body the color of a fresh bruise. Its eyes regarded him with stupid malevolence. Jake threw it against the wall. It broke open and splattered there, legs twitching feebly.

Another one dropped onto his neck. Jake felt a sudden painful bite just below the place where his hair stopped. He ran backward into the hall, tripped over the fallen banister, fell heavily, and felt the spider pop. Its innards—wet, feverish, and slippery—slid between his shoulder-blades like warm egg-yoke. Now he could see other spiders in the kitchen doorway. Some hung on almost invisible silken threads like obscene plumb-bobs; others simply dropped on the floor in a series of muddy plops and scuttered eagerly over to greet him.

Jake flailed to his feet, still screaming. He felt something in his mind, something that felt like a frayed rope, starting to give way. He supposed it was his sanity, and at that realization, Jake's considerable courage finally broke. He could bear this no longer, no matter what the stake. He bolted, meaning to flee if he still could, and realized too late that he had turned the wrong way and was running deeper into The Mansion instead of back toward the porch.

It was a large black spider hanging on a thread. Jack looked up and saw its web in one of the stilled overhead fans, tangled in a dirty snarl between the hardwood blades. The spider's body was bloated. Jack could see its eyes. He couldn't remember ever having seen a spider's eyes before. Jack began to edge around the hanging spider towards the tables. The spider turned at the end of its thread, following him.

"Fushing feel!" it suddenly squealed at him.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1 + special*

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Haunted houses, etc.

Move: 10

HP: 1

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3

Powers of the Red:

Disease*

Telepathy

*A house spider's bite causes painful red swelling around the wound, as well as a high fever. Unless preventative measures like Keflex or stronger medicines are used, the victim's condition will worsen each day until dead.

Little Sister

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
19	22	18	17	21	11	18*	15	3

The five were dressed in billowing habits as white as the walls and the panels of the ceiling. Their antique crones' faces were framed in wimples just as white, their skin as grey and runnelled as droughted earth by comparison. Hanging like phylacteries from the bands of silk imprisoning their hair (if they indeed had hair) were lines of tiny bells which chimed as they moved or spoke. Upon the snowy breasts of their habits was embroidered a blood-red rose... the sigil of the Dark Tower.

The one in the centre stepped forward, and as she did, their faces seemed to shimmer like the silk walls of the ward. They weren't old after all, he saw—middle-aged, perhaps, but not old.

Yes. They are old. They changed.

The one who now took charge was taller than the others, and with a broad, slightly bulging brow. She bent towards Roland, and the bells which fringed her forehead tinkled. The sound made him feel sick, somehow, and weaker than he had felt a moment before. Her hazel eyes were intent. Greedy, mayhap. She touched his cheek for a moment, and a numbness seemed to spread there. Then she glanced down, and a look which could have been disquiet cramped her face. She took her hand back.

"Ye wake, pretty man. So ye do. 'Tis well."

"Who are you? Where am I?"

"We are the Little Sisters of Eluria," she said. "I am Sister Mary. Here is Sister Louise, and Sister Michela, and Sister Coquina—"

'And Sister Tamra,' said the last. 'A lovely lass of one-and-twenty.' She giggled. Her face shimmered, and for a moment she was again as old as the world.

'Unless it's been blessed or dipped in some sect's holy wet—blood, water, semen—it can't harm such as I, gunslinger. For I am more shade than substance... yet still the equal to such as yerself, for all that.'

The touch of her flesh was obscene—it seemed not just alive but various beneath his hands, as if it was trying to crawl away from him. He could feel it running like liquid, flowing, and the sensation was horrible beyond description.

Those of the Dark Bells can control the can tam with 90% success.

*If seen with glammer off, Appearance is 3.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Bite* 50%, 1d4 + blood drain

Claws 50%, 1d4 + FB

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scent blood 75%

Habitat: Out-World, On-World

Move: 10

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: 0/1d4 to be attacked;
1/1d3 to witness a transformation

*drains 1d6 Strength and 1d3
Anima from target each round

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Levitate

Sup

Glam

Dim

Telepathy

Timoh-lach

Speaking Demon

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
14	-	15	8	20+	15	-	5	2

There was a hole in the wall now, a hole as big as a coin. He could hear, through the curtain of his own terror, Jake's pattering feet as the boy ran. Then the spill of sand stopped. The groaning ceased, but there was a sound of steady, labored breathing.

"Who are you?" The gunslinger asked.

No answer.

And in the High Speech, his voice filling with the old thunder of command, Roland demanded: "Who are you, Demon? Speak, if you would speak. My time is short; my hands lose patience."

There was a ring of tall, black stones which looked like some sort of surreal animal-trap in the moonlight. In the center was a table of stone . . . an altar. Very old, rising out of the ground on a powerful arm of basalt.

He knew well enough that the spirit of the stone circle was surely a demon, and very likely an oracle as well. A demon with no shape, only a kind of unformed sexual glare with the eye of prophesy.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Hook 50%, 1d3 + FB

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Any (Speaking Rings)

Move: 16

HP: *

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

*A demon drained of its Anima is disincorporated and essentially destroyed.

Powers of the Red:

Clairvoyance

Telepathy

Sup

Fascinate

Timoh-lach

Glam

Prophesy

Taheen

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
17	15	14	12	15	18	5	10	3

“Now come Gilead’s ka-mais!” shouted an excited, nervous voice. Not a human one, of that Callahan was almost positive. It was too buzzy to be human. Callahan saw what appeared to be some sort of monstrous bird-human hybrid standing at the far end of the room. It wore straight-leg jeans and a plain white shirt, but the head rising from that shirt was painted with sleek feathers of dark yellow. Its eyes looked like drops of liquid tar.

Taheen, under ordinary circumstances, could send and receive some very simple mental communications, but not be progged.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d4

Claw 50%, 1d3 + FB

Armor:

none

Skills:

Habitat: Earth, Out-World, End-World

Move: 10

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3

Powers of the Red:

Telepathy (minor)

Type One Vampire (Grandfather)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
22	25	15	19	30	14	3	18	8

*Then the ancient ones who had been at their own sup
tore aside the obscene tapestry and burst out, shrieking through
the great fangs that propped their deformed mouths forever
open. Their eyes were as black as blindness, the skin of their
cheeks and brows—even the backs of their hands—tumerous
with wild teeth. Like the vampires in the dining room, they were
surrounded by auras, but these were of a poisoned violet so dark
it was almost black. Some sort of ichor dribbled from the corners
of their eyes and mouths. They were gibbering and several were
laughing; seeming not to create the sounds but rather to snatch
them out of the air like something that could be rent alive.*

*And Callahan knew them. Of course he did. Had he not
been sent hence by one of their number? Here were the true
vampires, the Type Ones, kept like a secret and now loosed on
the intruders.*

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 2d4 + FB + blood drain*

Claw 50%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scent blood: 50%

Habitat: Any

Move: 10

HP: 20

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

*drains 2d4+1 Strength and 2d3
Anima from target each round

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Command

Sleep

Sup

Timoh-lach

Glam

Dim

Telepathy

Type Two Vampire

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
19	18	18	10	20	13	12	14	5

"I believe there are at least three types of vampires at work in our world. I call them Types One, Two, and Three. Type Ones are rare. Barlow was a Type One. They live very long lives, and may spend extended periods—fifty years, a hundred, maybe two hundred—in deep hibernation. When they're active, they're capable of making new vampires, what we call the undead. These undead are Type Twos. They are also capable of making new vampires, but they aren't cunning." He looked at Eddie and Susannah.

"Have you ever seen Night of the Living Dead?"

Susannah shook her head. Eddie nodded.

"The undead in that movie were zombies, utterly brain-dead. Type Twos are more intelligent than that, but not much. They can't go out during the daylight hours. If they try, they are blinded, badly burned, or killed. Although I can't say for sure, I believe their life-spans are usually short. Not because the change from living and human to undead and vampire shortens life, but because the existences of Type Two vampires are extremely perilous.

"In most cases—this is what I believe, not what I know—Type Two vampires create other Type Two vampires, in a relatively small area. By this phase of the disease—and it is a disease—the Type One vampire, the king vampire, has usually moved on."

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d4 + blood drain*

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scent blood: 75%

Habitat: Any urban

Move: 8

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3+1

*drains 1d6 Strength and 1d3 Anima from target each round

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Sup

Type Three Vampire

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
10	8	8	5	15	10	7	5	2

Scattered among them, all less fleshy than the low folken and some as slender as fencing weapons, their complexions ashy and their bodies surrounded in dim blue auras, were what had to be vampires.

“In other cases, Type Twos create Type Threes. Type Threes are like mosquitoes. They can’t create more vampires, but they can feed. And feed. And feed.”

“But of course Type Ones like Barlow are very rare, and Type Twos don’t last long. Their very hunger undoes them. They’re always ravenous. Type Threes, however, can go out in daylight. And they take their principal sustenance from food, just as we do.”

“Unless the vampire’s a real guzzler, the marks go in a hurry. But I knew. It was no good asking him who he’d been with, or when, or where. Vampires, even Type Threes—especially Type Threes, maybe—have their protective devices. Pond-leeches secrete an enzyme in their saliva that keeps the blood flowing while they’re feeding. It also numbs the skin, so unless you actually see the thing on you, you don’t know what’s happening. With these Type Three vampires, it’s as if they carry a kind of selective, short-term amnesia in their saliva.”

Fight Bonus: 0

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d4 + blood drain*

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scent blood: 50%

Habitat: Any urban

Move: 10

HP: 9

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3+1

*drains 1d6 Strength and 1d3 Anima from target each round

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Sup

Zombie (Red-borne)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
9	10	5	3	0	*	5	2	0

The man's face not just being devoid of expression, you understand, but seemingly devoid of muscle tension as well. It had probably always been a long face, but now it seemed absurdly long, almost like a face glimpsed in one of those trick carnival mirrors. It hung off his skull like dough hanging from the lip of a mixing bowl. Beside me, I heard Roger draw his breath in. He told me later that at first he thought we were looking at a case of Alzheimer's, but I believe that was a lie.

"He's undead," she corrected. "He's a zombie. What's keeping him at least partly alive is my psychic force. When I'm gone, he'll fall over. Not that he'll know or care, God bless him."

"Norv," she said, and when he didn't look at her she said something short and guttural. Uhlahg! is what it sounded like. Whatever it was, it worked. He stared around. "Open your shirt, Norv."

"No," Roger said uneasily. "That's okay, we don't need to—"

"I think you do," she said. "Going back on the train, your normal way of thinking is going to reassert itself and you'll start doubting everything I just told you. This, though...this'll stick to your ribs." Then, even more sharply: "Uhlahg!"

Mr. Keen unbuttoned his shirt, slowly but steadily. He pulled it open, exposing his gray tideless chest. Running down the center of it was a horrifying bloodless wound like a long vertical mouth. In it we could see the gray and bony bar of his sternum.

Fight Bonus: 0

Weapons:

none

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Any

Move: 4

HP: 10

Sanity Loss: 1/1d8

*Size is equal to the zombie's original form.

Zombie (Spontaneous)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
16	16	7	2	5	var	1	2	0

No big deal, at least, until they started to come out in other places, as well. No big deal until the first news film ('You may want to ask your children to leave the room,' Tom Brokaw introduced gravely) showed up on network TV, decayed monsters with naked bone showing through their dried skin, traffic accident victims, the morticians' concealing make-up sloughed away so that the ripped faces and bashed-in skulls showed, women with their hair teased into dirt-clogged beehives where worms and beetles still squirmed and crawled, their faces alternately vacuous and informed with a kind of calculating, idiotic intelligence. No big deal until the first horrible stills in an issue of People magazine that had been sealed in shrink-wrap and sold with an orange sticker that read NOT FOR SALE TO MINORS!

Then it was a big deal.

On the Pulsifers' satellite-assisted TV, more dead people got up and walked, but now there was a crucial change. In the beginning the zombies had only bitten living people who got too close, but in the weeks before the Pulsifers' high-tech Sony started showing only broad bands of snow, the dead folks started trying to get close to the living folks.

They had, it seemed, decided they liked what they were biting.

So he told her, perhaps because he had to tell someone or go mad, but he glossed over the worst parts. He told her that they had chain-sawed the corpses that absolutely refused to return to the land of the dead, but he did not tell her that some parts had continued to squirm—hands with no arms attached to them clutching mindlessly, feet divorced from their legs digging at the bullet-chewed earth of the graveyard as if trying to run away—and that these parts had been doused with diesel fuel and set afire. Maddie did not have to be told this part. She had seen the pyre from the house.

