



Tharkold™



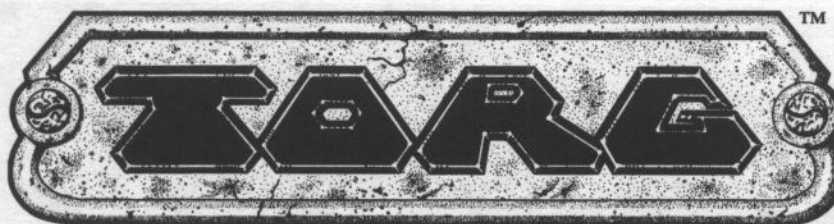
THE SOURCEBOOK OF TECHNO-HORROR REALITY

The Near Now™ ...

Later today, early tomorrow, sometime next week,
the world began to end.

Los Angeles. Lala-land. The City of the Angels has become the City of the Demons since the Possibility Raiders™ came to steal the stuff of Earth's dreams. A Maelstrom Bridge™ crashes into the very heart of the city. Beings half-flesh and half-machine stalk the streets, spreading panic. Technomages meld cybernetics and the forces of magic into potent weapons. Core Earth™ humanity finds itself trapped in a War as old as history and as modern as tomorrow.

This is the realm of ...



Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

Tharkold™

The Sourcebook of Techno-Horror Reality

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Introduction



Twilight catches me on the streets. Bad idea. I clutch the sack of scavenged supplies closer to my chest. Kal-kan for supper: yum. I try to walk as if I don't feel their eyes. Move too fast, they may decide to chase. Too slow, and they may strike without even thinking about it, like a frog absent-mindedly snagging a lazy-buzzing fly. I wonder if there's even time to scream?

That's if they're watching. Sometimes they aren't. I can't tell. Better be safe, and try to walk a little quicker. But not too quick.

One day storms came and the earth shook. Only a few weeks ago? A few lifetimes? Now the buildings grow back where the Almost Big One brought them down. The machines crawl through the ruins, eating rubble and excreting strange, twisted shapes. Each morning the air is a little fouler, a little harsher to

the taste, thick with a gluey smog that never came from a car.

The fear, like the air, has grown heavier, more clinging. For a day or so after the quake, everyone could pretend. Sure, it had been bad. But the rumors were just more crazy stories in a world full of crazy stories.

People tried to leave. Storms raged on all sides of the city. Storms. The kind you get when a Possibility Raider comes to Earth from wherever they come from. But which one? Not the scales. No priests, like they have in France. Certainly no Egyptian guys running around. Not even any werewolves. Someone told me they have werewolves in Australia now. I told him he'd been watching too many late-night movies. The gangs were worse, but they had always been bad. Pretty much the same old LA.

Until the night I saw something, just a glimpse, walking past an alley. A face,

half beast, half robot and a flash in the shadows, like something sharp playing tag with the fitful street lights. It glimmered and was gone before I was even sure there had been anything to see. Just my eyes playing tricks. Except tricks don't leave people neatly dissected, severed limbs laid out with surgical precision in obscene positions. And that's how the cops found old Mrs. Aiello, in the alley next morning.

Since then there's been a killing every night, always the same. People carved up as if they'd run into a scalpel the size of a chain saw. And the rest of us feel the eyes watching us, marking our movements. And when evening finds us on the streets, we walk quickly, but not too quickly, to the safety of home.

I have the keys out, and snap open the locks. In through the door and click-click-click, made it through another day.

I turn, and something comes at me, something half-beast, half-robot. Something I saw in an alley once.

And there isn't even time to scream.

The Possibility Wars

Earth has been invaded. Alien beings called "High Lords" from other universes, other realities, have brought their worlds to ours, seeking to drain Earth of "possibility energy"—the life force of the planet.

Each High Lord rules a section of the Earth, reshaping its natural laws to fit those of his home reality. That is the situation on Earth in the Near Now of *Torg: The Possibility Wars*.

At the outset of the Possibility Wars, as five High Lords established their realms on our embattled planet, a sixth Possibility Raider tried to invade the USSR. The attack was repelled and in the conflicts that have raged since then, no one has given much thought to Tharkold.

Until a Maelstrom Bridge crashes into



the heart of downtown Los Angeles.

Tharkold is the realm of "techno-horror." It blends advanced technology with primal terror. The realm of Tharkold is ruled by the techno-demons, who view the humans within their domain as prey, as slaves, as victims to be manipulated in any way that takes the invaders' terrible fancy.

Weakened by their earlier setbacks, the Tharkoldu can only establish a small realm on Earth. From Los Angeles, the Demons can extend their sway over western North America. But first, there are other matters to be attended to. The Tharkoldu are aware that Nippon Tech was instrumental in their earlier defeat in Russia. That's a debt that calls for repayment. And of all the High Lords invading Earth, "Ryuchi Kanawa" should be able to appreciate a finely executed act of revenge. And he shall. He shall.

Important!

This sourcebook is a companion volume to *Torg: Roleplaying The Possibility Wars*. While it is possible to use this setting with other roleplaying systems, many of the concepts and rules presented here are explained in greater detail in the boxed *Torg* rules set. Read the game books first, then return to this sourcebook to learn more about the techno-horror realm of Tharkold.

The Sourcebook

This sourcebook contains all the information you need in order to design exciting campaigns and adventures within the *Torg* universe and the dark-future cosm of Tharkold, where humanity fights for its life against a hideous foe.

It describes the cultures of Tharkold, their technology, and the goals of the Possibility Raiders in Los Angeles. It provides new character templates, rules for advanced cybertechnology,



and the descriptions of the techno-horrors themselves.

Pit the Storm Knights against the vicious Demons of Tharkold. Join the humans of Tharkold in their War against this ancient enemy. Fight to

keep the realm from swallowing more of Core Earth.

As night falls on the deserted streets of the captive City of the Angels, and dark shapes creep from the shadows, step into the realm of Tharkold. The battle is about to begin.



Chapter One

The Cosm



Tharkold is a planet like our own. The pivotal difference between Tharkold and Core Earth is that for the last three thousand years, there has been continuous warfare between two species for control of the planet. Members of either species do not speak of wars in the plural, but simply of the War. Both species consider the other to be an invader, and each, in its earliest myths, tells how the enemy appeared out of nowhere.

One of the contesting species is homo sapiens. Humanity, but a humanity with several marked differences compared to our own race. Not least is the blurring, or erasure, of major ethnic differences. Humanity on Tharkold has been exposed to mutagens generated both by science and magic. Many generations of humans have been bred in the slave pens of their enemy, who mixed many ethnic strains to fit their own purposes. Today, humanity is simply the Race, both in the singular and plural.

Opposed to the Race is a species of magical beings, humanoid but far from human, once known by names such as "maskim," "nephelos," "oni," "akuma," "tikoloshe," "p'o." The English word that most closely approximates these terms is "demon." They refer to themselves as Tharkoldu. We use the terms "Tharkoldu" and "demon" interchangeably throughout this sourcebook.

The Name of the World

"Tharkold" is the demons name for this world. The term "Tharkold" is derived from their ancient language and means "Air of the hunters", and Tharkoldu are the "hunters of the air," implied masters of the world. As Tharkoldu dominated or destroyed cultures of the Race, their name stuck. Race scholars still refer to Tharkold by ancient human names, usually.

Tharkoldu

Tharkoldu are natural predators. While carnivorous, they also derive enjoyment and psychic sustenance from chaos, terror, and pain. Humans are prey. Prey that is obviously inspired by some unnatural force in the universe. Humanity resists its proper role in the scheme of things by warring against the hunter through monkey tricks and treachery, rather than strength and ferocity. Tharkoldu are sentient and creative, capable of social activity, although their instincts resist central authority.

The "natural order" of demonic society is a cross between feudalism and an extended clan. A group of Demons, through struggle, both overt and covert, determines the most ferocious, or most devious, of their number to lead them. This leader wields power as long as it can maintain it.

This is similar to the social interaction of many of Earth's predators, and in fact, the English term that most closely approximates the word for a Tharkoldu clan/family/group is "pride." As in "a pride of lions." The pride is as central to Tharkoldu psychology and sociology as the concept of the family is to human responses.

Demon society is loosely hierarchical and based on a pyramid of dominance. It is not a strict hierarchy, since demons can change their relationships in terms of dominance. A pride is dominated by an alpha. All the demons in a pride are submissive to the alpha. This does not mean that the alpha has defeated all the pride members in combat. Many prides contain members who have voluntarily submitted to the alpha in order to participate in some activity at which the pride excels. For example, most powerful Tharkoldu magicians are alphas, dominating prides composed of their students and assistants.



An average pride contains 20 demons, all dominated by a single alpha. The largest pride has slightly over 100 members, and a small pride can consist of a single paired dominant and submissive.

A great alpha dominates a great pride, made up primarily of alphas. An average great pride contains 20 alphas. Thus, a typical great alpha indirectly dominates about 400 demons.

A Demon Lord dominates up to several dozen great alphas, and thus can indirectly control thousands of demons. Typically, a Lord may head a chain of dominance containing anywhere from 2,000 demons, up to 20,000.

A Demon Prince, in turn, dominates up to several dozen Lords, and typically has some 50,000 followers or so. Two Princes, Trog Ammoz of the Scarlet Waste and Sterret of the Blades indirectly dominate over a million followers each. There are 64 Demon Princes. Most have not formally submitted to the High Lord Jezrael, as they did to Kranod before her. The new High Lord's position is still precarious.

There are prides that do not owe ultimate submission to a Prince, or even a great alpha. Some are outlaw prides, predators who prey upon other demons. Some are new prides, or prides whose chain of dominance has been broken by the death or conquest of a superior. Demons at all levels are constantly jockeying for more power. Every dominant, from the newest alpha to the most powerful Princes, is well aware that those who submitted yesterday are probably plotting against it today.

Under these conditions, how could the Demons form a functioning society at all? Demons are intelligent beings. They can transcend their instincts. They don't like it, they don't do it unless they have to, but one of the tests of intelligence is the ability to overcome or subliminate instinct in order to achieve abstract goals. Demonkind passes that test.

As Tharkoldu are under the *Social* axiom of Tharkold, they can and do manage to achieve improbable levels of organization within the dominance structure. While their organizations differ drastically from the tribe/village/city/nation algorithm of hu-

mans, prides, strongholds and demesnes serve the same purpose (see below).

Tharkoldu can sublimate their inherent territoriality into abstract areas, such as research, commerce, administration, all the pursuits of sentient beings. Of course, the demonic notion of competition in the marketplace can become uncommonly bloody. Competitors tend to end up in dominant/submissive roles, leading to monopolistic extended prides, under the dominance of a great alpha, a Lord, or even a Prince, which control a given industry or area of commerce.

Tharkoldu culture is driven by a balanced series of stresses which would normally impede, or even halt, social and technological progress. However, the constant conflict with the Race serves to overcome the Tharkoldu tendency towards cultural stasis. For example, the demons learned early that the best source of new ideas and techniques was the simian curiosity of their human slaves. While slave scientists do not produce new concepts as readily as free researchers, appropriate fear, and rewards, keep them productive enough to serve the demons' needs. Similarly, as we shall see, human cooperation against Tharkoldu in the War forced the demons to develop their own systems for central governments.

Strongholds and Demesnes

Tharkoldu are territorial. Make that **TERRITORIAL!** Entering a demon's territory uninvited is a direct challenge and usually risks immediate and violent reprisals. Alphas, great alphas, and Lords establish their territory in **strongholds**. Princes, dominate numerous strongholds in an organization called a **demesne**. There are 66 demesnes on Tharkold: 65 are ruled by the Princes. The 66th is Dzis, the demesne of the High Lord.

A stronghold might be a small estate, or perhaps an office building and plant. Living quarters, areas for work, food processing, are all traditionally part of the stronghold. Self-sufficiency and defensibility are primary consid-

erations. The largest strongholds can approach the size of small cities, housing thousands of Demons.

Demesnes are the closest that Demons get to countries, and even the largest demesnes are quite small compared to the human concept of a nation. Dzis, largest of the Demesnes, has a population of two million Demons spread out over Tharkold's equivalent of Madagascar and southern Africa.

However, the Demons do not dwell in splendid solitude. There are an estimated 1.5 billion Race on Tharkold. 700 million of them live in the Free Nations. Almost all the rest are slaves. A stronghold of average wealth contains about 15 slaves for every Demon living there, and even a poor stronghold has 5 to 10 slaves per Demon. A stronghold of great wealth has 25 slaves per demon or more.

Dzis alone contains almost 60 million slaves, who serve in its labs, mines, the great preserves where food animals (including other humans) are bred and released as hunting stock, and a hundred other roles.

Some demesnes are organized much like any high-tech culture, and while cruelty and terror are the daily lot of the slave population, the effect is more like living in a brutal dictatorship than anything else. Other demesnes are run to fit the horrible aesthetics of the ruling Prince. Slaves are hunting stock, used in literally hellish ways by their oppressors.

Demonic Breeding and Population

Demonic sex plays an important role in this social order. The demons are natural hermaphrodites. Any demon is capable of producing spermatozoa or ova during the breeding cycle. A demon who produces sperm is an "inseminator." A demon who produces the ovum and becomes pregnant is the "gestator."

When the mating cycle is initiated, the dominant Tharkoldu dictates the roles that will be assumed. Tharkoldu who are not in an established dominant-submissive relationship usually cannot mate. Demon courtship is often synonymous with violent combat,



since it involves establishing or reinforcing dominance in order to trigger the mating response.

One way a dominant Tharkoldu maintains its control over a submissive who is jockeying to reverse their roles is to induce the mating cycle. The submissive demon, whether gestator or inseminator, cannot betray or plot against the dominant demon until the offspring is born. During pregnancy, both demon Parents temporarily lose their hermaphroditic abilities. Tharkoldu researchers believe this is a side effect of an exchange of magical, as well as genetic, material during mating. After the offspring is born, both parents return to the normal hermaphroditic mode within a few days.

Tharkoldu gestation requires 22 months. Tharkoldu are viviparous, bearing live young. The demons rarely carry their young for the full term. After ten weeks, most embryos are removed and placed in magically-enhanced incubators. The incubators are usually located in the strongholds of demon lords, demon princes, or the High Lord. They are fiercely guarded.

Single births are the rule. Tharkoldu are not mammals and do not lactate. Newborn demons are carnivores from birth. Demons reach physical maturity at 8-10 years of age. Their average life span, barring accidents, is between 150-200 years, though life spans of 200-220 are not unknown, and the legendary Krom-Ashur The Undying lived to be 310. Demons retain most of their vitality in their old age. However, given the violence of their culture, few demons die of old age.

While Tharkoldu population is relatively low by Core Earth standards (approximately 40 million) every member of that population except a fairly small percentage of immature demons is a fully capable adult, and a fearsome fighter.

Cult of the Dominant

"Omoo-Zhan, Progenitor of Demonkind, the self-begotten, Itself It bore, inseminator and gestator, within the womb of stars. Wings flaring, eyes burning, did Omoo-Zhan fly Its hunting dance among the stars. Talons tearing, fangs biting, did Omoo-Zhan seize Creation by the throat

and bear it down. Before Omoo-Zhan, the Universe did bare the throat. Unto Gestator Omoo-Zhan did Inseminator Universe submit. And <She> bore many children from <His> seed, and we shall rule the worlds."

—From the "Kraznavekta"

The origins of the Cult of the Dominant, like the origins of the demons of Tharkold, are lost in antiquity. The mythos expounded in the 1,313 stanzas of the Kraznavekta, the demons' epic of creation and the early generations of the War, gives very few hints. Some scholars of the Race have argued that it clearly indicates an extra-dimensional origin for their foe, but since this belief is rooted in the Race's own self-image, it must be taken with a grain of salt.

The Cult of the Dominant encourages its members to live up to their proud heritage, enforcing their dominion over all that lives. It is monotheistic and worships Omoo-Zhan, Progenitor of Demons. The children of Omoo-Zhan partake of <Her> nature as the Ultimate Dominant. It is their heritage to take the universe by the throat and force it to submit.

Formal priesthood is rare, though several prides and great prides exist which are dedicated to religious study, and which are highly respected by Tharkoldu. Typically, however, the dominant Demon in a pride has high faith and focus skills and acts as a priest-equivalent to its submissives.

A slave version of the Cult exists, and is enforced upon the demons' human slaves. It teaches the virtues of accepting the status of a slave. A modified form of the slave-Cult, is one of the tools Tharkold uses to prepare a cosm for invasion. The Cult prepares its converts to accept the reality of Tharkold, as well as using converts as agents for more mundane acts of espionage and terror.

Swarms

When the survival of the species is threatened, the Demons form "swarms" - a half-shameful term meaning a political alliance that does not involve true dominance. In a swarm, Lords and Princes voluntarily accept the leadership of an individual,

joining the resources of their demesnes to counter some threat from the Race.

When the Demons are strong, they rarely cooperate well, or at all. Many Demonic attacks on the Race have failed because the leaders got into dominance contests with each other, or simply refused to work together. When Demons swarm, they select a single leader, making it dominant for a specified term or until certain conditions are fulfilled.

The first recorded swarming of Demons occurred in WY 485, under the legendary Shan-gommoth, who led a Demon war against the growing power of the Jhou Emperors. This plunged the area into chaos and assured Demon superiority for the next two centuries.

The most recent case of swarming occurred 600 years ago, when the dominance of all Demonkind was consolidated in Warlord Kranod, backed by its ghastly patron, the Gaunt Man. That was the origin of the Demon state in its present form: a centralized dictatorship under the power of the High Lord.

The Race

The Race is composed of human beings. Human beings who have survived three millennia of unending War. Human beings whose foes use pain and terror as their weapons of choice. Human beings whose world is blotched with hostile wastelands, plague spots of technological and magical mass destruction. Human beings who have fought for six centuries against the power of a High Lord.

In other words, very, very tough human beings. Think of the human resistance in the *Terminator* movies. Then think of what they might be like after another dozen decades of warfare.

The Race prizes cooperation, and the bonds of honor, friendship, and perhaps most important, love, which make cooperation possible. These traits keep the last sparks of humanity alive in the Race. To act with brutality and ferocity is necessary; to act with trust, honor or love is to prove you are of the Race. To prove you are not like the demons.

The cruel extremes to which the Race goes in fighting the demons of-





ten serves their enemy. Since the arrival of the Darkness Device on Tharkold, the pain and anguish that the Race accepts as the price of war feeds strength to the High Lord. For this reason, it suited Kranod to allow certain areas of Tharkold to become Race enclaves. The enclaves were formed when the demons broke the human strength in the great battles 500 years ago. These enclaves are the Free Nations.

For centuries, the Free Nations served the High Lord's ends in various ways. They provide a challenge, rather like a game preserve that holds dangerous prey. The Free Nations are a source of fresh genetic material for the slave pens. Lastly and most horribly, the suffering of free humans satisfies certain connoisseurs among the demons better than the less vibrant response of humans bred to slavery. Newly captured Race from the Free Nations are highly prized.