When there was nothing left but a stinking, tallowy lump (and still there were occasional bulges in this mass, like twitches in a tired muscle), Matt Arsenault fired up his old D-9 Caterpillar—above the nicked steel blade and under his faded pillowtick engineer's cap, Matt's face had been as white as cottage cheese—and plowed the whole hellacious mess under.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Bite 30%, 1d3

Armor:

none*

Skills:

Pursue Human Flesh 99%

Habitat: World Next Door

Move: 6

HP: 14-15

Sanity Loss: 1/1d8

Powers of the Red:

Animation

Sup

*Impaling weapons inflict 1 point of damage. All other weapons inflict half normal damage (round down).

CREATURES OF Tahken

Goddam different was what he kept coming back to. What they both kept coming back to. Everything about it screamed that it wasn't from here, here meaning not just the Short Hills but all of Planet Earth. Maybe the entire universe, at least as C-students in science such as themselves understood that concept. It was as if some warning circuit buried deep in their heads had suddenly awakened and begun to wail.

Arky was thinking of spiders. Not because the thing in the corner looked like a spider; but because... well... spiders were different. All those legs—and you had no idea what they might be thinking, or how they could even exist. This thing was like that, only worse. It made him sick just to look at it, to try and make sense of what his eyes said they were seeing. His skin had gone clammy, his heart was missing beats, and his guts seemed to have gained weight. He wanted to run. To just turn tail and stampede out of there.

Cyclops Bat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
4	10	16	2	7	2	0	1	1

The thing in the corner was the size of a very large bat, like the ones that roosted in Miracle Caves over in Lassburg or the so-called Wonder Cavern (guided tours three dollars a head, special family rates available) in Pogus City. Its wings hid most of its body. They weren't folded but lay in messy overlapping crumples, as if it had tried to fold them—and failed—before it died. The wings were either black or a very dark mottled green. What they could see of the creature's back was a lighter green. The stomach area was a cheesy whitish shade, like the gut of a rotted stump or the throat of a decaying swamp-lily. The triangular head was cocked to one side. A bony thing that might have been a nose or a beak jutted from the eyeless face. Below it, the creature's mouth hung open. A yellowish rope of tissue dangled from it, as if the thing had been regurgitating its last meal as it died. Huddie took one look and knew he wouldn't be eating any more macaroni and cheese for awhile.

Beneath the corpse, spread around its hindquarters, was a thin puddle of congealing black goo. The idea that any such substance could serve as blood made Huddie feel like crying out.

He thought: I won't touch it. I'd kill my own mother before I'd touch that thing.

He was still thinking that when a long wooden rod slid into his peripheral vision. He gave a little shriek and flinched back. "Arky, don't!" he yelled, but it was too late. Later on, Arky was unable to say just why he had prodded the thing in the corner—it was simply some strong urge to which he had given in before he was completely aware of what he was doing. When the end of the rake-handle touched the place where the wings were crumpled across each other, there was a sound like rustling paper and a bad smell, like old stewed cabbage. The two of them barely noticed. The top of the thing's face seemed to peel back, revealing a dead and glassy eye that looked as big as a factory ball bearing.

And they took pictures of the corpse in the corner, took them from every angle they could think of. Every Polaroid showed that unspeakable single eye. It was shiny, like fresh tar. Seeing himself reflected in it made Sandy Dearborn feel like screaming.

"Whatever that thing is—bird, bat, some kind of robot drone—it flew out of the trunk when the lid came open. It hit the back door, that's the first smudge, and then it started bouncing off the walls. Ever seen a bird that gets caught in a shed or a barn?"

Fight Bonus: 0

Weapons:

Bone spur 35%, 1d2

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Earthquake country

Move: fl. 20

HP: 4-6

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

Great One

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
17+	15	15	5	18+	?	1	4	3

A tentacle came over the far lip of the concrete loading platform and grabbed Norm around the calf. My mouth dropped wide open. Ollie made a very short glottal sound of surprise—uk! The tentacle tapered from a thickness of a foot—the size of a grass snake—at the point where it had wrapped itself around Norm’s lower leg to a thickness of maybe four or five feet where it disappeared into the mist. It was slate gray on top, shading to a fleshy pink underneath. And there were rows of suckers on the underside. They were moving and writhing like hundreds of small, puckering mouths.

Norm looked down. He saw what had him. His eyes bulged. “Get it off me! Hey, get it off me! Christ Jesus, get this frigging thing off me!”

I looked down and saw the tentacle around Norm’s waist working into his skin. The suckers were eating him where his shirt had pulled out of his pants. Blood, as red as his missing apron, began to seep out of the trench the pulsing tentacle had made for itself.

He was not screaming anymore; he was beyond that. His head whipped back and forth in an endless gesture of negation, and his long black hair flew wildly. I looked over his shoulder and saw more tentacles coming, dozens of them, a forest of them. Most were small but a few were gigantic, as thick as the moss-corseted tree that had been lying across our driveway that morning. The big ones had candy-pink suckers that seemed the size of manhole covers. One of these big ones struck the concrete loading platform with a loud and rolling thrrrrp! sound and moved sluggishly toward us like a great blind earthworm. I gave one gigantic tug, and the tentacle holding Norm’s right calf slipped a little. That was all. But before it reestablished its grip, I saw that the thing was eating him away.

I was half in and half out, directly under the raised door. A tentacle passed by on my left, seeming to walk on its suckers.

I pushed the tip of the broom handle onto the button and the motor whined. The door began to slide back down. It touched the thickest of the tentacles first, the one that had been investigating in Myron’s direction. It indented its hide—skin, whatever—and then pierced it. A black goo began to spurt from it. it writhed madly, whipping across the concrete storage-area floor like an obscene bullwhip, and then it seemed to flatten out. A moment later it was gone. The others began to withdraw.

Fight Bonus: 2d6

Weapons:

Tentacles 65%, 1d6/round

Armor:

1 HP (hide)

Skills:

none

Habitat: The Mist

Move: 15

HP: *

Sanity Loss: 2 / 2d4+3

*Tentacles have 5-30 HP, depending on size.

His hand was gripping my arm hard. “All right,” he said. “Yes, I just keep asking myself... all those tentacles... like a squid or something... David, what were they hooked to ? What were those tentacles hooked to?”

Langolier

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
-	-	20	?	20	10	0	?	?

THEY were here... and they will be back. You know that, don't you?

He knew. The langoliers would be back. They would be back for him. He could sense them. He had never seen them, but he knew how horrible they would be. And was he alone in his knowledge? He thought not.

He thought perhaps the little blind girl knew something about the langoliers as well.

On the horizon, perhaps ten miles distant, the tall gantry of a radio tower trembled, rolled outward, and crashed down to disappear into the quaking trees. Now they could feel the very earth beginning to vibrate; it ran up the ladder and shook their feet in their shoes.

"Make it stop!" Bethany suddenly screamed from the doorway above them. She clapped her hands to her ears. "Oh please make it STOP!"

But the sound-wave rolled on toward them—the crunching, smacking, eating sound of the langoliers.

Brian could see them, but could not understand what it was he was seeing.

At first there were only two shapes, one black, one a dark tomato red.

Something actually seemed to click in the center of his head and they were balls, sort of like beachballs, but balls which rippled and contracted and then expanded again, as if he was seeing them through a heat-haze. They came bowling out of the high dead grass at the end of Runway 21, leaving cut swaths of blackness behind them.

What they left behind were narrow lines of perfect blackness. And now, as they raced playfully down the white concrete at the end of the runway, they were still leaving narrow dark tracks behind. They glistened like tar.

They ate as they came, rolling up narrow strips of the world.

This time the langoliers bounced upward in perfect tandem and clipped Craig off at the knees. He came down, still trying to run, and then fell sprawling, waving his stumps. His scampering days were over.

"No!" he screamed. "No, Daddy! No! I'll be good! Please make them go away! I'll be good, I SWEAR I'LL BE GOOD FROM NOW ON IF YOU JUST MAKE THEM GO AW—"

Then they rushed at him again, gibbering yammering buzzing whining, and he saw the frozen machine blur of their gnashing teeth and felt the hot bellows of their frantic, blind vitality in the half-instant before they began to cut him apart in random chunks.

Fight Bonus: 2d6

Weapons:

Bite 99%, 1d6+3

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Late-Time

Move: 20

HP: 8+

Sanity Loss: 2 / 2d4+3

Mist Bird

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
7	6	8	1	6	7	1	1	1

It was a flying thing. Beyond that I could not have said for sure. The fog appeared to darken in exactly the way Ollie had described, only the dark smuch didn't fade away; it solidified into something with flapping, leathery wings, an albino-white body, and reddish eyes. It thudded into the glass hard enough to make it shiver. Its beak opened. It scooped the pink thing in and was gone. The whole incident took no more than five seconds.

Its red eyes glittered in its triangular head, which was slightly cocked to one side. A heavy, hooked beak opened and closed rapaciously. It looked a bit like the paintings of pterodactyls you may have seen in the dinosaur books, more like something out of a lunatic's nightmare.

The flying creature paused on top of the lawn-food bags, glaring around, shifting slowly and malignantly from one taloned foot to the other. It was a stupid creature, I am quite sure of that. Twice it tried to spread its wings, which struck the walls and then folded themselves over its hunched back like the wings of a griffin. The third time it tried, it lost its balance and fell clumsily from its perch, still trying to spread its wings. It landed on Tom Smalley's back. One flex of its claws and Tom's shirt ripped wide open. Blood began to flow.

The thing spread its wings and flapped them once—apparently not to fly away but to secure a better hold on its prey—and then its leathery-white, membranous wings enfolded poor Smalley's entire upper body. Then the sounds came—mortal tearing sounds that I cannot bear to describe in any detail.

All of this happened in bare seconds. Then I thrust my torch at the thing. There was the sensation of striking something with no more real substance than a box kite. The next moment the entire creature was blazing.

Heads turned to follow its flaming, dying course. I think that nothing in the entire business stands in my memory so strongly as that bird-thing blazing a zigzagging course above the aisles of the 'Federal Supermarket, dropping charred and smoking bits of itself here and there. It finally crashed into the spaghetti sauces, splattering Ragu and Prince and Prima Salsa everywhere like gouts of blood. It was little more than ash and bone. The smell of its burning was high and sickening.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 1d3+1

Claw 70%, 1d4+1

Armor:

none

Skills:

Hunt prey 75%

Habitat: The Mist

Move: 4, fl. 18

HP: 6-7

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Mist Fly

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
3	6	10	1	5	4-7	1	1	1

It was maybe two feet long, segmented, the pinkish color of burned flesh that has healed over. Bulbous eyes peered in two different directions at once from the ends of short, limber stalks. It clung to the window on fat sucker-pads. From the opposite end there protruded something that was either a sexual organ or a stinger. And from its back there sprouted oversized, membranous wings, like the wings of a housefly. They were moving very slowly as Ollie and I approached the glass.

At the loophole to the left of us, where the man had made the disgusted cawing sound, three of the things were crawling on the glass. They moved sluggishly across it, leaving sticky snail trails behind them. Their eyes—if that is what they were—joggled on the end of the finger-thick stalks. The biggest was maybe four feet long. At times they crawled right over each other.

Some of the others saw what Ollie had done and got the idea. They used the mop handles to tap on the windows. The things flew away, but came right back. Apparently they had no more brains than your average housefly, either.

One of the bugs had come in through the hole and it now perched on a lawn-food bag, housefly wings buzzing—you could hear them; it sounded like a cheap department store electric fan—eyes bulging from their stalks. Its pink and noxiously plump body was aspirating rapidly.

“Hank Vannerman said the last one hit the windows around four. Apparently the... the wildlife... is a lot more active when it's dark.”

All the things in the mist operated primarily by sense of smell. It stood to reason. Sight would have been almost completely useless to them. Hearing a little better, but as I've said, the mist had a way of screwing up the acoustics, making things that were close sound distant and—sometimes—things that were far away sound close.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Stinger 50%, 1d3+1

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: The Mist

Move: 5, fl. 15

HP: 5-7

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Mist Spider

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
9	8	14	6	9	6	1	5	1

“They’re spiderwebs,” I said. And then two screams came out of the mist. The first of fear, maybe. The second of pain. It was Jim. If there were dues to be paid, he was paying them. “Get out!” I shouted at Mike and Dan Miller. Then something looped out of the mist. It was impossible to see it against that white background, but I could hear it. It sounded like a bullwhip that had been halfheartedly flicked. And I could see it when it twisted around the thigh of Buddy Eagleton’s jeans.

He screamed and grabbed for the first thing handy, which happened to be the telephone. The handset flew the length of its cord and then swung back and forth. “Oh Jesus that HURTS!” Buddy screamed. Ollie grabbed for him, and I saw what was happening. At the same instant I understood why the head of the man in the doorway was missing. The thin white cable that had twisted around Buddy’s leg like a silk rope was sinking into his flesh. That leg of his jeans had been neatly cut off and was sliding down his leg. A neat, circular incision in his flesh was brimming blood as the cable went deeper.

Suddenly the air was full of those languorous bullwhip cracks, and the thin white cables were drifting down all around us. They were coated with the same corrosive substance. I dodged two of them, more by luck than by skill. One landed at my feet and I could hear a faint hiss of bubbling hottop.

One of the spiders had come out of the mist from behind us. It was the size of a big dog. It was black with yellow piping. Racing stripes, I thought crazily. Its eyes were reddish-purple, like pomegranates. It strutted busily toward us on what might have been as many as twelve or fourteen many-jointed legs—it was no ordinary earthly spider blown up to horror-movie size; it was something totally different, perhaps not really a spider at all. Seeing it, Mike Hatlen would have understood what that bristly black thing he had been prodding at in the pharmacy really was.

It closed in on us, spinning its webbing from an oval-shaped orifice on its upper belly. The strands floated out toward us in what was nearly a fan shape. Looking at this nightmare, so like the death-black spiders brooding over their dead flies and bugs in the shadows of our boathouse, I felt my mind trying to tear completely loose from its moorings. I believe now that it was only the thought of Billy that allowed me to keep any semblance of sanity.

As we reached the IN door, a smaller spider, no bigger than a cocker spaniel puppy, raced out of the fog along the side of the building. It was producing no webbing; perhaps it wasn’t mature enough to do so. As Ollie leaned one beefy shoulder against the door so Mrs. Reppler could go through, I heaved the steel bar at the thing like a javelin and impaled it. It writhed madly, legs scratching at the air, and its red eyes seemed to find mine, and mark me...

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Strand 70%, *

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: The Mist

Move: 15

HP: 5-8

Sanity Loss: 2/2d4+1

*Strands that connect sever the limb in 1d3 rounds.

Thinnyworm

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1	1	3	0	1	1	1	0	1

At that precise moment, long, fat white bugs began to squirm into Albert the Blob's room. They came pushing out of the brown fungoid spots on the wall as if the fungus were in some unknown way giving birth to them. They twisted and writhed half in and half out of the soft brown spots, then plopped to the floor and began squirming blindly toward the bed.

"Bugs, Jesus, we have to get out, we have to—"

"Thank God, this kid finally sees the light," Jack said.

He slung his knapsack over his left arm and grabbed Richard's elbow in his right hand. He hustled Richard to the door. White bugs squashed and splattered under their shoes. Now they were pouring out of the brown patches in a flood; an obscene, ongoing multiple birth that was happening all over Albert's room. A stream of the white bugs fell from a patch on the ceiling and landed, squirming, on Jack's hair and shoulders; he brushed them away as best he could and hauled the screaming, flailing Richard out the door.

"Missed me, you hairy motherf—" Eddie began, and then the bear, its head still cocked back to look at him, sneezed. Eddie was immediately drenched in hot snot that was filled with thousands of small white worms. They wriggled frantically on his shirt, his forearms, his throat and face.

Roland did not reply; did not need to reply. What he was doing—gouging out one of the bear's eyes with his knife—was perfectly obvious. The surgery was quick, neat, and precise. When it was completed he balanced an oozing brown ball of jelly on the blade of his knife for a moment and then flicked it aside. A few more worms made their way out of the staring hole, tried to squirm their way down the bear's muzzle, and died.

Fight Bonus: -1d6

Weapons:

Bite 40%, 1d2

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Thin places

Move: 6

HP: 1

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3+2

Tommyknocker

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
15	14	15	10	18	13	1	20+	1

These are the Tommyknockers, *he thought*. Bobbi and the others aren't going to look exactly like them when they're done 'becoming,' maybe because of the environment or maybe because the original physiological makeup of the—what would you call it? target group?—results in a slightly different look each time this happens. But there's a kissin-cousin resemblance, all right. Maybe these aren't the originals... but they're close enough. Ugly fuckers.

Their faces were ugly and long-snouted. Their eyes were filmed over to the whiteness of cataracts. Their lips were drawn back in uniform snarls.

Their skins were scaly but transparent—he could see frozen muscles laid in crisscross patterns around jaws, temples and necks. They had no teeth.

"There really isn't an Altair-4, just as there aren't really any Tommyknockers. There aren't any nouns for some things—they just are. Somebody pastes one name on those things in one place, somebody pastes on another someplace else. It's never a very good name, but it doesn't matter. You came back from New Hampshire talking about Tommyknockers, so here that's what we are. We've been called other things in other places."

"I don't suppose you've had time enough to wonder why a race with access to teleportation technology"—Bobbi wiggled the plastic gun slightly—"would even bother zipping around in a physical ship."

"But beyond that, we don't understand it very well. Which is true of us about most things, Gard. We're builders, not understanders"

"There are other channels which open on rock. Just rock. The inside of some place. Most open in deep space. We've never been able to chart a single one of those locations using our star-charts. Think of it, Gard! Every place has been a strange place to us... even to us, and we are great sky-travelers."

"I said Thomas Edison was closer than Albert Einstein, and that's as good a way to put it as any," Bobbi said. "There are things here in Haven that would have made Albert boggle, I suppose, but Einstein knew what $E=mc^2$ meant. He understood relativity. He knew things. We... we make things. Fix things. We don't theorize. We build. We're handymen."

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Foot-claw[†] 60%, 1d3 + FB

Knife 45%, 1d4 + FB

Gadget*

Armor:

none

Skills:

Build gadget 90%

Habitat: Any (special)

Move: 12

HP: 13

Sanity Loss: 2/1d4+1

Breaker Abilities:

Telepathy

Send Thoughts

Group-Mind

Precognition (slight)

*Tommyknocker gadgets span from thought-responsive typewriters to rayguns, robots, anima-drainers and space-ships. On Earth, all these run on direct-current batteries.

[†]Only fully-transformed Tommyknockers have these.

Tunnel Worm

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
50	60	20	8	30	40	1	3	4

She held the burning flashlight out before her and for a moment they both saw the head of something wet and covered with pink albino eyes. Below them was a mouth the size of a trapdoor, filled with squirming tentacles. The Sterno didn't burn brightly, but in this Stygian blackness it was bright enough to make the thing recoil. Before it disappeared into the blackness again, she saw all those eyes squeezing shut and had a moment to think of how sensitive they must be if even a little guttering flame like this could—

The thing was coming and now she could see any number of short, misshapen legs beneath its raised lump of a head. Not a worm after all but some kind of giant centipede.

The thing was creeping ever closer. Amid the tentacles sprouting from its mouth she could see jutting fangs. In another moment it would be close enough to lunge at Oy, taking him with the speed of a gecko snatching a fly out of the air. Its rotted-fish aroma was strong and nauseating. And what might be behind it? What other abominations?

Every now and then Susannah caught a glimpse of its slick-gleaming skin, and even when it drew back beyond the chancy light of her current torch they would hear those liquid stomping sounds, like a giant in mud-filled boots. She began to think it was the sound of the thing's tail. This filled her with a horror that was unreasoning and private and almost powerful enough to undo her mind.

That it should have a tail! her mind nearly raved. A tail that sounds like it's filled with water or jelly or half-coagulated blood!

It roared again and thrust itself forward. For one moment she saw it plain: a huge round lump that couldn't be called a face in spite of the lolling mouth; the segmented body, scratched and oozing from contact with the rough walls; a quartet of stubby armlike appendages, two on each side. These ended in snapping pincers.

Fight Bonus: 3d6

Weapons:

Pincer 75%, 2d4 + FB (x4)

Tentacle 50%, 1 + grapple (x6)

Bite 80%, 5d6 + FB

Armor: 2 HP (hide)

Skills:

Scent prey 80%

Habitat: End-World, Todash

Move: 16

HP: 50

Sanity Loss: 2/2d4+3

Venutian

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
*	2	*	25	10	1	1	10	*

The realization crept on me, then sank home with a frightening rush. My eyes were closed, but I was still looking at the book. What I was seeing was smeary and monstrous, the distorted, fourth-dimensional counterpart of a book, yet unmistakable for all that.

And I was not the only one watching.

I raised my hands slowly to my face, catching an eerie vision of my living room turned into a horror house.

I screamed.

There were eyes peering up at me through splits in the flesh of my fingers. And even as I warched the flesh was silating, retreating, as they pushed their mindless way up to the surface.

But that was not what made me scream. I had looked into my own face and seen a monster.

They were huge, dilated, golden-irised. I had poked one of them against the tip of a pencil once, and had felt excruciating agony slam up my arm. The eyes seemed to glare at me with a chained hatred that was worse than physical pain. I did not poke again.

I wonder what he thought... as the last of the light fell across my hands, red and split and shining with their burden of eyes, what he thought when the hands made that sudden, flailing gesture in the air, just before his head burst.

I know what I thought.

I thought I had peeked over the rim of the universe and into the fires of hell itself

“Run! Run, Richard!”

And he did run. He ran in huge, bounding leaps. He became a scaffold against the looming sku. My hands flew up, flew over my head in a screaming, orlesque gesture, the fingers reaching to the only familiar thing in this nightmare world—reaching to the clouds.

And the clouds answered.

There was a huge, blue-white streak of lightning that seemed like the end of the world. It struck Richard, it enveloped him. The last thing I remember is the electric stench of ozone and burnt flesh.

They are also called “The Golden Eyes” and “The Watchers Beyond the Door.”

Fight Bonus: as host

Weapons:

none

Armor:

none

Skills:

Telekinesis 95%

Habitat: Host body

Move: as host

HP: 1

Sanity Loss: 1/1d8

*Their Strength and Dexterity is that of their host. As projected consciousnesses, they have no khaf, though their “real” manifestations must surely have a great deal of both khaf and anima.

Mythic Creatures

The big truck's front brakes shrieked. From the rear came the angry-dragon chuff of the airbrakes. There was an accompanying scream of huge rubber tires first locking and then smoking black tracks on the metaled surface of the road. The truck's multi-ton load began to slew sideways. Roland saw splinters flying from the trees and into the blue sky as the outlaws on the far side of the road continued to fire heedlessly. There was something almost hypnotic about all this, like watching one of the Lost Beasts of Eld come tumbling out of the sky with its wings on fire.

Dragon

Attributes*:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
30+	30+	17	5	25+	40+	10	3	4+

The King's Preserves had almost been hunted out. In these modern days it was rare to find so much as a good-sized deer in them, and no one had seen a dragon since time out of mind. Most men would have laughed if you had suggested there might still be such a mythic creature left in that tame forest. But an hour before sundown on that day, as Roland and his party were about to turn back, that was just what they found . . . or what found them.

The dragon came crashing and blundering out of the underbrush, its scales glowing a greenish copper color, its soot-caked nostrils venting smoke. It had not been a small dragon, either, but a male just before its first molting. Most of the party were thunderstruck, unable to draw an arrow or even to move.

It stared at the hunting party, its normally green eyes went yellow, and it fluttered its wings. There was no danger that it could fly away from them—its wings would not be well developed enough to support it in the air for at least another fifty years and two more moltings—but the baby-webbing which holds the wings against a dragon's body until its tenth or twelfth year had fallen away, and a single flutter stirred enough wind to topple the head huntsman backward out of his saddle, his horn flying from his hand.

Roland was the only one not stunned to utter movelessness, and although he was too modest to say so to Sasha, there was real heroism in his next few actions, as well as a sportsman's zest for the kill. The dragon might well have roasted most of the surprised party alive, if not for Roland's prompt action. He gipped his horse forward five steps, and nocked his great arrow. He drew and fired. The arrow went straight to the mark—that one gill-like soft spot under the dragon's throat, where it takes in air to create fire. The worm fell dead with a final fiery gust, which set all the bushes around it alight. The squires put this out quickly, some with water, some with beer, and not a few with piss and, now that I think of it, most of the piss was really beer, because when Roland went a-hunting, he took a great lot of beer with him, and he was not stingy with it, either.

The fire was out in five minutes, the dragon gutted in fifteen. You still could have boiled a kettle over its steaming nostrils when its tripe was let out upon the ground. The dripping nine-chambered heart was carried to Roland with great ceremony. He ate it raw, as was the custom, and found it delicious. He only regretted the sad knowledge that he would almost certainly never have another.

Fight Bonus: 3d6

Weapons:

Bite 80%, 4d4 + FB

Claw 60%, 2d4 + FB (x2)

Fire 60%, 2d4+2**

Armor:

10 HP (scales)

1 HP (gill)

Skills:

Scent Prey 80%

Habitat: Delain, Garlan, Andua

Move: 28

HP: 40+

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Powers of the Red:

Fascinate

Timoh-lach

*All attributes for after first molting. All variable attributes change by +5 each molting. Weight increases by a half-ton each molting. Hatchlings are eight feet long, and increase in size rapidly for their first fifty years.