When the disastrous failures of the invasions of Kadandra and Earth seri-

ously weakened the demonkind, the Free Nations were quick to take advantage. Successful raids into Tharkoldu lands showed that Kranod had seriously underestimated the strength of the Race.

If the second invasion of Earth goes well, the High Lord will gain enough possibility energy, along with other resources, to push the impudent humans back into their kennels. Perhaps to finish the job of enslaving or exterminating them once and for all. If this invasion fails, on the other hand, then demon power in Tharkold may be broken at last. For Tharkold, as for Earth, the Possibility Wars are the ultimate crossroads of destiny.

The Free Nations

The free enclaves of the Race are Aurioch, Kham, Helfei, Jhou, and Mizatyan.

Aurioch is on the site of Core Earth Israel, Syria, and portions of Lebanon,

Iraq, and Turkey. It is the most technologically advanced of the Free Nations.

Aurioch is ruled by an oligarchy of eleven senior military and political leaders called the Shanodrim. The capital is Erushal.

Kham is outwardly a monarchy, with the Pha-ra as titular ruler. Actual power resides with the military high command. The Pha-ranic government is highly centralized, and the most bureaucratic of the Race states. The capital is in Luxor (modern Al-Uqsir in Core Earth terms, at least before Dr. Mobius restored the original Egyptian name). Kham covers the Nile Valley down to the northern Sudan.

Helfei occupies central Europe and most of Italy. Sixteen heavily fortified city-states make up the country, each headed by a warlord. No one city-state acts as capital. The ruling council of warlords rotates its meeting place from one city to the next every six months.

Jhou occupies the eastern portion of China as well as the Korean penin-



sula, and is geographically the largest of the Free Nations. It also has the worst problem with demon strongholds infiltrating its territory.

The government is a military dictatorship under Warlord Hyakinthos Zhen. The capital city is Wuhan, which occupies the site of the Core Earth city of the same name.

Mizatyan consists of the three home islands of Japan: Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Hokkaido, the northernmost of the major islands in the Japanese archipelago, is the demesne of the Demon Prince Krothard Hellbear, whose personal stronghold burrows deep under the island's snow-covered peaks.

Mizatyan is the second most technologically advanced of the Free Nations. Of necessity it has developed recycling and alternative energy sources to a high degree, since its sea trade is subject to vicious demon blockade. Mizatyan makes extensive use of geothermal power.

The government is a military dictatorship, under the Taikoun. The ancient imperial line was attainted and executed *en masse* in WY 2476, when the Nameless Emperor attempted to betray the country to the demons in return for their help in subduing his rebellious nobles. All reference to this last ruler's name were stricken from the records of Mizatyan, hence his ignominious title.

There are other pockets of free Race scattered over Tharkold, but they are more like refugee camps than countries. They suffer constant raids by local communities of demons, or from weaker groups that do not care to tackle the formidable fighting power of the Free Nations.

The population of the Free Nations is approximately 700 million.

Way Of The Race

"And upon the mountain tops, the People slew many of the Demonkind, for the Will of the Race was to survive. And after the wrack of the battle, the People turned their faces to heaven, and cried aloud.

'Behold, here is Thy holocaust, oh God. We are thy Race, and before us Thou shalt

have no others. For we are a jealous people'..."

—Book of Liberation

The Way of the Race is a warrior creed, distilled from centuries of human struggle against Tharkoldu. It emphasizes the need for united action in the face of the common enemy. The will of God is expressed in Race victories over the foe, and there is the promise of eventual victory and peace upon war-torn Tharkold. The individual is subordinate to the needs of the Race under this creed, yet each individual is seen as an instrument of the will of the Race, and thus of the will of God, and is therefore precious.

While the Race retain specific symbols in their cultures, human religion on Tharkold has, like human society, been formed, or warped if you prefer, by the War. The Way of the Race posits the human drive for survival and victory as the ultimate manifestation of divinity in the universe. While local forms of the Way embody the mythos using historical god images and legends from the local culture, these are held to represent apotheosized human qualities, carried to heroic lengths.

There are established priesthoods of the Way in each of the Free Nations. There is no central authority controlling these priesthoods, and each sect's rituals and symbols are influenced by the history of their individual Nation. However, all share the common message of the religion.

Priests in Mizatyan and Jhou combine aspects resonant with Shinto and Taoism in their worship. The Way in Aurioch has aspects similar to Old Testament Judaism, and in Kham the religion resembles classical Egyptian religion. Helfei has the smallest priestly class, with no sharp lines drawn between clergy and pious laity. High values in *faith* and *focus* are typical of all priests of the Way, of course, whatever their cultural background.

Among the slaves, the Way is an underground religion. The penalties for any slave found practicing the Way are ghastly, designed to terrify. At one time, the demons broadcast the hideous executions of those caught following the Way, to intimidate the other slaves. However, this practice ceased after the uprising of 2978, when the

heroine Veda managed to invoke the miracle of liberation during her death agonies, turning her execution into the required ritual by sheer force of faith and will. Over 20,000 slaves were freed of domination and wrought havoc on their former masters until the uprising was put down with enormous loss of life and property.

The Way is harsh and uncompromising in many ways. Yet, it promotes bonds of honor, trust, and love among humans, as the Race's principal weapons in the long struggle.

The War

Tharkold's history is the War. Since the first recorded encounters between Race and Demons, over 3,000 years ago, the history of the cosm has been one of violent conflict as the two species contended for control of the cosm.

Both species use a calendar based on the War Year. It is presently WY 3193: the year that Jezrael becomes High Lord and invades Core Earth.

The War Year 1 roughly corresponds to 1200 BC in typical Core Earth terms. It is the year that prides of demons terrorized Mycenae, weakened by the departure of its finest warriors for the siege of Troy. This is the first documented clash between Demonic and human cultures and accounts of the period may be found in the surviving fragments of Omeros' Mykeniad as well as Euyripedis' tragedy, *Klytemnestra*.

The First Age

Under the impetus of Demon attacks, the humans of Tharkold began to accelerate their rate of technological and magical innovation.

The Auriochs drove virtually all Demons from their territories when King Shelomo developed a series of spells which were lethal to the Demonic metabolism. The area corresponding to Palestine was untroubled by Demons for almost 200 years until the Demons developed effective counterspells.

An alchemical curiosity in ancient China was turned into a weapon, when the court scholars of Jhou developed primitive gunpowder weapons in



WY483. In a sense, this led to a terrible backlash, since Jhou's victories with the new weapon triggered the first recorded swarming by the Demons.

The Spasm

The "arms race" continued until the 15th century of the War. At this point, global destruction erupted in the vicious holocaust known as the Spasm. The Spasm combined the technological weaponry available to a *Tech* axiom of 24 with magical attacks driven by an axiom value of 15. Nuclear weapons, laboratory-bred plagues, and genetically engineered monsters were used, along with destructive elementals and spell-driven waves of madness. Most suicidal of all, magic and technology were combined to produce terrible seismic effects, that reshaped the face of the planet.

The Spasm itself lasted only weeks. The aftereffects lasted centuries. There are still vast areas of Tharkold, the Dead Lands, which are inhospitable to Demons and Race alike. Radiation pockets, mutant creatures, and active foci of ancient War magic are the hazards which dot the landscape.

The seismic weapons used during the Spasm left a permanently heightened level of earthquake and volcanic activity as a legacy for later generations.

In the immediate aftermath of the Spasm, both species were thrown back into a low technological existence, and for three centuries were too busy surviving in the hostile environment to carry on any formal hostilities. If it were not for the powerful spiritual energies which permeate the cosm, it is possible that the Spasm would have wiped sentient life off the planet entirely.

The demons did better in this period than the humans, reverting to their primal nature as independent hunting prides, stalking the post-holocaust landscape, seeking their prey among the scattered enclaves of the Race.

Yet, in the paradox that makes Tharkold what it is, the vicious pressure of the toxic environment and the unrelenting foe combined to propel the Race back up the ladder of civilization.



The Decline of Magic

The advantages of the Race in the War have always been their greater numbers, for humans breed far more prolifically than the Demonkind, coupled with their ability to join forces against the common foe, and their capacity for finding technological solutions to challenges.

On the other hand, one demon is more than a match for three Race in personal combat. And the demons

have a natural affinity for magic that helped offset the technological cleverness of the Race-apes.

But as the species came back from the edge of mutual extinction, mages on both sides discovered that many spells no longer functioned. As the centuries passed, the Demons made an even more terrifying discovery: their breeding cycle was distorted. Their highly magical metabolism had resisted the mutagenic effects of the Spasm up until now, but suddenly



stillbirths, sterility and lethal mutations began to appear.

As the demons absorbed these blows, the forces of the Race pressed them unmercifully. Inexorably, the Demons were forced out of human territories, driven into isolated strongholds in the Dead Lands, hunted like animals by the victorious Race.

It was in 2310 that scholars from the pride of the great mage Fanexith presented rigorous proof to Princes of Demonkind, showing that the *Magic* axiom of Tharkold had begun declining sometime following the Spasm, and was rapidly reaching the point where the cosm would be unable to sustain demonic life. Like any magical life-form, the demons of Tharkold can-

not survive for long in a cosm where the *Magic* is lower than 8.

At this time, the Tharkoldu had no knowledge of the cosmverse, of its Everlaws and Axioms. Before the Spasm, the art of magic had achieved great heights, and the demons still remembered much of what they had known. The recent rediscovery of computer technology allowed Tharkoldu to accurately model the levels of magical energy available to them. There was no possible doubt. If Tharkoldu could not find a way to reverse this trend, they were doomed to extinction.

A desperate plan emerged from a great swarm of scholars, magicians, and scientists. The Warlord Kranod, a mighty Prince and cunning mage, was

given charge of the best minds Tharkoldu could produce. Kranod's task force constructed a technomagical probe, combining the forces of sorcery and the most advanced technology available to them. In 2314 the project launched a carefully programmed beam of energy from a secret laboratory in Kranod's stronghold. If their theories were correct, the probe would pass through a multi-dimensional matrix, and would seek out the most powerful source of magical energy within its range.

The probe was launched. It scanned the dimensions. It found an unbelievably potent focus of magical power. It found the Gaunt Man and Heketon.

Dark Visitor

Kranod steered the mouse across the top of Its desk, as its eyes scanned the flickering patterns displayed in the VDT. The Demon cursed in a monotone as the results stubbornly refused to change on this (the hundredth? thousandth?) reading.

Four years of effort, with the fate of Demonkind riding on the outcome, and the much-vaunted Saviour Probe had found...nothing. A few anomalous spikes in the readings, and then a flat mana-ambience that spelled extinction for Kranod's people. It looked like that pompous fool Hz'chtiga had been right when it suggested that the decline of magical energy was a cosmic constant and that the Saviour Project was a waste of dwindling resources. Kranod briefly regretted having ripped the opposing scientist's throat out in the course of the debate.

The pensive warlord's musing were interrupted when it became aware that someone else was in the room. To enter a Demon's space uninvited is the next thing to a challenge, and the "startle" reflex of Kranod's species is to attack. So Kranod was on its feet, heavy machine pistol in hand, almost as soon as it detected the intruder. Kranod's

snarl turned to a sneer when it registered the human outline of the figure in the corner. A slave that needed a sharp reminder of protocol. In Kranod's mood, the lesson would be fatal. The Demon raised its weapon and sighted.

The intruder raised his hands. There was a flash of violet light. The pistol flew across the chamber as Kranod was hurled against the far wall. It stared at the advancing...human? Clothing of strange cut flapped about elongated limbs. A face like a skull, thinly covered with flesh grinned at the stunned Demon. "Congratulate yourself, child of Tharkold," said the intruder. "You have raised a weapon to me and yet live. Few beings in all the cosms can make that claim."

Kranod's struggled with the strange words. Cosms? It became aware of an aura that radiated from the skeletal figure like heat from a furnace. The intruder pulsed with magical energy, more mana than Kranod had ever sensed in Its life.

"Who...what are you?" Kranod demanded.

"I am the hope of your people, Kranod. I am the Gaunt Man. But you may call me 'Master'."

The Coming Of The Gaunt Man

Intrigued by the properties of the Tharkoldu probe, the Gaunt Man had not destroyed it out of hand when it impinged on him. He redirected the beam into a pocket universe, a limbo he had created ages before as part of an elaborate project, then traced it through the cosmverse to its point of origin.

The Gaunt Man observed the situation in the War-torn cosm. The Race he dismissed as another busy human species, though one that looked likely to provide some amusement. Tharkoldu captured his interest. A capable race, threatened by the decline of the *Magical* axiom in their cosm, pressed by their human opponents...yes, most interesting, the Gaunt Man thought.

The possibility raider rode a dimthread into Kranod's stronghold and presented the warlord with a bargain. He would stave off the demons' extinction, and aid them against the Race, if, in turn, Tharkoldu swore fealty to him. Kranod submitted that same night. Within weeks, the other great dominants of Demonkind had bared their throats in submission as well. Dimthreads dropped the monstrous creations of the Gaunt Man to battle against the Race.

After several years of bitter fighting, the Demons were firmly in control of the Americas. The forces of the Gaunt Man harassed the humans constantly, preventing them from mounting an or-





ganized counter-campaign. Demon forces under Kranod's leadership became valued underlings in the Gaunt Man's raids upon other realities.

The solution to the decline of magic changed Demonkind forever. The Gaunt Man valued the services of Tharkoldu, but had no intention of pouring huge amounts of possibility energy into Tharkold, forcing magic to rise when the cosm was forcing it to fall. He was able to stabilize the axiom at 7, but this left Tharkoldu literally starving for magical energy. Their metabolisms could not function normally in such an environment.

The answer was the first generation of LifeCyber. Demon and human slave scientists developed clumsy, but workable, surgical implants that augmented the Demonic system, permitting it to function in the low-magic environment of Tharkold. Researches designed to improve the technology slowly led to the development of genuine cybertechnology on Tharkold.

High Lord Of Tharkold

After almost a century in the Gaunt Man's service, Kranod was leading an expedition in an ancient cosm. The dim rays of a dying sun saw scenes of horror as the creatures of Orrorsh stalked the streets of an ancient city, killing what little they found, scavenging for items of occult interest. The last dregs of possibility energy were being leached from the dying world. Kranod also hunted in the twisting streets, but its prey was nothing so tangible as flesh and blood.

Ever since it arrived, Kranod had been tantalized by a faint, astral music that, it seemed, only it could hear. Now it hunted for the source of the eerie song. The warlord and its companions, including the young warrior Thratchen, came to a massive, pyramidal temple. The temple was guarded by spells of great power. Breaking through the wards with their combined sorcerous powers, the demons found an onyx staff, its surface covered with sinuous carvings, and runes

whose meaning were unknown to any living being.

This was the Darkness Device, Malgest. How it came to be locked away in a remote cosm is unknown. Malgest itself is unable, or unwilling, to tell what happened.

Armed with a Darkness Device of its own, Kranod and the other Tharkoldu returned to their home cosm, and a 500-year reign of terror began. Several primitive cosms were invaded by the Demon hordes, providing energy for Malgest. Kranod began the lengthy process of changing the World Laws of Tharkold to suit its people, and of restoring the *Magic* axiom to a level that would sustain them. By now, cybertechnology was a central element of the Demons' self-image, and even when LifeCyber was no longer essential to their survival, a high degree of modification was a mark of power.

A century-long battle against the Race shattered human power on Tharkold, and it seemed that the War was all but over. The slave pens of the Demons were flooded with new victims. The remnants of human freedom survived, just barely, in the Free Nations.





Chapter Two

The High Lord



Kranod, High Lord of Tharkold, lounged in its command chair in the great hall of Dzis. A thin cable ran from the nervejack in the Demon ruler's temple to a Grid access terminal. The link fed computer records directly to Kranod's brain, reacting to its mental commands as it scanned the latest status reports from the Princes of the Demonkind. Kranod's eyes stared unseeing at the holodisplays on the chamber's wall and a snarl rippled across the its leathery face. It was most displeased.

For centuries, Kranod had led its people to dominion over the puny species of other cosms, as well as smashing the power of the Race, the native humans of Tharkold. Aided by the power and advice of Malgest, Kranod had been invincible. The Demons were wealthy in the only terms that mattered: power, security, and slaves. But in the last two years, the Possibility Raiders of Tharkold had suffered a series of reverses that endangered all that.

First, there had been the invasion of Kadandra. The Sim Wars had cost Tharkold dearly in terms of soldiers and demonic pride. The Kadandrans had infiltrated hundreds of strongholds, infesting the slaves with their ideas, making a mockery of Tharkoldu security. Kranod doubted that, even now, all the spies had been found. More monkey trickery stole true Tharkold technological developments, derailed others. Logistics, an occupation not fit for true hunters, had to be given to disgruntled Tharkoldu when slaves could no longer be trusted. The swarm began to unravel. The demons won nearly every battle, but the war ... Huge quantities of possibility energy was lost when the Maelstrom Bridges between the cosms were destroyed by the enemy. Not only that, but the Kadandrans, may their young rend

them from within the womb, had somehow discovered a way to travel between cosms without a Maelstrom Bridge or dimthread. A Kadandran agent had travelled to Earth, target of the Gaunt Man's massive invasion plan, and was aiding the Earthers. More core-crashed humans! Were the vermin everywhere?

The most crushing disaster was yet to come, however. The Earthers actually destroyed the Tharkoldu stelae as the demons' bridge was materializing. The resulting reality backlash from Earth, powered by that cosm's incredible levels of possibility energy, not only destroyed the Maelstrom Bridge, but unleashed a series of disasters across the face of Tharkold. The stronghold of Lord Khernogom, where the invasion force was being staged, vanished in a glare of other-worldly energy, which became the eye of a massive reality storm that ripped across the planet. Seismic activity erupted in a hundred sites. Energy pulses disrupted communications and crashed computers worldwide.

Always ready to take advantage of any weakness, the armies of the Race struck at the strongholds that bordered their contemptible "Free Nations." Kranod would have ordinarily dispatched forces to assist the beleaguered Strongholds and whip the human scum back to their kennels. Faced with tremendous losses already, and with communications reeling in the aftermath of the disaster, the demons were unable to respond in time, and two major Strongholds were destroyed in the first significant human victory in almost half a millenium.

Kranod growled deep in its throat as it contemplated the Race's filthy monkey tricks: cooperation and organization. Diseased notions that few Tharkoldu could even comprehend. Without its tutelage under the Gaunt Man centuries ago, Kranod itself



doubted that it could deal with such ideas...

A flashing red aura permeated the cybernetic reality in which Kranod was immersed, snapping the High Lord from its reverie. An alarm? Here, in Dzis? What danger could threaten the central Stronghold of all Tharkold?

Kranod jacked out, just as the double doors which gave entry to the great hall erupted from their hinges in a welter of shattered steel and dazzling plasma energy. Before the reverberations of the explosion had died away, a figure in full power armor leapt through the flaming gap, energy rifle blazing. But the natural ferocity of the Demonkind makes them almost immune to surprise. Combat when confronted by a threat is instinctive. When the plasmatic blasts of the assassin's weapon turned Kranod's command chair into a fireball, the High Lord was already clear, propelled into the air by powerful wings. It returned fire. Its counterfire struck the attacker in three precisely aimed spots, puncturing the armor and its integral energy screen, and literally vaporizing the target.