**People on fire suffer 1d6 damage per round.

Hellcat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
2	16	19	7	14	2	16	3	3

Halston sat. The cat, which had been crouched on the back of the sofa, jumped lightly down into his lap. It looked up at Halston for a moment with those huge dark eyes, the pupils surrounded by thin green-gold rings, and then it settled down and began to purr.

Halston looked at Drogon questioningly.

"He's very friendly," Drogon said. "At first. Nice friendly pussy has killed three people in this household. That leaves only me. I am old, I am sick ... but I prefer to die in my own time."

"I can't believe this," Halston said. "You hired me to hit a cat?"

"Look in the envelope, please."

Halston did. It was filled with hundreds and fifties, all of them old.

"The cat was rubbing against her legs. She was old, not too steady on her feet. Half asleep. They got to the head of the stairs and the cat got in front of her ... tripped her ..."

Yes, it could have happened that way, Halston thought. In his mind's eye he saw the old woman falling forward and outward, too shocked to scream. The Friskies spraying out as she tumbled head over heels to the bottom, the bowl smashing. At last she comes to rest at the bottom, the old bones shattered, the eyes glaring, the nose and ears trickling blood. And the purring cat begins to work its way down the stairs, contentedly munching Little Friskies ...

"What did the coroner say?" he asked Drogon.

"Death by accident, of course. But I knew."

"Drogon," he said, continuing to stroke the purring cat. "Why don't you just have it put away? A vet would give it the gas for twenty dollars."

Drogon said, "The funeral was on the first day of July, I had Carolyn buried in our cemetery plot next to my sister. The way she would have wanted it. On July third I called Gage to this room and handed him a wicker basket., a picnic hamper sort of thing. Do you know what I mean?"

Halston nodded.

"I told him to put the cat in it and take it to a vet in Milford and have it put to sleep. He said, 'Yes, sir,' took the basket, and went out. Very like him. I never saw him alive again. There was an accident on the turnpike. The Lincoln was driven into a bridge abutment at better than sixty miles an hour. Dick Gage was killed instantly. When they found him there were scratches on his face."

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 1d2

Claw 50%, 1 (x2)

Armor:

1 HP (fur)

Skills:

Scent prey 85%

Habitat: Any

Move: 8

HP: 9

Sanity Loss: 0/1d2

Powers of the Red:

Unluck

Leprechaun

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1	12	8	8	10	1	10	8	1

At first he thought Springsteen didn't have anything at all. Then the cat leaped, and Owen heard a very tiny scream from the grass. He saw something green and blue between Springsteen that was shrieking and trying to get away. And now Owen saw something else—little spots of blood on the grass. "No!" Owen shouted. "Get away, Springsteen!" The cat flattened his ears back and turned towards the sound of Owen's voice. His big green eyes glared. The green and blue thing between Springsteen paws squiggled and wiggled and got away. It started to run and Owen saw it was a person, a little tiny man wearing a green hat made out of a leaf. The little man looked back over his shoulder, and Owen saw how scared the little guy was. He was no bigger than the mice Springsteen sometimes killed in their big dark cellar. The little man had a cut down one of his cheeks from one of Springsteen's claws.

Springsteen hissed at Owen and Owen could almost hear him say: "Leave me alone, he's mine and I'm going to have him!" Then Springsteen jumped for the little man again, just as quick as a cat can jump—and if you have a cat of your own, you'll know that is very fast. The little man in the grass tried to dodge away, but he didn't quite make it, Owen saw the back of the little man's shirt tear open as Springsteen's claws ripped it apart. And, I am sorry to say, he saw more blood and heard the little man cry out in pain. He went tumbling in the grass. His little leaf hat went flying. Springsteen got ready to jump again.

"No, Springsteen, no!" Owen cried. "Bad cat!"

At first he thought the little man was gone. Then he saw the blood on the grass, and the little leaf hat. The little man was nearby, lying on his side. The reason Owen hadn't been able to see him at first was the little man's shirt was the exact color of the grass. Owen touched him gently with his finger. He was terribly afraid the little man was dead. But when Owen touched him, the little man groaned and sat up.

"Are you all right?" Owen asked.

The fellow in the grass made a face and clapped his hands to his ears. For a moment Owen thought Springsteen must have hurt the little guy's head as well as his back, and then he realized that his voice must sound like thunder to such a small person. The little man in the grass was not much longer than Owen's thumb. This was Owen's first good look at the little fellow he had rescued, and he saw right away why the little man had been so hard to find again. His green shirt was not just the color of grass; it was grass. Carefully woven blades of green grass. Owen wondered how come they didn't turn brown.

Fight Bonus: -1d6

Weapons:

none

Armor:

none

Skills:

any

Habitat: Any (temperate)

Move: 4

HP: 6

Sanity Loss: none

Winged Man

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
18	19	17	12	12	16+	15	10	1

Jack's eyes suddenly widened. For a moment his jaw sagged even further—until it was almost lying on his breast-bone, in fact—and then it came up and his mouth spread in a dazed, unbelieving grin. The man hadn't fallen from the tower, nor had he been blown off it. There were tonguelike protrusions on two sides of the platform—they looked like diving boards—and the man had simply walked out to the end of one of these and jumped off. Halfway down something began to unfurl—a parachute, Jack thought, but it would never have time to open.

Only it hadn't been a parachute.

It was wings.

The man's fall slowed and then stopped completely while he was still some fifty feet above the high fieldgrass. Then it reversed itself. The man was now flying upward and outward, the wings going up so high they almost touched—like the crowns on the heads of that Henny Youngman parrot—and then driving downward again with immense power, like the arms of a swimmer in a finishing sprint.

Ow wow, Jack thought, driven back to the dumbest cliché he knew by his total, utter amazement. This topped everything; this was an utter pisser. Oh wow, look at that, oh wow.

Parkus shifts and looks away, uncomfortable. "I knew something was coming, yes—there have been great disruptions on this side—but I was on other business. And Sophie can't cross. She came here with the flying men and will go back the same way when our palaver's done."

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

any

Armor:

none

Skills:

any

Habitat: The Territories

Move: 10 / 25 (flying)

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: none

Soldiers OF THE Red



Later that day, thumbing on the side of Route 3 in Issaquena County under a hot gunmetal sky that knows nothing of December and approaching Christmas, the chimes come again. They fill his head, threatening to pop his eardrums and blow pinprick hemorrhages across the entire surface of his brain. As they fade, a terrible certainty grips him: they are coming. The men with the red eyes and big hats and long yellow coats are on their way.

For a moment or two there's nothing. Then a white-over-red Cadillac comes pounding down Highway 3 from the direction of Yazoo City. It's doing seventy easy, and Callahan's peephole is small, but he still sees them with supernatural clarity: three men, two in what appear to be yellow dusters, the third in what might be a flight-jacket. All three are smoking; the Cadillac's closed cabin fumes with it.

They'll see me they'll hear me they'll sense me, Callahan's mind yammers, and he forces it away from its own panicky wretched certainty, yanks it away.

There is one terrible, heart-stopping moment when he thinks the Caddy is slowing—long enough for him to imagine them chasing him through this weedy, forgotten field, chasing him down, dragging him into an abandoned shed or barn—and then the Caddy roars over the next hill, headed for Natchez, maybe. Or Copiah. Callahan waits another ten minutes. "Got to make sure they're not trickin on you, man," Lupe might have said. But even as he waits, he knows this is only a formality. They're not trickin on him; they flat missed him.

And that's good, because these guys aren't brain-blasted, like the dead folks, or blind to him, like the bloodsucking folks. These people, whoever they are, are the most dangerous of all.

Android

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
25	18*	16	18	5	19	8	16	3

Andy's smile probably could not become troubled—he was a robot, after all, the last one in Calla Bryn Sturgis or for miles and wheels around—but to Tian it seemed to grow troubled, just the same. The robot looked like a young child's stick-figure of an adult, impossibly tall and impossibly thin. His legs and arms were silvery. His head was a stainless steel barrel with electric eyes. His body, no more than a cylinder seven feet high, was old. Stamped in the middle—what would have been a man's chest—was this legend:

**NORTH CENTRAL POSITRONICS, LTD.
IN ASSOCIATION WITH LaMERK INDUSTRIES
PRESENTS**

ANDY

**Design: MESSENGER (Many Other Functions)
Serial # DNF 44821 V 63**

Why or how this silly thing had survived when all the rest of the robots were gone—gone for generations—Tian neither knew nor cared. You were apt to see him anywhere in the Calla (he would not venture beyond its borders) striding on his impossibly long silver legs, looking everywhere, occasionally clicking to himself as he stored (or perhaps purged—who knew?) information. He sang songs, passed on gossip and rumor from one end of town to the other—a tireless walker was Andy the robot—and seemed to enjoy the giving of horoscopes above all things, although there was general agreement in the village that they meant little.

He had one other function, however, and that meant much.

Their durable metal bodies have lasted for more than two thousand years without rusting. Their only real physical weakness is the thin glass of their eyes. If blinded, they can still perceive the world through 3x macrovision, though Dexterity drops to 5.

*As artificial creatures, androids are immune to physical sickness or poison. However, they have been known to have severe mental and spiritual problems.

Andy (typical android of Mid-World):

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Grab 75%, damage 1d4 +1 (x2)

Punch 75%, damage 1d2 (x2)

Armor:

10 HP (body)

3 HP (eyes)

Skills:

Fortune-telling 75%

History (local) 80%

Sneak 80%

Habitat: Mid-World

Move: 11

HP: 18 (body). 1 (eyes)

Sanity Loss: none

Nigel (typical domestic android):

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Grab 75%, damage 1d4 +1 (x2)

Punch 75%, damage 1d2 (x2)

Armor:

10 HP (metal body)

3 HP (eyes)

Skills:

Cooking: 99%

Child-rearing: 90%

Cleaning: 85%

Habitat: End-World

Move: 8

HP: 10

Sanity Loss: none

Batman

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
20	18	14	15	19	15	*	14	3

Above the broad shoulders of this year's most Eminently Acceptable Business Suit and the knot in the red Sulka power-tie had loomed a huge grayish-brown head, not round but as misshapen as a baseball that has taken a whole summer's worth of bashing. Black lines—veins, perhaps—pulsed just below the surface of the skull in meaningless roadmap squiggles, and the area that should have been its face but wasn't (not in any human sense, anyway) had been covered with lumps that bulged and quivered like tumors possessed of their own terrible semisentient life. Its features were rudimentary and pushed together—flat black eyes, perfectly round, that stared avidly from the middle of its face like the eyes of a shark or some bloated insect; malformed ears with no lobes or pinnae. It hadn't had a nose, at least none that Pearson could recognize, although two tusk-like protuberances had jutted from the spiny tangle of hair that grew just below the eyes. Most of the thing's face had been mouth—a huge black crescent ringed with triangular teeth. To a creature with a mouth like that, Pearson had thought later, bolting one's food would be a sacrament.

'Afraid? I don't know if that's exactly true. But they're not taking many chances, about that there's no doubt. And something else there's no doubt about, either—they hate the fact that some of us can see them. They fucking hate it. We caught one once and it was like catching a hurricane in a bottle. We—'

'Caught one!'

'Yes indeed,' Duke said, and offered him a hard, mirthless grin. 'We bagged it at a rest area on I-95, up by Newburyport. There were half a dozen of us—my friend Robbie was in charge. We took it to a farmhouse, and when the boatload of dope we'd shot into it wore off—which it did much too fast—we tried to question it, to get better answers to some of the questions you've already asked me. We had it in handcuffs and leg-irons; we had so much nylon rope wrapped around it that it looked like a mummy. You know what I remember best?'

Pearson shook his head. His sense of living between the pages of a boy's adventure story had quite departed.

'How it woke up,' Duke said. 'There was no in-between. One second it was knocked-out loaded and the next it was wide-awake, staring at us with those horrible eyes they have.'

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 80%, 2d4

Claw 50%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

none

Skills:

any

Habitat: Large cities

Move: 12

HP: 17

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

Powers of the Red:

Glam

Can-toi (Low Men)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
17	15	14	12	15	14	7/1	10	3

Beside the stand was a sai of about sixty with white hair combed back from a lean and rather predatory face. It was the face of an intelligent man, but his clothes—the blaring yellow sportcoat, the red shirt, the black tie—were those of a used-car salesman or a gambler who specializes in rooking small-town rubes. In the center of his forehead was a red hole about an inch across, as if he had been shot at close range. It swam with blood that never overflowed onto his pallid skin.

At the tables in the dining room stood perhaps fifty men and half again as many women. Most of them were dressed in clothes as loud or louder than those of the white-haired gent. Big rings glared on fleshy fingers, diamond eardrops sparked back orange light from the flambeaux.