Hovering in mid-air as its mind processed the scene that had just passed, Kranod realized with a shock that the assassin had been in the uniform of the Janissaries, the elite force of human slaves who served as its personal bodyguard. So, after all this time, one of the Princes or Lords sought to usurp power for itself and had subverted the household guard as part of the plot. The conspirators had obviously forgotten what it meant to attack a High Lord. Kranod grinned mirthlessly. It would be happy to remind them.

Kranod mentally reached out to Malgest, the Darkness Device that had granted it ultimate dominion on Tharkold for over 500 years, and felt its energy flow into him. As the power of Malgest filled the High Lord, a second armored figure strode through the burning doorway. Kranod recognized Jezrael, commander of the Janissaries. Was the slave here to succor it, Kranod wondered, or as part of the plot against it? Jezrael's words answered the High Lord's question.

"Kranod, High Lord of Tharkold! Submit or die!"

Surprise, amusement, and rage

swirled through Kranod's mind. Did the idiotic slave actually believe that the Demon Princes would ever accept a human as dominant? That was why Janissaries were the troops of choice among the rulers of Demonkind. They had nothing to gain by rebellion.

The energy of the Darkness Device seemed to reach to every cell of Kranod's body, filling it with terrible exaltation. Its wings snapped as it hurled itself upon the impudent challenger, extending cyber talons that could rip through both armor and the flesh beneath it in one terrible blow.

To Kranod's utter dismay, the armored figure danced aside from the path of the death dive, and the talons emptied their plasmatic charge into the stone floor, melting a row of furrows through the bare rock. The High Lord whirled, or tried to whirl, to face its opponent. But the energy that Malgest had fed it so fully a moment before was now being withdrawn. More, Kranod felt its very life force being sucked from it, as if the Darkness Device was demanding repayment with interest for the powers it had granted the High Lord over the centuries. Kranod's movements slowed, and the Demon gasped in agony as its very life force was drained away. A final wave of contempt from Malgest bathed the Demon's consciousness. It sensed that the Darkness Device was cutting it off, casting it aside. And Kranod also sensed the identity of Malgest's choice for the role of High Lord: Jezrael. Jezrael of the Janissaries. Jezrael of the Race.

Kranod saw its own face reflected in the opaque, black densiplast of Jezrael's vizor. The Janissary's voice crackled over the helmet amplifiers. "There will be a change, Kranod. Malgest has no use for failures or fools."

Fool. The word echoed through the Demon's consciousness as Jezrael drew a force axe and activated it, sending a flickering aura of energy crackling along the blade. Fool to trust in the Darkness Device. The axe swept up. Fool to place the fate of Demonkind in the hands of the Gaunt Man. The relays of Jezrael's cyberarm whined with the force of the blow as the blade slashed down.

Fool.

Kranod's blood sizzled, frying into dust in the shimmering plasma field that sheathed Jezrael's axe blade. The new High Lord of Tharkold removed her combat helm and shook out a mane of night-black hair. Her eyes, one violet and human, the other a glittering construction of metal and crystal, contemplated the body of her predecessor. One of the oldest High Lords in the Infiniverse was dead.

The newest High Lord turned and strode out of the chamber.

Jezrael

Jezrael was born as (Nesh) Gam-5473/Dzis-3089. That is, she was (Female) G-5473, born in War Year 3089, in the slave pens of Dzis, the Stronghold of Kranod, High Lord of Tharkold. Her designation and genetic code were recorded in the overseer's computer, according to the breeding regulations. At the age of one year, after it was determined that the child was within the current culling standards for slave births, a thermal probe branded her designation on her left arm.

Jezrael tested high in intelligence, but her physical parameters were impressive. At the age of five she was removed from the general creche and placed in the military training program. Twelve years later, having achieved the one of the highest ratings ever recorded in the vicious training program, she was assigned to the Hellhounds, the elite slave commandoes used for infiltration and terrorism among renegade humans in the Demon territories.

At the age of 23, G-5473's unit was caught in a vicious action against troops from Helsei. With the Demon who dominated the Hellhound unit severely wounded, and her squadmates pinned down under heavy fire, G-5473 single-handedly engaged two enemy emplacements, destroying them with blaster fire and grenades. She then regrouped the remaining elements of the Hellhound unit and commanded their retreat from the battle area, evacuating the wounded Demon officer to a treatment area. In the course of this engagement, G-5473's right arm suffered





irreparable damage from wounds.

The commanding Demon was treated for its wounds, adjudged incompetent by its dominant, and summarily killed. G-5473 was adjudged competent and prosthetic replacement for her damaged limb was approved at the standard "cull-or-cure" examination by the High Lord's slavekeepers.

After recovering her wounds, G-5473 was transferred to the Janissaries, the High Lord's elite household guard. Following tradition, the slave was allowed to replace her stock designation with a name.

Jezrael served with distinction in the Janissaries over the next decade. By a cunning blend of ferocity and treachery, she became commander of that force in War Year 3191, following the summary culling of the previous commander in the wake of Janissary failures during the Sim War.

In 3193, she became High Lord of Tharkold.

Kranod's defeats and, worse, its uncertainty in recovering from them, had alienated the Darkness Device, Malgest. Malgest sought for a being with the ambition, the energy, that it judged was suitable for a High Lord. Ferocity it found in plenty, and driving ambition, in many of the Demonkind, but in Jezrael it found the qualities combined with the burning hatred of existence that is most pleasing to the Nameless One. Jezrael was also a powerful stormer and had unconsciously learned to manipulate possibility energy. Under Malgest's tutelage, she rapidly became adept in using the energy deliberately.

Subtly at first, then more openly, Malgest contacted the commander of the Janissaries. It secretly fed her power: power to persuade several Demon Princes to remain neutral during her coup, despite the traditions of their species; power to undermine and destroy the Master of Secrets, director of Kranod's secret police. After the execution of that "treacherous" official, it was Malgest who suggested that Kranod teach its underlings a lesson by appointing Jezrael to the office, showing them that a well-disciplined slave could serve the High Lord better than one of the Demonkind.

Once in office, Jezrael proved her value to Kranod by uncovering a number of plots against it among the more powerful Demons. These were crushed, effectively alienating the rest of Demonkind from their High Lord.

This was the final stage of the conspiracy. As Master of Secrets, Jezrael was able to subvert the defenses of Dzis and launch her attack on Kranod's inner sanctum. At the crucial moment, Malgest drained Kranod of possibility energy and transferred its power to Jezrael.

Jezrael

DEXTERITY 18

Acrobatics 20, dodge 25, energy weapons 26, fire combat 21, heavy weapons 20, maneuver 22, melee weapons 23, unarmed combat 23

STRENGTH 21 (Right Arm: 23)

Climbing 24, lifting 24

TOUGHNESS 19(25)

PERCEPTION 23

Air vehicles 28, divination magic 24, find 28, first aid 24, land vehicles 24, tracking 27, trick 25

MIND 24

Conjuration magic 26, science 27, survival 28, test of will 27, willpower 30

CHARISMA 19

Persuasion 24, taunt 26

SPIRIT 22

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 29, focus 24, intimidation 25, pain weapon 25, reality 31

Possibilities: 60 (or more if she has recently tapped the power her Darkness Device, see page 88 of the *Torg Rulebook*)

Equipment: Cyberware: Nanocord, two Nervejacks.

Cybervisual package (left eye): dangerscan, darksight, hidehunter, killseeker. Natural implant (right eye): sharpsight.

Poison snooper. Interdermal armor (+6 adds/ armor value 25). Bodymax (+3 to STR)

Right Cyberarm (+2 for STR 23) equipped with monofilament-edged slicers (STR+5/Damage value 28), hand-mount Res-14-Ket laser pistol with smartgun link (damage value 25) (4).

Cyber value: 15 (reduced through *psychology*)

Chod/10 Power Armor (+10/TOU

29. STR+2/STR 17. Plasma Jets. Nu-15-Ket CAW mounted in left arm: plasma shells, damage value 25). Plasma axe (+8/max. damage value 31).

Malgest

Malgest is old in spirit. It has served more High Lords than any other Darkness Device. Its destructive nature has taken a toll on itself, eating away at the mental and spiritual stability. Malgest is weary of its mission. This weariness has caused Malgest to choose risky courses of action, to place risky choices of character in the position of High Lord. Malgest wants the destructive embrace of the Nameless One far more than it wants continued existence. Malgest's intense desire, and the instability it causes, may undermine the Darkness Device's attempts to achieve the end it seeks.

Over 500 years ago, Kranod, serving as a minion of the Gaunt Man, found the onyx staff, carved with twisting patterns and indecipherable runes, which called itself Malgest. Kranod returned to Tharkold to establish the dominion of the Demonkind over that cosm. Then Malgest opened the way between cosms to Tharkoldu. Since that time, more than twenty cosms have been looted of their possibility energy to feed the appetites of these two beings. Perhaps of greater importance are the cosms where Kranod and Malgest failed: Earth, Illithicar, Kadandra, and Seido. Illithicar and Seido were not full-fledged invasions; Tharkoldu agents were uncovered or destroyed prior to the invasion by their counterparts from Marketplace. Before the disaster on Earth, Kranod and Malgest received reports of Nippon-style operations in the USSR. Malgest credits Kanawa with more of a hand in the failed invasion on Earth than is true.