When the fat couple turned to look, Mia saw their cheeks wrinkle upward like clingy cloth, and for a moment, beneath the soft angle of their jaws, she saw something dark red and tufted with hair.

Susannah, was that skin? Mia asked. Dear God, was it their skin?

Beneath where the mask had been was the head of a huge red rat, a mutie with yellow teeth growing up the outside of its cheeks in a crust and what looked like white worms dangling from its nose.

“The low men,” Callahan said. “They call themselves that, sometimes, although there are women among them. Sometimes they call themselves regulators. A lot of them wear long yellow coats... but not all. A lot of them have blue coffins tattooed on their hands... but not all.”

“What they are—what they really are—is soldiers of the Crimson King,” Callahan said. And he crossed himself.

The low men consider turning pictures upside down the absolute height of humor. Unlike taheen, they worship the human form as divine. Not all of them are evil.

Their forehead wounds dry up and disappear America-side.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Switchblade 70%, 1d4 + FB

Pistol 65%, 1d4+1

Armor:

1 HP (coat)

Skills:

Tracking 80%

Scent Hume 75%

Driving 70%

Intimidation 65%

Habitat: Earth, Mid-World

Move: 10

HP: 14

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3

Gargoyle

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
19	20	14	12	11	16	1	6	2

The guards toiled beside them, and Jack saw with numb dismay that they were not human; in no sense at all could they be called human. They were twisted and humped, their hands were claws, their ears pointed like Mr. Spock's. Why, they're gargoyles! he thought. All those nightmare monsters on those cathedrals in France—Mom had a book and I thought we were going to have to see every one in the whole country but she stopped when I had a bad dream and wet the bed—did they come from here? Did somebody see them here? Somebody from the Middle Ages who flipped over, saw this place, and thought he'd had a vision of hell?

But this was no vision.

The gargoyles had whips, and over the rumble of the wheels and the sounds of rock cracking steadily under some steady, baking heat. Jack heard their pop and whistle.

The monstrosity who was guarding them—a twisted creature with a breechclout twisted around its legs and a patchy line of stiff hair growing from the scant flesh over the knobs of its spine—brought its whip down first on one and then on the other, howling at them in a high, screeching language that seemed to drive silver nails of pain into Jack's head. Jack saw the same silver beads of metal that had decorated Osmond's whip, and before he could blink, the arm of one prisoner had been torn open and the nape of the other's neck lay in ruined flaps.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Whip 65%, 1d3 + FB

Claw 50%, 1d2 + FB (x2)

Armor:

3 HP (hide)

Skills:

any

Habitat: Territories, End-World

Move: 10

HP: 18

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

King's Man

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
18	20	17	18	20	18	1	18	3

Mr. Munshun, like Black House itself, is hard to look at. He shivers in and out of focus. Sometimes that hideously long face (it obscures most of his body, like the bloated head of a caricature on some newspaper's op-ed page) has two eyes, sometimes just one. Sometimes there seem to be tufted snarls of orange hair leaping up from his distended skull, and sometimes Mr. Munshun appears to be as bald as Yul Brynner. Only the red lips and the fangy pointed teeth that lurk inside them remain fairly constant.

His grotesque face is like the bowl of a huge serving spoon upholstered in skin. The one eye bulges freakishly. The red lips grin.

This creature has a vast white face dominated by a red mouth and a single blurry eye. The abbalah's emissary and chief deputy looks, in the gaze of Ty's imagination, like Humpty-Dumpty gone bad. It wears a vest buttoned with bones.

"Put him down, Munshun," says the one with the club, and Lord Malshun realizes with growing dismay that he could have trouble with this one. He really could. Yet his smile widens, exposing the full, ghoulish range of his teeth. They are pointed and tip inward. Anything bitten by them would tear itself to shreds trying to pull free of that bony trap.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Bite 40%, 1d4 + FB

Armor:

none

Skills:

Spells

Habitat: End-World

Move: 12

HP: 20

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

Powers of the Red:

Dark Speech

Low Car

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
40	25	16	5	15	40	9	5	2

Parked in front, on the very edge of Puritan Square, was a DeSoto automobile of a purple Bobby had never seen before—had never even suspected. The color was so bright it hurt his eyes to look at it. It hurt his whole head.

The purple car was loaded with swoops and darts of chrome. It had fenderskirts. The hood ornament was huge; Chief DeSoto's head glittered in the hazy light like a fake jewel. The tires were fat whitewalls and the hubcaps were spinners. There was a whip antenna on the back. From its tip there hung a raccoon tail.

'The low men,' Bobby whispered. There was really no question. It was a DeSoto, but at the same time it was like no car he had ever seen in his life, something as alien as an asteroid. As they drew closer to the clogged three-way intersection, Bobby saw the upholstery was a metallic dragonfly-green—the color nearly howled in contrast to the car's purple skin. There was white fur around the steering wheel. 'Holy crow, it's them!'

'You have to take your mind away,' Ted said. He grabbed Bobby by the shoulders (up front the Yankees blared on and on, the driver paying his two fares in the back seat no attention whatsoever, thank God for that much, at least) and shook him once, hard, before letting him go. 'You have to take your mind away, do you understand?'

Ted was shaking his head. 'I have no idea. But you'll know just the same, because their cars will be like their yellow coats and sharp shoes and the greasy perfumed stuff they use to slick back their hair: loud and vulgar.'
'Low,' Bobby said—it was not quite a question.
'Low,' Ted repeated, and nodded emphatically.

Beneath the streetlights the DeSoto looked like a huge blood-clot decorated with chrome and glass. Its headlights were moving and shimmering like lights seen underwater . . . and then they blinked. They weren't headlights at all. They were eyes.

The DeSoto's grille was moving. Snarling. Those cars ain't real cars, Juan had said. They something else.
They were something else, all right.

From across the street there came a thick slobbering grunt. Bobby looked in that direction and saw that one of the Oldsmobile's tires had turned into a blackish-gray tentacle. It reached out, snared a cigarette wrapper, and pulled it back. A moment later the tentacle was a tire again, but the cigarette wrapper was sticking out of it like something half swallowed.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Ram 80%, 3d6 + FB

Tentacle 65%, 1d4

Armor:

12 HP (shell)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Urban, roads

Move: 80

HP: 32

Sanity Loss: 0/1d2

Lycanthropes

“Wolf, do you really change into an animal when the moon gets full?”

“ ‘Course I do!” Wolf said. He looked astounded, as if Jack had asked him something like Wolf, do you really pull up your pants after you finish taking a crap?

He tried to tell Jack what to do, but he had little to go on except old tales and rumors. He knew what the change was in his own world, but he sensed it might be much worse—more powerful and more dangerous—in the land of the Strangers. And he felt that now. He felt that power sweeping through him, and tonight when the moon rose he felt sure it would sweep him away.

Over and over again he reiterated that he didn’t want to hurt Jack, that he would rather kill himself than hurt Jack.

A series of howls followed soon after—the sound of a creature set free, or the despairing sound of one who wakes to find himself still confined, Jack could not tell which. Mournful and feral and oddly beautiful, the cries of poor Wolf flew up into the moonlit air like scarves flung into the night. Jack did not know he was trembling until he wrapped his arms around himself and felt his arms vibrating against his chest, which seemed to vibrate, too.

The howls diminished, retreating. Wolf was running with the moon.

Weregoat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
20	18	10	12	14	17	7	10	2

Jack shook his head, trying to clear this steady, repeating thought out as the rangy millhand who was not a millhand leaned closer and closer. His eyes... yellow and somehow scaly. He—it—blinked, a rapid, milky swimming blink, and Jack realized it had nictitating membranes over its eyeballs.

"You were supposed to get gone," it whispered again, and reached toward Jack with hands that were beginning to twist and plate and harden.

Jack began to edge to his left, his eyes never leaving the man's face. His eyes now seemed almost transparent, not just yellow but lighted from within . . . the eyes of a hideous Halloween jack-o'-lantern.

"But you can trust old Elroy," the cowboy-thing said, and now it grinned to reveal a mouthful of curving teeth, some of them jaggedly broken off, some black with rot.

He whirled in time to see the thing go down. There was even a moment to realize—Oh dear Jesus a tail it's got something like a tail—that the thing was not almost entirely an animal. Golden light fell from its eyes in weird rays, like bright light falling through twin keyholes.

The thing snarled and flailed at the garbage cans. Jack saw one hoof-hand go up and then come whistling down, splitting the side of one corrugated metal can in a jagged slash a yard long. It got up again, stumbled, almost fell, and then began to lurch toward Jack, its snarling rippling face now almost at chest level. And somehow, through its barking growls, he was able to make out what it was saying. "Now I'm not just gonna ream you, little chicken. Now I'm gonna kill you... after."

Hearing it with his ears? Or in his head?

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 35%, 1d3

Claw 50%, 1d3 + FB (x2)

Armor:

1 HP (hide)

Skills:

Track 75%

Habitat: Territories, Earth

Move: 10

HP: 18

Sanity Loss: 0/1d4 + 1

Powers of the Red:

Telepathy

Change form

Weretiger

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
20	24	20	16	25	16	12	16	3

Mostly it was his eyes—large and dark and totally blank. The eyes, and the feeling that a man capable of controlling seven watchful cats in a small cage must be part savage himself.

“All right,” he muttered, staring down at me, his eyes like hurricane lamps. “No juju to protect you now. No grisgris.” His lips twitched in a wild, horrible smile. “He isn’t here now, is he? We’re two of a kind, him and me. Maybe the only two left. My nemesis—and I’m his.” He was rambling, and I didn’t try to stop him. At least his mind was off me.

“Turned that cat against me, back in ‘58. Always had the power more’n me. Fool could make a million—the two of us could make a million if he wasn’t so damned high and mighty... what’s that?”

It was Green Terror, and he had begun to roar ear-splittingly.

“Haven’t you got that damned tiger in?” He screamed, almost falsetto. He shook me like a rag doll.

Mr. Indrasil’s wildly whipping hair lifted around the livid scar across the back of his neck. His fists clenched, but he said nothing. I could almost feel him gathering his will, his life force, his id. It gathered around him like an unholy nimbus.

The great tiger leaped out and almost flowed past Mr. Legere. Mr. Indrasil swayed, but did not run. He bent his head and stared down at the tiger.

And Green Terror stopped.

He swung his huge head back to Mr. Legere, almost turned, and then slowly turned back to Mr. Indrasil again. There was a terrifyingly palpable sensation of directed force in the air, a mesh of conflicting wills centered around the tiger. And the wills were evenly matched. I think, in the end, it was Green Terror’s own will—his hate of Mr. Indrasil that tipped the scales.

The cat began to advance, his eyes hellish, flaring beacons. And something strange began to happen to Mr. Indrasil. He seemed to be folding in on himself, shriveling, accordioning. The silk-shirt lost shape, the dark, whipping hair became a hideous toadstool around his collar.

Mr. Legere called something across to him, and, simultaneously, Green Terror leaped.

I never saw the outcome.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Punch 75%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

none

Skills:

Any

Habitat: Any

Move: 10

HP: 20

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Powers of the Red:

Timoh-lach

Change Form

Werewolf

Attributes*:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
24	25	19	5	20	18	1	2	2

The Beast is hunched over, but it is clearly walking on its two rear legs. Walking the way a man would walk. The red light of the twizzer skates hellishly across its green eyes.

It moves slowly, its wide nostrils flaring rhythmically. Scenting prey, almost surely scenting that prey's weakness. Marty can smell it- its hair, its sweat, its savagery. It grunts again. Its thick upper lip, the color of liver, wrinkles back to show its heavy tusk-like teeth. Its pelt is painted a dull silvery-red.

It has almost reached him- its clawed hands, so like-unlike human hands, reaching for his throat-when the boy remembers the packet of firecrackers. Hardly aware he is going to do it, he strikes a match and touches it to the master fuse. The fuse spits a hot line of red sparks that singe the fine hair on the back of his hand, crisping them. The werewolf, momentarily offbalance, draws backwards, uttering a questioning grunt that, like his hands, is nearly human. Marty throws the packet of firecrackers in its face.

They go off in a banging, flashing train of light and sound. The beast utters a screech-roar of pain and rage; it staggers backwards, clawing at the explosions that tattoo grains of fire and burning gunpowder into its face. Marty sees one of its lamplike green eyes whiff out as four crackers go off at once with a terrific thundering KA-POW! at the side of its muzzle.

For the last three days he has felt familiar sensations: a great restlessness, an impatience that is almost joyful, a sense of tension in his body. It is coming again-the change is almost here again. Tonight the moon will rise full, and the hunters will be out with their dogs. Well, no matter. He is smarter than they give him credit for. They speak of a man-wolf, but think only in terms of the wolf, not the man. They can drive in their pickups, and he can drive in his small Volare sedan. And this afternoon he will drive down Portland way, he thinks, and stay at some motel on the outskirts of town. And if the change comes, there will be no hunters, no dogs. They are not the ones who frighten him.