But the failure on Kadandra ... Malgest placed full blame on Kranod. Malgest turned to Jezrael as a fit replacement for the old High Lord. The Darkness Device is pleased with Jezrael's hatred of life. Malgest shall be at least as patient with Jezrael as it was with Kranod.



Malgest**DEXTERITY 0****STRENGTH 0****TOUGHNESS 192****PERCEPTION 23**

Alteration magic 36, cybertech 28, divination magic 40, find 30, language 27, trick 30

MIND 41

Apportation magic 51, computer science 42, conjuration magic 50, science 42, test of will 43, willpower 48

CHARISMA 28

Charm 29, persuasion 32, taunt 33

SPIRIT 40

Faith (Nameless One) 44, focus 42, intimidation 45, pain weapon 41, reality 53

Possibilities: Only several thousand. Malgest hungers for new sources of possibility energy even as it seeks to end its own existence.**Powers:** Malgest has all the powers listed on page 88 of the *Torg Rulebook*. It can dissolve any relationships under the Law of Domination (see Chapter Four, "World Laws").

Tasks For A New High Lord

Jezrael faces a number of challenges as the new High Lord of Tharkold.

Achieve and maintain domination: Tharkoldu society is based upon a network of domination and submission, the psychology of the pack. Kranod dominated the 65 Demon Princes, who in turn dominated several hundreds of Demon Lords, and so on.

To cement her rule, it is essential that Jezrael obtain the submission of the rulers of Demonkind.

It is enlightening that she never appeared to consider challenging the Demons' supremacy on Tharkold and allying herself with the free humans of the Race. The slave girl G-5473, having risen to rule the world, seems to consider herself a demon in all but the biological sense. She intends to dominate the demons. She intends to dominate the Free Nations.

Jezrael knows she is not yet strong enough to obtain her goals. She is working relentlessly to put herself in a position of superiority.

Assaults by the Free Nations work to her advantage. Many of the ranking Demons find themselves under attack and in need of assistance from the new High Lord. Most of the Princes had received possibility energy, increased life span, and other benefits from Malgest. Jezrael made it clear that continued aid was dependent on her goodwill.

A crucial incident occurred shortly after Jezrael displaced Kranod. Prince Krezlakh of the Iron Mountains issued a formal challenge to this monstrous human. Jezrael defeated Krezlakh in single combat, impressive in itself. Her agent on Krezlakh's staff eliminated all of the assassins assigned to kill the High Lord, further impressing the Demons.

Combining the power of Malgest with a miracle of the Cult of the Dominant and some advanced genetic engineering, Jezrael impregnated the defeated Prince with her own genetic material, thus affirming her dominance in the traditional Demon manner. The birth is expected shortly. Prenatal tests have given vague results, which is remarkable given the advanced obstetric technology available on Tharkold. It is uncertain whether the fetus is even viable, but the event's impact on the Demons is profound. It is the most compelling proof of Jezrael's right to rule.

Invade Earth: Malgest and Kranod lost enormous amounts of possibility energy in the disastrous invasions of the past few years. Without a major source of energy, the Darkness Device's control of the cosm of Tharkold is threatened, and with it, Jezrael's power as High Lord. She must have a share in the loot from Earth or face destruction.

Unwilling to risk another reality backlash from Core Earth, despite the cosm's weakened condition, Jezrael decided to create a small realm to anchor the Maelstrom Bridge. Once this is stabilized, the Tharkoldu will begin planting stelae to cover a wider area.

She chose Los Angeles as the site of her realm for two reasons. First, it has a high population density, and will therefore generate significant possibility energy within a small area. Second, it borders upon Kanawa's new realm in California. And that serves

her next priority.

Revenge on Kanawa: As far as Malgest is concerned, 3327's agents in Russia were responsible for warning the contemptible Earthers of Tharkold's original invasion. With their help, the Russians destroyed the stelae and triggered the reality backlash that devastated Tharkold. Kranod discounted the Core Earth psychics of Project Omen as mere pawns of the venal scum from Marketplace. In this it was mistaken, but since all of the Demons who came up against Project Omen are dead, Kranod's views are shared by the other rulers of Tharkold, including Jezrael.

Most of the Princes and Lords are howling for vengeance against 3327. While Jezrael is more intent on other priorities, she cannot afford to ignore these politics of revenge and her campaign on Core Earth will be divided between establishing and expanding the realm, and doing as much harm as possible to Nippon Tech and its agents.

Torg: Becoming Torg is not yet one of her goals. Malgest has not yet pressed the issue. Jezrael will be content with a despotic grip on Tharkold, until the Darkness Device decides otherwise.

Jezrael and the Other High Lords

No one is quite prepared for Tharkold's invasion. Ever since the Gaunt Man dropped out of sight, there has been little to coordinate the actions of the Possibility Raiders. The general consensus is that Tharkold is too damaged to recover from the reality backlash that took place when the Russian invasion failed.

So the sudden appearance of a Tharkoldu realm comes as a shock to all and sundry. Tharkold's realm is small, but the Possibility Raiders are aware of the power of Demon technology.

Pella Ardinay of the Light, opposed as she is to the depredations of the other High Lords, will see Jezrael as yet another Possibility Raider, trying to feed on Earth's possibilities.

Angar Uthorion and Kranod were vassals of the Gaunt Man together. Each viewed the other as a rival to be discredited in the competition that was, and is,





endemic among the minions of Orrorsh. This rivalry still rankled even after both became High Lords themselves.

When he learns of her, Uthorion will approve of Jezrael, because she killed Kranod. He will approach the mistress of Tharkold, seeking assistance in his campaign against Ardinay.

Mobius will doubtless be amused by the situation in Tharkold. He sees no great threat in the presence of a realm that barely contains one city. Given the ongoing danger of war with the Cyberpapacy, however, Mobius will try to cultivate a connection with Jezrael in order to obtain some of those fascinating toys these cybertechicians

play with. He is also fascinated at the possibility of enlisting Tharkoldu deckers to invade the GodNet.

Baruk Kaah, hard-pressed on a number of fronts, will find himself approached by a delegation from Tharkold shortly after the invasion. They will propose a joint action to displace Nippon Tech from California, dividing the reclaimed territory between Tharkold and the Living Land.

Kaah will accept, of course, planning to retake all his former holdings, leaving Tharkold with nothing to show for its aid. Gospog will start appearing armed with advanced Tharkoldu

weapons. In isolated incidents, at first, but if steps are not taken to break the alliance between the two realms, in increasing numbers.

Jean Malraux I will view the appearance of another realm as technologically advanced as his own with extreme suspicion. His antipathy to the demonic races is strong at the best of times. The idea of a demon culture that is capable of invading the GodNet will makes him nearly paranoid in dealing with Tharkold.





Chapter Three

The Realm of Los Angeles



he Tharkoldu invasion of Los Angeles is the latest, most severe event in the city's turbulent recent history. From the first day, the Possibility Wars have shaken the City of Angels. Below is a summary time line for Los Angeles, beginning with the opening of the Possibility Wars.

YEAR ONE

Week One — The Possibility Wars begin. Baruk Kaah establishes the Western Lands. The initial confusion of the war produces more noise than casualties in the Western Theater. Refugees begin to flee the Living Land. Many of the refugees from Oregon, Nevada and Northern California head for Los Angeles and other Southern California communities.

Week Two — The war heats up, and the flow of refugees becomes a flood. An estimated 150,000 people a day enter the Los Angeles metro area.

Week Three — The Delphi Council begins to consider the problem of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Raiders announce that they are moving spring training to an alternate site...in Florida. The stream of refugees continue. City services cannot cope with the increase in population.

Week Five — Homicides increase fivefold, burglaries by nearly eightfold. An edein tribe is spotted in the San Bernadino mountains. While the tribe is quickly massacred by US forces, panic seizes Los Angeles. Invasion hysteria leads to the worst looting spree in city history. Rumors persist that Spartan teams made room in overcrowded jails by murdering current

inmates. Studio after studio begins to move assets out of Los Angeles in earnest, moving the movie industry to Florida. The Delphi Council decides to evacuate and disperse the population of Los Angeles.

Week Seven — "The Two-week Traffic Jam" begins. US Army, California Highway Patrol, Spartan and elements of the California National Guard herd refugees out of the city. The "trip fives," highways 5, 10, and 15, crawl with the fearful and the walking wounded. Tempers flare and incidents of violence increase. The residents of Beverly Hills double the size of their police force.

Week Eight — The Los Angeles Dodgers announce their intention to play out their current home stand. They reduce general admission to \$1.00. Home games are to be televised to the remaining LA audience. The Delphi Council issues a "terrorism advisory" for the games, urging the Dodgers to call off the games and suggesting that fans travelling to the games might be killed by unnamed "forces hostile to the security of the United States." The Dodgers politely inform the Delphi Council that they will take the risk, and, under the watchful eyes of the LAPD and the California National Guard, the games go off without a hitch. The games are a desperately needed diversion for the city which had been completely spellbound by the exodus along the interstates. The phrase "it takes a dollar and a Dodger" comes to symbolize courage during dark times.

Week Ten — The population of Los Angeles' metro area shrinks to under one million, less than one-seventh its pre-war figure. The press refers to the city as a "semi-ghost town." Los Ange-



les establishes the "grid neighborhoods" — areas which receive electrical power during the night. These same neighborhoods receive the bulk of police and fire protection. Approximately 250,000 people live outside of grid neighborhoods, in areas controlled by gangs or by no one at all. Many squatters establish villages in previously fashionable condominiums.