*Attributes listed are for beast-form, Human attributes will vary.

A werewolf in beast-form regenerates 3HP/round when struck by any non-silver weapon. Solid silver weapons do normal damage; impure weapons do only half normal damage if 50% or more silver, and no damage (only pain) if the purity is less than 50%.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 2d4 + FB

Claw 60%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

3 HP (pelt)

Skills:

Scent blood 99%

Hide 60%

Habitat: Any

Move: 12

HP: 21

Sanity Loss: 0/1d8 to see a werewolf; 0/1d3 to see a human transform into one

Wolf o' the Territories

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
21	20	13	10	16	19	14	6	2

Tall he was—six-five at least, Jack guessed—and with shoulders so broad that his across still looked slightly out of proportion to his high. Long, greasy black hair shagged down his back to the shoulder blades. Muscles bulged and rippled as he moved amid the animals, which looked like pygmy cows. He was driving them away from Jack and toward the Western Road.

The eyes of this creature were a bright, impossible shade of orange. Looking into them was like looking into the eyes of a Halloween pumpkin. And while Elroy's grin had promised madness and murder, the smile on this fellow's face was large and cheerful and harmless.

His feet were bare, huge, and spatulate. the toes clumped together into groups of three and two, barely visible through curls of wiry hair. Not hooflike, as Elroy's had been, Jack realized, half-crazed with surprise, fear, a dawning amusement, but padlike-pawlike.

As he closed the distance between himself and Jack, (his? its?)

eyes flared an even brighter orange, going for a moment to the Day-Glo shade favored by hunters and flagmen on road-repair jobs. The color faded to a muddy hazel. As it did, Jack saw that his smile was puzzled as well as friendly, and understood two things at once: first, that there was no harm in this fellow, not an ounce of it, and second, that he was slow. Not feeble, perhaps, but slow.

He stuck out one hand, and Jack saw that, like his feet, his hands were covered with hair, although this hair was finer and more luxuriant—actually quite handsome. It grew especially thick in the palms, where it was the soft white of a blaze on a horse's forehead.

Bib overalls and a big handshake from a guy who looks like an overgrown Siberian husky and smells a little bit like a hayloft after a heavy rain, *Jack thought*. What next? An offer to come to his church this Sunday?

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite* 75%, 2d4 + FB

Claw* 60%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

3 HP (pelt)

Skills:

Herding 75%

Habitat: The Territories

Move: 13

HP: 19

Sanity Loss: none

*Changed form only

Common Animals and Abberations

*He made three trips to collect stones, because a grave dug
by hand must necessarily be a shallow one and animals, even in
such a tame world as this, are always hungry.*

Basement Rat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1-6	5-12	17	3	6-8	1-5	1	2	1

The rats were moving in, creeping on their bellies, forcing them forward. 'Look,' Warwick said coldly.

Hall saw. Something had happened to the rats back here, some hideous mutation that never could have survived under the eye of the sun; nature would have forbidden it. But down here, nature had taken on another ghastly face.

The rats were gigantic, some as high as three feet. But their rear legs were gone and they were blind as moles, like their flying cousins. They dragged themselves forward with hideous eagerness.

A legless rat, guided by some bastard form of sonar, lunged against him, biting. Its body was flabby, warm. Almost absently Hall turned the hose on it, knocking it away. The hose did not have quite so much pressure now.

Hall walked to the brow of the wet hill and looked down. The rat filled the whole gully at the far end of that noxious tomb. It was huge and pulsating grey, eyeless, totally without legs. When Hall's light struck it, it made a hideous mewling noise. Their queen, then, the magna mater. A huge and nameless thing whose progeny might some day develop wings. It seemed to dwarf what remained of Warwick, but that was probably just illusion. It was the shock of seeing a rat as big as a Holstein calf.

Basement rat

Fight Bonus: -1d2 or none

Weapons:

Bite 70%, 1 to 1d4+1

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scent prey: 80%

Navigate 90%

Habitat: Earth (underground)

Move: 8

HP: 3-9

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

Queen

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d3 +1 + FB

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Earth (underground)

Move: 0

HP: 12

Sanity Loss: 2/2d4+1

Billy-bumbler (Throcken)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
3	10	14	4	7	3	14	3	1

Up ahead, a large creature that looked like a badger crossed with a raccoon ambled out of the woods. It looked at them with its large, gold-rimmed eyes, twitching its sharp, whiskery snout as if to say Huh! Big deal!, then strolled the rest of the way across the road and disappeared again. Before it did, Eddie noted its tail—long and closely coiled, it looked like a fur-covered bedspring.

“What was that, Roland?”

“A billy-bumbler.”

“No good to eat?”

Roland shook his head. “Tough. Sour. I’d rather eat dog.”

“Have you?” Susannah asked. “Eaten dog, I mean?”

Roland nodded, but did not elaborate.

“What is it?” Jake asked softly. He did not want to startle it away; he was enchanted. “Its eyes are beautiful!”

“Billy-bumbler,” Roland said.

“Umber!” the creature ejaculated, and retreated another step.

“It talks!”

“Not really. Bumpers just repeat what they hear—or used to. I haven’t heard one do it in years. This fellow looks almost starved. Probably came to forage.”

“He was licking my face. Can I feed it?”

“We’ll never get rid of it if you do,” Roland said, then smiled a little and snapped his fingers. “Hey! Billy!”

The creature mimicked the sound of the snapping fingers somehow; it sounded as if it were clucking its tongue against the roof of its mouth. “Ay!” it called in its hoarse voice. “Ay, Illy!” Now its ragged hind-quarters were positively flagging back and forth.

“Go ahead and give it a bite. I knew an old groom once who said a good bumbler is good luck. This looks like a good one.”

“Yes,” Jake agreed. “It does.”

“Once they were tame, and every barony had half a dozen roaming around the castle or manor-house. They weren’t good for much except amusing the children and keeping the rat population down. They can be quite faithful—or were in the old days—although I’ve never heard of one that would remain as loyal as a good dog. The wild ones are scavengers. Not dangerous, but a pain in the ass.”

Fight Bonus: -1d4

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d3

Claw 25%, 1d2 (x2)

Armor:

1 HP (pelt)

Skills:

Track by Scent 85%

Speak 20%

Habitat: Mid-World

Move: 8

HP: 6

Sanity Loss: none

Buffalo

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
40	20	14	3	10	40	10	1	1

Before them, an almost endless plain dozed in the long golden light of a summer's afternoon. The grass was lush, emerald green, and very high. Groves of trees with long, slender trunks and wide, spreading tops dotted the plain. Susannah had once seen similar trees, she thought, in a travelogue film about Australia.

The road they had been following swooped down the far side of the hill and then ran straight as a string into the southeast, a bright white lane cutting through the grass. To the west, some miles off, she could see a herd of large animals grazing peacefully. They looked like buffalo. To the east, the last of the forest made a curved peninsula into the grassland. This incursion was a dark, tangled shape that looked like a forearm with a cocked fist at the end.

They could see more buildings ahead. Most looked like farms, and all appeared deserted. Some of them had fallen down, but these wrecks seemed to be the work of time rather than violence, furthering Eddie's and Jake's hopes of what they might find in the city—hopes each had kept strictly within himself, lest the others scoff. Small herds of shaggy beasts grazed their way across the plains. They kept well away from the road except to cross, and this they did quickly, at a gallop, like packs of small children afraid of traffic. They looked like bison to Jake . . . except he saw several which had two heads. He mentioned this to the gunslinger, and Roland nodded.

"Muties."

"Only buffaler cream," Aunt Talitha said dismissively. "No more cows—last one croaked thirty years ago. Buffaler cream ain't no prize-winner, but better 'n nothin, by Daisy!"

In the days of their great-great-grandparents, River Crossing had been much the town Susannah had imagined: a trade-stop at the Great Road, modestly prosperous, a place where goods were sometimes sold but more often exchanged. It had been at least nominally part of River Barony, although even then such things as Baronies and Estates o' Land had been passing.

There had been buffalo-hunters in those days, although the trade had been dying out; the herds were small and badly mutated. The meat of these mutant beasts was not poison, but it had been rank and bitter.

"Eventually I began to preach again. There was no conscious decision to do so—it wasn't anything I prayed over, God knows—and when I did, I discovered these people knew all about the Man Jesus." He laughed. "Along with The Over, and Oriza, and Buffalo Star . . . do you know Buffalo Star, Roland?"

"Oh yes," the gunslinger said, remembering a preacher of the Buff whom he had once been forced to kill.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Horns 50%, 2d4 + FB

Trample 75%, 3d6 + 1

Armor:

5 HP (hide)

Skills:

Scent predator 60%

Habitat: Plains

Move: 14

HP: 30+

Sanity Loss: none

Cat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
2	15	18	4	7	2	10	2	1

Eddie shoved the barrel of the pistol deeper under Andolini's chin. The smell of gas and gunpowder was strong in the air, for the time being overwhelming the smell of books. Somewhere in the shadows there was an angry hiss from Sergio, the bookstore cat. Sergio apparently didn't approve of loud noises in his domain.

She took the cat from her shoulder and held it in front of her eyes. The old torn purred and stretched out its pug of a face toward hers. She kissed its nose. The cat closed its milky gray-green eyes in ecstasy. "So beautiful, like you—so y'are, so y'are! Hee!"

She put the cat down. It walked slowly toward the hearth, where a late fire lazed, desultorily eating at a single log. Musty's tail, split at the tip so it looked like the forked tail of a devil in an old drawing, switched back and forth in the room's dim orange air. Its extra legs, dangling from its sides, twitched dreamily. The shadow which trailed across the floor and grew up the wall was a horror: a thing that looked like a cat crossed with a spider.

Musty sniffed, head stretched forward, ears laid back, old eyes rimmed with that rose light. Rhea was instantly jealous.

"Get away, foolish, 'tis not for the likes of you!"

She swatted the cat. Musty shied back, hissing like a kettle, and stalked in dudgeon to the hummock which marked the very tip of Coos Hill. There he sat, affecting disdain and licking one paw as the wind combed ceaselessly through his fur.

Fight Bonus: -1d4

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d3

Scratch 75%, 1d2

Rake* 80%, 1d2 + 1

Armor:

none

Skills:

Listen 95%

Scent 90%

Habitat: Any

Move: 15

HP: 4-5

Sanity Loss: none

*If a cat can hold on with both front paws, it will rake with its rear paws.

Child of Roderick

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
8	9	9	5	8	12	3	5	1

Ahead of them, staggering unsteadily along the shoulder, was an old man with snarled and straggly white hair. He wore a clumsy wrap of dirty cloth that could by no means be called a robe. His scrawny arms and legs were whipped with scratches. There were sores on them as well, burning a dull red. His feet were bare, and equipped with ugly and dangerous-looking yellow talons instead of toes. Clapsed under one arm was a splintery wooden object that might have been a broken lyre.

The thing that had been trudging along the berm of Route 7 turned toward them, and Eddie let out an involuntary cry of horror. Its eyes bled together above the bridge of its nose, reminding him of a double-yolked egg in a frypan. A fang depended from one nostril like a bone booger. Yet somehow worst of all was the dull green glow that baked out from the creature's face. It was as if its skin had been painted with some sort of thin fluorescent gruel.

"Roland, was that . . . was it a slow mutant?"

"Aye, I suppose you'd say so, poor old thing. But the Rodericks are from beyond any lands I ever knew, although before the world moved on they gave their grace to Arthur Eld."

"They're wandering folken," Ted put in. "Bedouins. I think they follow the railroad tracks, for the most part."

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Any

Armor:

none

Skills:

Scavenge 60%

Habitat: Out-World, End-World

Move: 8

HP: 9

Sanity Loss: 0 / 1d3

Crow

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
1	9	14	3	5	1-2	10	2	1

The nine of them got off the highway and camped in a farmhouse somewhere just west of Columbia, now over the Indiana state line. They were all in shock, and Fran thought in later days that their walk across the field from the overturned pink trailer on the turnpike to the farmhouse would have looked to an observer like a fieldtrip sponsored by the local lunatic asylum. The grass, thigh-high and still wet from the previous night's rain, had soon soaked their pants. White butterflies, sluggish in the air because their wings were still heavy with moisture, swooped toward them and then away in drugged circles and figure eights.

The sun was struggling to break through but hadn't made it yet; it was a bright smear feebly illuminating a uniform white cloud cover that stretched from horizon to horizon. But cloud cover or no cloud cover, the day was hot already, wringing with humidity, and the air was filled with whirling flocks of crows and their raucous, ugly cries. There are more crows than people now, Fran thought dazedly. If we don't watch out, they'll peck us right off the face of the earth. Revenge of the blackbirds. Were crows meat-eaters? She very much feared that they were.

Fight Bonus: -1d3

Weapons:

Peck 70%, 1d4

Armor:

none

Skills:

Spot objects 80%

Habitat: Any

Move: 6, fly 30

HP: 21

Sanity Loss: none

Dog

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
7	10	13	5	7	4-5	10	2	1

Although most humans don't know it, scents are like colors to dogs. Faint scents have faint colors, like pastels washed out by time. Clear scents have clear colors. Some dogs have weak noses, and they read scents the way humans with poor eyes see colors, believing this delicate blue may actually be a gray, or that dark brown may actually be a black. Frisky's nose, on the other hand, was like the eyesight of a man with the gaze of a hawk, and the scent in the attic where Dennis had slept was very strong and very clear (it may have helped that Dennis had been some days without a bath). Frisky sniffed the hay, then sniffed the blanket THE GIRL held for her. She scented Arlen upon it, but disregarded the scent; it was weaker, and not at all the scent she had found on the hay. Arlen's smell was lemony and tired, and Frisky knew at once that it was the smell of an old man. Dennis's smell was more exciting and vital. To Frisky's nose, it was the electric blue of a summer lightning stroke.

She barked to show that she knew this smell and had put it safely away in her library of scents.

In the field, Frisky had paused. She turned toward THE GIRL and THE TALL-BOY and barked impatiently for them to follow. Anduan huskies were the tame descendants of the great white wolves the residents of the Northern Barony had feared in earlier times, but tame or not, they were hunters and trackers before they were anything else. Frisky had isolated that bright-blue thread of scent again, and was in a fever to be off.

Shortly before those mortal events in the Camber doorway, Cujo's remains were cremated. The ashes went out with the trash and were disposed of at the Augusta waste-treatment plant. It would perhaps not be amiss to point out that he had always tried to be a good dog. He had tried to do all the things his MAN and his WOMAN and most of all his BOY had asked or expected of him. He would have died for them, if that had been required. He had never wanted to kill anybody.

Fight Bonus: -1d4 or 0

Weapons:

Bite 30%, 1d6

Armor:

none

Skills:

Listen 75%

Scent 90%

Habitat: Wherever humans live

Move: 12

HP: 7-8

Sanity Loss: none

Gamma Maggot

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
25	20	8	1	15	25+	1	1	1

I was cut off by a sound that has hounded me through nightmares ever since, a hideous mewing sound, like that of some gigantic rat in pain.

The car was empty, the door on the passengers side open. I shone my light over the ground. Here and there were footprints of a girl wearing high heels, a girl who had to be Vicki. The rest of the tracks were blotted out by a monstrous something; I hesitate to call it a track. It was more as if something huge had dragged itself into the woods. Its hugeness was testified, too, as I noticed the broken saplings and crushed underbrush.

The lab was darkened and all that I could make out was a huge shadow moving sluggishly. And the screams! Screams of terror, the screams of a man faced with a monster from the pits of hell. It mewed horribly and seemed to pant in delight.

My hand moved around for a light switch. There, I found it! Light flooded the room, illuminating a tableau of horror that was the result of the grave thing I had performed, I and the dead uncle. A huge, white maggot twisted on the garage floor, holding Weinbaum with long suckers, raising him towards its dripping, pink mouth from which horrid mewing sounds came. Veins, red and pulsating, showed under its slimy flesh and millions of squirming tiny maggots - in the blood vessels, in the skin, even forming a huge eye that stared out at me. A huge maggot, made up of hundreds of millions of maggots, the feasters on the dead flesh that Weinbaum had used so freely.

In a half-world of terror I fired the revolver again and again. It mewed and twitched. Weinbaum screamed something as he was dragged inexorably toward the waiting mouth. Incredibly, I made it out over the hideous sound that the creature was making.

"Fire it! In the name of heaven, fire it!"

Then I saw the sticky pools of green liquid which had trickled over the floor from the laboratory. I fumbled for my lighter, got it and frantically thumbled it. Suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten to put a flint in. I reached for matches, got one and fired the others. I threw the pack just as Weinbaum screamed his last. I saw his body through the translucent skin of the creature, still twitching as thousands of maggots leached onto it. Retching, I threw the now flaring matches into the green ooze. It was flammable, just as I had thought. It burst into bright flames. The creature was twisted into a horrid ball of pulsing, putrid flesh.

Fight Bonus: 2d6

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 3d4 + FB

Armor:

4 HP (hide)

Skills:

Scent prey 75%

Habitat: Any

Move: 9

HP: 23+

Sanity Loss: 2/1d4+2

Lobstrosity

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
14	15	17	3	6	8	1	0	1

The horror was a crawling which must have been cast up by a previous wave. It dragged a wet, gleaming body laboriously along the sand. It was about four feet long and about four yards to the right. It regarded Roland with bleak eyes on stalks. Its long serrated beak dropped open and it began to make a noise that was weirdly like human speech: plaintive, even desperate questions in an alien tongue.

“Did-a-chick? Dum-a-chum? Dad-a-cham? Ded-a-check?”

The gunslinger had seen lobsters. This wasn't one, although lobsters were the only things he had ever seen which this creature even vaguely resembled. It didn't seem afraid of him at all.

He heard the grinding, swelling roar of water and looked from the creature (it had stopped and was holding up the claws with which it had been pulling itself along, looking absurdly like a boxer assuming his opening stance, which, Cort had taught them, was called The Honor Stance) to the incoming breaker with its curdle of foam.

It hears the wave, the gunslinger thought. Whatever it is, it's got ears.

“No, bastard!” Roland snarled, and kicked it. It was like kicking a block of rock... one that bit. It tore away the end of Roland's right boot, tore away most of his great toe, tore the boot itself from his foot.

It was almost upon him, a thing four feet long and a foot high, a creature which might weigh as much as seventy pounds and which was as single-mindedly carnivorous as David, the hawk he had had as a boy—but without David's dim vestige of loyalty.

Fight Bonus: 0

Weapons:

Claw 70%, 1d4+1 (x2)

Bite 50%, 1d4

Armor:

6 HP (shell)

Skills:

Hear Wave 99%

Habitat: Mid-World (beaches)

Move: 8

HP: 11

Sanity Loss: 0/1

Mutant Bat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
2	8	16	1	5	2	1	1	1

He was nearly three-quarters of the way back when the huge whirring filled the darkness. He looked up and the gigantic flying form smashed into his face.

The mutated bats had not lost their tails yet. It whipped around Hall's neck in a loathsome coil and squeezed as the teeth sought the soft spot under his neck. It wriggled and flapped with its membranous wings, clutching the tatters of his shirt for purchase.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 75%, 1d3

Tail 65%, 1

Armor:

none

Skills:

Hunt prey 75%

Habitat: Earth (underground)

Move: 4, fl. 18

HP: 4-5

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Mutie Wasp

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
2	8	13	1	3	2	1	1	1

Tian was blessed with livestock, including three mules, but a man would be mad to try using a mule out in Son of a Bitch; the beast unlucky enough to draw such duty would likely be lying legbroke or stung to death by noon of the first day. One of Tian's uncles had almost met this latter fate some years before. He had come running back to the home place, screaming at the top of his lungs and pursued by huge mutie wasps with stingers the size of nails.

They had found the nest (well, Andy had found it; Andy wasn't bothered by wasps no matter how big they were) and burned it with kerosene, but there might be others. Then there were the holes. You couldn't burn holes, could you? No. And Son of a Bitch sat on what the old folks called "loose ground." It was consequently possessed of almost as many holes as rocks, not to mention at least one cave that puffed out draughts of nasty, decay-smelling air. Who knew what boggarts might lurk down its dark throat?

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Stinger 1d2

Armor:

1 HP (carapace)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Mid-World

Move: 8

HP: 5

Sanity Loss: 0 (individual wasp)

0/1 (swarm)

Rock-cat

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
10	12	18	4	10	8-10	10	1	1

There were less sandtraps, but that was cold comfort. The ground was becoming grainier, more and more like cheap and unprofitable soil and less and less like sand (in places bunches of weeds grew, looking almost ashamed to be there), and there were so many large rocks now jutting from this odd combination of sand and soil that Eddie found himself detouring around them as he had previously tried to detour the Lady's chair around the sandtraps. And soon enough, he saw, there would be no beach left at all. The hills, brown and cheerless things, were drawing steadily closer. Eddie could see the ravines which curled between them, looking like chops made by an awkward giant wielding a blunt cleaver. That night, before falling asleep, he heard what sounded like a very large cat squalling far up in one of them.

"I thought the shells were all losers."

"Probably are. But I've loaded with the ones I believe were wetted least—three from the buckle side of the left belt, three from the buckle side of the right. One may fire. Two, if you're lucky. Don't try them on the crawlies." His eyes considered Eddie briefly. "There may be other things out there."

"You heard it too, didn't you?"

"If you mean something yowling in the hills, yes. If you mean the Bugger-Man, as your eyes say, no. I heard a wildcat in the brakes, that's all, maybe with a voice four times the size of its body. It may be nothing you can't drive off with a stick. But there's her to think about."

"I'll be fine."

"No you won't. You're too close to the high tide line. If I leave you here, the lobsters are going to come out when it gets dark and you're going to be dinner." Up in the hills, a cat's coughing growl suddenly cut across what he was saying like a knife cutting thin cord. It was a good distance away, but closer than the other had been. Her eyes flicked to the gunslinger's revolver shoved into the waistband of his pants for just a moment, when back to his face. He felt a dull heat in his cheeks.

Let her be safe, that's my wish, let my beloved be safe. And, like an ill omen, a wildcat screeched somewhere in the tortured ravines that cut through the hills . . . only this wildcat sounded as big as a lion roaring in an African jungle.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 30%, 1d4

Claw 50%, 1d3 + FB

Rip* 80%, 2d3 + FB

Armor:

Skills:

Climb 80%

Hide 80%

Sneak 90%

Habitat: Mid-World (plains)

Move: 14

HP: 10-11

Sanity Loss: none

*If both claws hit, the rock-cat hangs on, continuing to bite, and may rip with its hind claws.

Salig-folk

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
17	20	10	6	10	17	5	3	1

Some of them looked a bit like medieval paintings of devils and satyrs. Some looked like degenerate human beings—cave-people, almost. And one of the things lurching into the early-morning sunlight had scaly skin and nictitating eyelids . . . it looked to Richard Sloat like an alligator that was somehow walking upright. As he looked, the thing lifted its snout and uttered the cry he and Jack had heard earlier: Grooo-OOOOO!

Bullets also tore open the whitish-green belly of the alligator-thing, and a blackish fluid—ichor, not blood—began to pour out of it. It fell backward, but its tail seemed to cushion it. It sprang back up and leaped at Richard's side of the train. It uttered its rough, powerful cry again . . . and this time it seemed to Richard that there was something hideously feminine in that cry.

The alligator-thing ran with slow, clumsy, thudding determination. Its eyes sparkled with murderous fury . . . and intelligence. The vestiges of breasts bounced on its scaly chest.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Bite 50%, 1d6 + FB

Armor:

4 HP (hide)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Territories

Move: 6

HP: 18

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Sampler Android

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
25	18*	17	8	-	15	14	10	-

The trader's hull split. A gangplank popped out like a tongue. A man strode down it behind three sampler androids and a guy built into treads that was surely the captain. He wore a beret with a clan symbol on it, anyway.

One of the androids waved a sampler wand at him. Shapiro batted it away. He fell on his knees in front of the captain and embraced the treads which had replaced the captain's dead legs.

"The dunes... Rand... no water... alive... hypnotized him... drone-head world... I... thank God..."

A steel tentacle whipped around Shapiro and yanked him away on his gut. Dry sand whispered underneath him like laughter.

"It's okay," the captain said. "Bey-at shell Me! Me! Gat!"

The android dropped Shapiro and backed away, clittering distractedly to itself.

"All this way for a fucking Fed!" the captain exclaimed bitterly.

"Dud. Take one of the andies and get him down from there." He shook his head. "Fedship, Christ. No salvage."

Dud nodded. A few moments later he was scrambling up the side of the dune with one of the andies. The andy looked like a twenty-year-old surfer who might make dope money on the side servicing bored widows, but his stride gave him away even more than the segmented tentacles which grew from his armpits. The stride, common to all androids, was the slow, reflective, almost painful stride of an aging English butler with hemorrhoids.

Dud and the android were coming back down the flank of the dune. Rand wasn't with them. The andy fell further and further behind. And now a strange thing happened. The andy fell over on its face. The captain frowned. It did not fall as an andy is supposed to fall -- which is to say, like a human being, more or less. It was as if someone had pushed over a mannequin in a department store. It fell over like that. Thump, and a little tan cloud of sand puffed up from around it.