Week Twelve — Proximity to the Living Land changes the weather of Los Angeles. The city now receives almost three times the annual rainfall it once did. Subsistence farms are started, but starvation and other deprivation eventually drives the population of metro LA down to 400,000, of which about 20,000 are gang members. Despite the conditions, realm runners find Los Angeles to be a lucrative way station along the path to the Western Living Land. The Dodgers, the last sport franchise in the city, are ordered to leave by the Delphi Council.

Week Fifteen — The Mayor and the Town Council finally leave the city, supposedly at the request of the Delphi Council. Terri Bender, a Los Angeles Health Department official, announces that she has assumed the office of Mayor. No one else wants the job, so she gets it. Ichi Entertainment opens a small film laboratory in the city. The event gets a lot of play within the city, but is buried or excised from the rest of the country's media.

Week Twenty — As an afterthought, elections are held which confirm Terri Bender as Mayor. Hachiman Arms Ltd. begins a small-scale weapons testing program in Los Angeles. Select LAPD units are given the weapons to field test. The action tilts the balance of power between gangs and police in favor of the police.

Week Twenty-Four — Gangs attack a warehouse owned by Ichi Entertainment. The company requests and receives special authority to bring in outside security forces to handle the gang problem. Within 72 hours, Kanawa Corporation has quietly declared war on Los Angeles gangs. In a more public move, Ichi Entertainment announces plans to build its North American headquarters in Los Angeles. The ultra-modern building is to be the tallest in the city.

Week Twenty-Eight — The gang wars end. While casualties are not known for either side, estimated losses are 1,070 Kanawa security people against perhaps 14,500 gang members. Storm Knights begin to arrive in Los Angeles, using the city as a base of operations against the Living Land to the north.

Week Twenty-Nine — Yoshiko Nakata arrives in Los Angeles. She is Executive for Special Operations for Ichi Entertainment, North America Division. Her previous stops include Marseilles, France and, earlier, the Soviet Union. Soto Investments and Chi Real Estate begin to buy Los Angeles property. Starvation in the city is eased by edeinos relief parties who drive herds of crosktrecks out of the Living Land for consumption by Los Angelenos.

Week Thirty-One — Dozens of independent actions are launched against the Living Land, especially the Sacramento area. Nippon Tech sources help supply Storm Knights. A number of American construction firms begin building new apartments and commercial properties on land held by Soto Investments and Chi Real Estate.

Week Thirty-Five — The construction boom in Los Angeles is large enough to attract Boruzai Construction. Mayor Bender rejects a tax-break proposal from a consortium of businesses. A bungled assassination attempt against the Mayor is blamed on a rise in gang activity. Previously warm relations between the Mayor's Office and Nippon businesses begin to cool. Two Storm Knights, Mark Dyer and Abbas Sombol establish a business, "Reality Solutions, Ltd."

Week Thirty-Nine — The "Miracle of California" is completed. Nippon reality replaces Living Land reality in the Sacramento area. The adjacent stela areas become mixed zones. The Miracle of California is hailed as a great victory for Core Earth.

Week Forty — The Delphi Council removes restrictions against travel to California. A number of firms run advertisements plugging Los Angeles, using everything from the lure of better jobs to a patriotic pitch to "take back what's ours."

Week Forty-Seven — Immigration reaches 75,000 a week. Edeinos tribes

settle in the Topanga State Park and the Los Angeles National Forest. Mayor Bender and local residents band together to support the edeinos right to live on the lands. Political observers believe the Mayor is trying to build a coalition in opposition to the increasing influence of Nippon in Los Angeles.

YEAR TWO

Week One — Cyberpapal Nuncio Eschlimann arrives in Los Angeles. While welcomed by the Mayor, the media is decidedly cool to his arrival, and is delighted when Eschlimann is denied a tour of the new Special Effects Laboratory being built by Ichi Entertainment.

Week Two — Ellerby Quaff, a dwarven fighter and mage of some repute, is sent as an envoy from the court of Queen Pella Ardinay. While the media is originally cool to the dwarf, he quickly sized up the situation and gained favor by publicly poking fun at the Cyberpapal Nuncio.

Week Five — Nippon Tech businesses now employ 400,000 people, about 25% of the population living in Los Angeles. American firms begin to relocate into the area in earnest. The US government sponsors "California Dreamers," night trains which run from the southeast and southwest to Los Angeles. Immigration reaches 100,000 a week.

Week Eight — Boruzai Construction announces it has started building underground modular apartments, the kind that "have proven so popular with young professionals in Osaka." They aim to build over 14,000 units a week. A local columnist quips that "even if you don't work for Nippon, you are going to be renting from them." He is fired.

Week Eleven — The influx of people leads to an increase in anonymity and mobility, which fuels an increase in crime. The surviving gangs come out from the underground and begin to recruit from the newcomers. Immigration exceeds 150,000 people a week, the target figure for Kanawa operations.

Week Fourteen — Jezrael succeeds in her coup against Kranod, and becomes the High Lord of Tharkold.



Knowing the techno-demons are reluctantly to serve one of the Race, she unites them by proposing a crusade of ferocity and vengeance against Earth and Kanawa. She chooses Sterret of the Blades to lead the effort against Earth. Jezrael also accelerates Kranod's program to modify the stelae through occulttech, to make the stelae more defensible. Jezrael knows she must prevent the type of defeat the previous High Lord suffered. She will only have one chance.

Week Sixteen—Malgest, Tharkold's darkness device, drops a dimthread into Russia. Sterret drops alone and begins his reconnoiter of Earth. He often wears a *monkey form* to camouflage himself from the curious. Immigration into the Los Angeles area reaches its peak of 250,000 people a week. It continues at this level for several weeks.

Week Twenty-One—Total Nippon investment in the greater Los Angeles area tops five trillion yen. Over seventy percent of that sum is from Kanawa or Kanawa-held subsidiaries. By the end of the year that figure should triple. Ryuchi Kanawa plans to make Los Angeles his base of operations in North America, striking at the remaining population centers of the United States, and quickly expanding south into Mexico and Central America. The arrival of the Akashans adds urgency to this plan. Sterret arrives in Los Angeles.

Week Twenty-Seven—The population of metro Los Angeles tops six million, and continues to swell. Better than 80% of the city is occupied close to capacity. Rather than reclaim the more devastated or gang-infested areas, many new arrivals opt to stay in the "warrens" built by Boruzai rather than risk the older neighborhoods. Sterret's hunting has left a trail of victims which catches the interest of Yoshiko Nakata. Before she can authorize an investigation, Sterret returns to Russia. The demon prince temporarily returns to Tharkold where he outlines his plan for the invasion of Los Angeles to Jezrael, who approves it.

Week Thirty—Gang activity once again pushes out from the neighborhoods in which it had been contained. Rumors that Yakuza are using the local gangs as an outlet for drug trafficking are investigated with lackluster effort by local authorities. Mayor Terri

Bender goes on television for several "take back the neighborhoods" speeches. These succeed in getting law enforcement to increase the vigor of their investigations. On Tharkold, the occulttech experiments with the stelae prove successful. The modified stelae now have limited ability to teleport themselves away from danger.

Week Thirty-Four—An illegal Kanawa importing scheme is uncovered and dismantled by Mark Dyer and Abbas Sombol. Other Storm Knight activity is also beginning to nettle Nippon Tech executives. Yoshiko Nakata is given the task of monitoring, and where possible, manipulating the media's reportage of these events. The level of Storm Knight activity is considered a cost which must be controlled rather than a crisis. Malgest drops a dimthread into Los Angeles. Sterret and a few of his chosen agents cross over.

Week Thirty-Six—Los Angeles experiences a rash of seemingly random, bizarre and very violent attacks. The poorer neighborhoods were struck first. Everyone wants to ascribe the attacks to an escalation of gang violence, so they do. Sterret establishes a cyberware surgical facility in Bellflower, one of the few neighborhoods which is still sparsely inhabited. Mark Dyer and Abbas Sombol tangle with contract ninja providing protection for a Yakuza operation. The two heroes receive the attention of the local press. The biggest news story is the ahead-of-schedule completion of the Ichi Entertainment building.

Week Forty One—Sterret and his agents strike twice in better neighborhoods; Beverly Hills and Granada Hills. The techno-demons approve of the fear which jolts the city. Sterret needs a diversion to prevent Nippon Tech agents from looking too closely at these killings. He gives them something else to think about. He murders an Ichi Entertainment courier, using a 9mm Beretta model manufactured by Hachiman Arms, Ltd. The ploy succeeds. Sterret begins to recruit local gang members for his operation.

Week Forty Three—After Sterret kills two more couriers, the investigation is given to Yoshiko Nakata. Her operations are hampered by interference from above, but she begins to

suspect that Ichi Entertainment is being victimized by the return of an old enemy: Tharkold. A Kadandran soldier, Kreya Keena-Three, is sent to Earth.

Week Forty-Four—Sterret murders his fourth courier. Yoshiko Nakata hires Mark Dyer and Abbas Sombol to find the courier-killer, fully anticipating Tharkold involvement. Her hope is for the elimination of the Tharkoldu or the heroes. Sterret's recruitment of local gang members moves into high gear; dozens are given cyberware each day, although not all survive each round of surgery. Keena, Mark, and Abbas fail to deactivate the stelae. Yoshiko Nakata goes underground. The maelstrom bridge drops straight into Ichi Entertainment's headquarters. With Yoshiko's help, Keena, Mark, and Abbas severely damage the Apoculum, an occulttech device which would allow all of the realms' stelae to be rearranged in a coordinated pattern. Sterret makes a desperate move to get the stelae to expand. The realm only measures 100 miles to a side. Technohorror arrives in Los Angeles.