Dud went back and knelt by it. The andy's legs were still moving as if it dreamed, in the 1.5 million Freon-cooled micro-circuits that made up its mind, that it still walked. But the leg movements were slow and cracking. They stopped. Smoke began to come out of its pores and its tentacles shivered in the sand. It was gruesomely like watching a human die. A deep grinding came from inside it: Graaaaagggg!

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Tentacle 80%, 1d4 + FB (x2)

Armor:

4 HP (metal body)

Skills:

any

Habitat: Beachworld, etc.

Move: 10

HP: 16

Sanity Loss: none

Slow Mutant

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
20	20	10	5	10	15	2	4	1

Jake saw the first one and screamed aloud.

The gunslinger's head, which had been fixed straight forward as he pumped the handcar, jerked to the right.

There was a rotten jack-o-lantern greenness below and away from them, circular and pulsating faintly. For the first time he became aware of odor- faint, unpleasant, wet.

The greenness was a face, and the face was abnormal. Above the flattened nose was an insectile node of eyes, looking at them expressionlessly. The gunslinger felt an atavistic crawl in his intestines and privates. He stepped up the rhythm of arms and handcar handle slightly.

The glowing face faded.

"What was it?" the boy asked, crawling. What—"

The words stopped dumb in his throat as they came upon and passed a group of three faintly glowing forms, standing between the rails and the invisible river, watching them, motionless.

"They're Slow Mutants," the gunslinger said.

"I don't think they'll bother us. They're probably just as frightened of us as we are of—"

One of the forms broke free and shambled toward them, glowing and changing. The face was that of a starving idiot. The faint naked body had been transformed into a knotted mess of tentacular limbs with suckers.

The Slow Mutants could smell their terror, he knew that, but he doubted if terror alone would be enough to motivate them. He and the boy were, after all, creatures of the light, and whole. How they must hate us, he thought...

The gunslinger shot the mutant in the chest. It began to slobber through the grin. Jake was going off the side. The gunslinger caught one of his arms and was almost pulled off balance himself. The thing was amazingly strong. The gunslinger put another bullet in the mutant's head. One eye went out like a candle. Still it pulled.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Club (50% likely)

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Mid-World (underground)

Move: 6

HP: 17

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Ter Cow (Creep)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
13	12	9	2	8	15	10	2	1

They really did look like some strange cross between cows and sheep, Jack saw, and wondered what you would call such a crossbreed. The only word to come immediately to mind was creeps—or perhaps, he thought, the singular would be more proper in this case, as in Here's Wolf taking care of his flock of creep. Oh yeah. Right here and now.

Even the biggest creep stood no more than four feet high. Their fur was woolly, but of a muddy shade that was similar to Wolf's eyes—at least, when Wolf's eyes weren't blazing like Halloween jack-o'-lanterns. Their heads were topped with short, squiggly horns that looked good for absolutely nothing. Wolf herded them back out of the road. They went obediently, with no sign of fear. If a cow or a sheep on my side of the jump got a whiff of that guy, Jack thought, it'd kill itself trying to get out of his way.

Some of them had gone east into The Settlements, where they served the Queen as guards, soldiers, even as personal bodyguards. Their lived, Wolf explained to Jack, had only two great touchstones; the Lady and the family. Most of the Wolfs, he said, served the Lady as he did—watching the herds.

The cow-sheep were the Territories' primary source of meat, cloth, tallow, and lamp-oil (Wolf did not tell Jack this, but Jack inferred it from what he said). All the cattle belonged to the Queen, and the Wolf family had been watching over them since time out of mind. It was their job.

"The, ah, herd," Jack said. "When you change, do they—"

"Oh, we don't go near the herd when we change," Wolf said seriously. "Good Jason, no! We'd eat them, don't you know that? And a Wolf who eats of his herd must be put to death. The Book of Good Farming says so. Wolf! Wolf! We have places to go when the moon is full. So does the herd. They're stupid, but they know they have to go away at the time of the big moon. Wolf! They better know, God pound them!"

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Kick 40%, 1d2 + FB

Armor:

1 HP (fur)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Territories

Move: 9

HP: 9-13

Sanity Loss: none

Wolf

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
13	11	13	5	11	8	12	2	1

"Who's there?" The Kid shouted. "You better answer me! Answer, goddammit, or I start shooting!"

And he was answered, but not by any human voice. A howl rose up in the night like a hoarse siren, first climbing and then dropping rapidly down to a guttural growl.

"Holy Jesus!" The Kid said, and his voice was suddenly thin.

Coming down the slope on the far side of the turnpike and crossing the median strip were wolves, gaunt gray timberwolves, their eyes red, their jaws gaping and adrip. There were more than two dozen of them. Trashcan, in an ecstasy of terror, made wee-wee in his pants again.

In her vision, she turned, fear leaping hotly into her throat with a taste like fresh copper. And there, shouldering its way out of the corn like a ragged silver ghost, was a huge Rocky Mountain timberwolf, its jaws hanging open in a sardonic grin, its eyes burning. There was a beaten silver collar around its thick neck, a thing of handsome, barbarous beauty, and from it dangled a small stone of blackest jet. . . and in the center was a small red flaw, like an eye.

Or a key.

She crossed herself and forked the sign of the evil eye at this dreadful apparition, but its jaws only grinned wider, and between them lolled the naked pink muscle of its tongue.

The lead wolf had attacked just as Kojak's hindquarters slipped into the shadow cast by the porch. It came in low, going for the belly, and the others followed. Kojak sprang up and over the leader's snapping muzzle, giving the wolf his underbelly, and as the leader began to bite and scratch, Kojak fastened his own teeth in the wolf's neck, his teeth sinking deep, letting blood, and the wolf howled and tried to struggle away, its courage suddenly gone. As it pulled away, Kojak's jaws closed with lightning speed on the wolf's tender muzzle, and the wolf uttered a howling, abject scream as its nose was laid open to the nostrils and pulled to strings and tatters. It fled yipping with agony, shaking its head crazily from side to side, spraying droplets of blood to the left and right, and in the crude telepathy that all animals of like kind share, Kojak could read its over-and-over thought clearly enough:

(wasps in me o the wasps the wasps in my head wasps are up my head o)

And then the others hit him, one from the left and another from the right like huge blunt bullets, the last of the trio submarining in low, grinning, snapping, ready to pull out his intestines.

Fight Bonus: none

Weapons:

Bite 30%, 1d8

Armor:

1 HP (hide)

Skills:

Spot hidden 60%

Track by smell 80%

Habitat: Temperate, cold

Move: 12

HP: 10

Sanity Loss: none

Plants

“The back lawn’s the real chore,” he told the man, unconsciously deepening his voice. “It’s square and there are no obstructions, but it’s pretty well grown up.” His voice faltered back into its normal register and he found himself apologizing: “I’m afraid I’ve let it go.”

“No sweat, buddy. No strain. Great-great-great.” The lawnmower man grinned at him with a thousand traveling-salesman jokes in his eyes. “The taller, the better. Healthy soil, that’s what you got there, by Circe. That’s what I always say.”

By Circe?

Black Tree

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
13	16	12	4	15	40	5	2	3

Our boy? *these nasty things seemed to whisper inside of Jack's head.* OUR boy?

All in your mid, Jack-O. You're just freaking out a little.

Thing was, he didn't really believe that.

The trees were changing. That sense of thick oppression in the air—that sense of being watched—was all too real. And he had begun to think that his mind's obsessive return to monstrous thoughts was almost something he was picking up from the forest . . . as if the trees themselves were sending to him on some horrible shortwave.

He slipped first behind one of the black trees, but the touch of the gnarly trunk—it was a bit like the banyans he had seen while on vacation on Hawaii year before last—was oily and unpleasant. Jack moved to the left and behind the trunk of a pine.

Our boy? YESSSS!

Something slithered over his foot . . . and up his ankle. Jack screamed and floundered backward, thinking it must be a snake. But when he looked down he saw that one of those gray roots had slipped up his foot . . . and now it ringed his calf.

That's impossible, *he thought stupidly.* Roots don't move—

He pulled back sharply, yanking his leg out of the rough gray manacle the root had formed. There was thin pain in his calf, like the pain of a rope-burn. He raised his eyes and felt sick fear slip into his heart. He thought he knew now why Morgan had sensed him and gone on anyway; Morgan knew that walking into this forest was like walking into a jungle stream infested with piranhas.

One particularly thick root, its last six inches dark with earth and damp, rose and wavered in front of him like a cobra piped up from a fakir's basket. OUR boy! YESS!

Fight Bonus:

Weapons:

Root 65%, 1d3

Armor:

6 HP (bark)

Skills:

none

Habitat: Territories, End-World

Move: 6

HP: 28

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3

Powers of the Red:

Animation

Send Thoughts

Boom-flurry

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
9	16	8	5	6	18	7	2	1

Up ahead, the path breasted the top of a hill. On either side were fantastically misshapen organ-pipe cactuses with great thick barrel arms that seemed to point every which way. Oy was standing there, looking down at something, and once more seeming to grin. As Jake approached him, he could smell the cactus-plants. The odor was bitter and tangy. It reminded him of his father's martinis.

At the same moment the pony shifted and gave a nervous whinny. Jake reined him, realizing the bitter (but not entirely unpleasant) smell of gin and juniper had gotten stronger. He looked around and saw two spiny barrels of the cactus-tangle on his right swiveling slowly and blindly toward him. There was a faint grinding sound, and dribbles of white sap were running down the cactus's central barrel. The needles on the arms swinging toward Jake looked long and wicked in the moonlight. The thing had smelled him, and it was hungry.

As he watched, the spiny barrel arms swung inward to block the road—and, perhaps, impale the prey. Andy, however, had no reason to fear cactus spines. He swung an arm and broke one of the barrels off halfway down its length. It fell into the dust, spurting white goo. Maybe it wasn't sap at all, Jake thought. Maybe it was blood. In any case, the cactus on the other side swiveled away in a hurry.

Fight Bonus: 1d4

Weapons:

Needles 50%, 1 + FB (x2)

Armor:

1 hp (skin*)

Skills:

Scent prey: 80%

Habitat: Out-World

Move: 0

HP: 17

Sanity Loss: none

*Unarmed attacks against a boom-flurry result in 1 + attacker's FB damage to the attacker.

Kadath (Common Ivy)

Attributes:

S	F	D	W	A	Sz	Ap	E	K
22	20	18	5	20+	*	14	2	2

Like the greenhouse in Central Falls, it had become a jungle. But whereas in Tina Barfield's jungle there had been plants of many kinds, here there was just ivy, ivy, and more ivy. It grew everywhere, twining over the handles of Riddley's broom and window-washer, climbing along the shelves, running up the walls to the ceiling, where it grew along the tiles in tough, zig-zagging strands from which brilliant green leaves hung, some still opening. Riddley's mop-bucket has itself become a large steel plant-pot from which a huge bush of ivy rises in a tangle of tendrils, leaves, and...

"What are those flowers?" I asked. "Those blue flowers? Never seen anything like those before, especially not on an ivy plant."

"You've never seen anything like any of this before, period," he said.

Sandra squatted down and held out her hand, the way you might hold your hand out for a strange dog to sniff. I didn't like to see her that way, not while she was so close to the green avalanche we'd let out of the janitor's closet. In its shadow, so to speak. I reached out to pull her back, but Roger stopped me. He had a queer little smile on his face.

"Let her," he said.

A tendril as thick as a branch detached itself from the nearly solid clump of green bulging through the doorway. It reached out to her, trembling, seeming almost to sniff its way to her. It slid around her wrist and she gasped. Herb started forward and Roger yanked him back. "Leave her alone!"

"It's all right!" he said.

"Do you swear?"

Roger's lips were pressed together so tightly they were almost gone. "No," he said in a small voice. "But I think."

"It is all right," Sandra said dreamily. She watched as the tendril slid delicately up her bare arm in a spiral of green and brown, seeming to caress her bare skin as it went. It looked like some exotic snake. "It says it's a friend."

*Common ivy begins as a tiny sprout, but increases in size rapidly, at a rate of 20 per day. Theoretically, there is no limit to its size, but it cannot normally grow across garlic. However, given a taste of innocent blood, such precautions are useless.

Fight Bonus: 1d6

Weapons:

Vine (75%), 1d3 + FB (x10 or more)

Armor:

none

Skills:

none

Habitat: Any (soil)

Move: 1

HP: 60+

Sanity Loss: 0/1d4

Powers of the Red:

Clairvoyance

Command

Sleep

Glam

Sup

Powers of the White:

Send thoughts

Longevity

Good Luck

Common ivy draws its power from both Discordia and the All.

In addition to its supernatural powers, common ivy induces a telepathic bond among its circle of friends similar to the Breaker group ability of good-mind.