Week Forty-Six—The start time for material in this sourcebook. Tharkoldu have had time to reinforce some of their positions, and recruit or capture more slaves. Refugees again are leaving Los Angeles by the thousands, but not in the flood as before. No one knows exactly why the citizens of Los Angeles have increased their resolve, but there are plenty of theories. Some of the reasons are given below in "The Players."

The Realm Today

Los Angeles is the heart of the Tharkold realm. While the teleporting stelae can shift the boundaries, the realm's northwestern boundary is usually along the Ventura Freeway (highway 1010, near the town of Camarillo). The southeastern boundary runs along the Golden State/Santa Ana Freeway (Highway 5), stopping within a few miles of Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. The northeastern boundary falls in the vicinity of route 395, running 10 to 15 miles south of Edwards Air Force Base. The realm is



a pure zone of Tharkold reality. Reality storms erupt periodically, but not with typical ferocity. Tharkoldu reality storms usually have an effect value of 8 to 12, although they can be higher.

Climate

Los Angeles' climate is affected by its proximity to the Living Land, Kanawa industrial activity, and Tharkoldu reality. Los Angeles now gets about 155 days of rain a year. Once established, the weather stays the same for days. If the weather is clear, it is clear for days. If it starts to rain, it rains for days. Torrential downpours are possible, but more common is a continual steady rain or fine drizzle. Rain makes the task of spotting characters or items more difficult. *Find*, or other similar *Perception* skills, difficulties are increased by +3 in a drizzle or steady rain, and by +5 during a torrential downpour. Kanawa industry has dumped enough pollution into the air to give the rain a variety of smells and tastes; these senses are also affected by the difficulty increase. The difficulty of hitting an opponent in the rain, when the opponent is not at point-blank or short range, has the difficulty increased by +3 in a drizzle or steady rain, +5 during a downpour. This is in addition to the usual range penalties.

The Feel of the City

Los Angeles is not a city in panic—it is a city in a determined struggle with demonic invaders. The Tharkoldu are not everywhere, but they can appear anywhere. The odds of an average Los Angeleno confronting a techno-demon on any given day are less than 1-in-15,000. Residents can go to work, shop, play, and live their lives without meeting a Tharkoldu face to face. But Tharkoldu are a spiritually erosive presence, for every Los Angeleno knows that nowhere is completely safe.

Signs of the invaders are everywhere. Synthecyclers, automated resource scavengers, comb the city for resources. Synthecyclers more commonly scour abandoned or lightly populated areas, but some rumble through inhabited areas. The common small modules are the size of a lawn

tractor; a citizen can awaken to hear her car being broken down into constituent substances for use in Tharkoldu production. The largest industrial scale synthecycler is 30 meters long, 30 meters wide, and 15 meters high, akin to a mobile four-story warehouse which consumes and breaks down material in its path. An industrial scale synthecycler is under construction near the ruins of the Ichi Entertainment building.

Gangslaves, wired with cybergear and frighteningly armed, roam the city. LAPD and Kanawa security firms patrol parts of the city, often in squad-strength (groups of 8 or more), a visual reminder to citizens they are in a war zone.

There are creatures wandering the city, monsters from Tharkold and Tharkoldu laboratories. Some are under Tharkoldu dominance, others are released to alter the texture of fear and pain in the city, twisting the city to grotesquerie that pleases Tharkoldu. But, though they will not admit it, there are a few creatures roaming Los Angeles that even the Tharkoldu wish did not exist.

The symbol of the invasion is the ruined Ichi Entertainment building. The 122-story structure is visible from virtually the entire city and much of the rest of the outlying area. During the day, winds whip about the building, clouds overhead darkening and congealing into wrong shapes, something which drips/twists around the building. At night small storms flare near the top of the building, spectacular multi-colored lightning striking ten or twelve spots simultaneously. The demons did this. The demons are inside.

The Players

Los Angeles is fast becoming an urban hell; a surreal playground for the Tharkoldu's esthetic of pain and horror. But there are a number of factions in Los Angeles, many of which are organized enough to resist the techno-demons. Jezrael and Sterret of the Blades have only won a modest victory in Los Angeles, and now face a vicious struggle. Little could better please the demons.

Core Earth Residents

Mayor Terri Bender represents the views of hundreds of thousands of Los Angelenos when she says "Hell has come to the City of Angels. We must pray we have the strength to honor our God in this, the first true battle of Armageddon." Most Core Earthers have an instinctual, spiritual repugnance to the Tharkoldu. Their repugnance, mixed with their fear, causes them to lash out against the invaders, rather than flee or submit. This reaction is certainly increased by Tharkold's world laws, such as the Law of Ferocity, which often increase the odds of a conflict. In neighborhoods still predominantly Core Earth, churches and religion have become the focus of the community. This was becoming true even before a TV 6 Live Cam report showed a berserker techno-demon attacking a congregation in a B'hai temple. The techno-demon tore several victims to pieces, but where the blood of its victims splattered it, the berserker bubbled and burned. An injured worshipper struck the demon with a bloodied palm. The palm-print immediately burst into a searing jet of blue-hot flame, burning through the demon in a matter of seconds.

Goals: The primary goal of the Core Earthers is survival and preservation of their society. For many citizens this means a no-holds barred war with the Tharkoldu and their slaves. Compromise with such brutal creatures is unthinkable. These Los Angelenos want to hunt the Tharkoldu as they themselves are hunted. They are particularly enraged by the slave-sweeps, the operations in which the Tharkoldu loot a neighborhood of its inhabitants, to temporarily satiate Tharkoldu need for slaves.

Others merely want to survive. They are caught in fear, and yet refuse to either surrender or flee. They defend themselves, perhaps sheltering and feeding others who come to them for help. Some strike back by working in Kanawa factories, producing goods and equipment needed by others who actively fight Tharkold. These people do not seek a more active part in the



war. Like the citizens of Stalingrad or Leningrad who refused to leave in the face of the Nazi onslaught, these people resist with a quiet pride and rock-solid determination not to yield.

The Ayslish Embassy

Ellerby Quaff's original mission was to keep an eye on Cyberpapal Nuncio Eschlimann, and thwart the Cyberpapacy's plans where possible. Amiable and astute, he quickly became a favorite with the local media. This was a boon for Quaff, who said, "A once-told tale now is heard in a thousand taverns. But I do miss the drinking." Nuncio Eschlimann's overbearing righteousness made him easy to provoke, and usually as easy to predict. As the Cyberpapal mission grew, the Ayslish embassy kept pace. Tharkold's invasion abruptly shifted the focus of Quaff's efforts. Fortunately the Ayslish were partially prepared, as battling the Cyberpapacy gave them experience with technologically advanced foes.

Goals: The first priority of the embassy is to provide a haven for Ayslish citizens. This haven is provided with the understanding that the citizens who count most are the permanent staff of the embassy. If characters are using the embassy as a base from which to harass the techno-demons, Quaff shall probably ask the characters to find shelter elsewhere. The dwarf will not risk facing the concerted effort of several Tharkoldu alphas just to save the hides of some characters. Quaff will not hesitate to deny shelter to any non-Ayslish character if he believes harboring the character would put the embassy at risk.

The second priority is to resist Tharkold. No one in the embassy doubts that Tharkold serves the forces of darkness. Being practiced diplomats, they recognize the limits of their power, as well as the limits of Ayslish interests in Los Angeles. The embassy's tactics of hit-and-hide do not sit well with some Core Earthers who can see nothing to be gained by not fighting full-bore against the techno-demons.

The Cyberpapal Nuncio

Nuncio Eschlimann came to Los Angeles to find believers for Jean Malraux, and to gauge the extent of Kanawa activity in the region. Eschlimann knew that what he could see of Nippon Tech activity was like the first sin confessed by the unrepentant; significant yet hardly speaking of the wretchedness yet to be revealed. He regularly petitioned, and received, more aid from Avignon. Despite ridicule from the Kanawa-influenced media, and hindrance from that stunted faery-brat Ellerby Quaff, Eschlimann made enough converts in the Los Angeles area to open a teaching monastery associated with the Nuncio.

Tharkold's invasion galvanized the Cyberpapists. The city was hit by a host of demons, blasphemers who dared to pervert the Lord's Cyberware to their own evil ends. Eschlimann believes the Cyberpapacy has no greater enemy than Tharkold. The fight against the techno-demons is the holiest crusade the Nuncio could imagine. The News Service of the Cyberpapacy feeds Los Angeles images to CyberFrance on an almost nightly basis. Scores of Jazuits and Cyberpriests have heeded the call, coming to Los Angeles to battle the devil.

Goals: Destruction of the Tharkoldu and their blaspheming ways. Malraux has personally relayed the requests of Avignon technopriests that Eschlimann obtain demonic cyberware for testing and evaluation. This task is extremely distasteful to the Nuncio, who has occasionally lapsed in this aspect of his holy duty.

Living Land Tribes

The edeinos and other Jakatts have tribes in the Los Angeles area, although few of them live in the city. The largest "tribes" have been named by Core Earth officials after the regions they inhabit. They are the Topanga tribe, located in Topanga State Park, and the San Gabriel tribe, located in the San Gabriel Mountains and the Angeles

National Forest. Each of these "tribes" actually consist of several tribal units which coexist within an area. Migration constantly changes the mix, with each named tribe actually containing five to eight tribes at any one time. Human Jakatts, as well as stalengers and benthe, belong to these tribes, although edeinos constitute nearly three quarters of the tribal population. Tharkoldu have brought hard times to the worshippers of Lanala, as the techno-demons find the life-affirming religion most unsettling. Jakatts can also experience pain in ways that Core Earthers shut out, a prospect which pleases the demons. The Jakatts' faith has prevented wholesale slaughter at the talons of the demons, as Tharkoldu are susceptible to faith-based defenses.

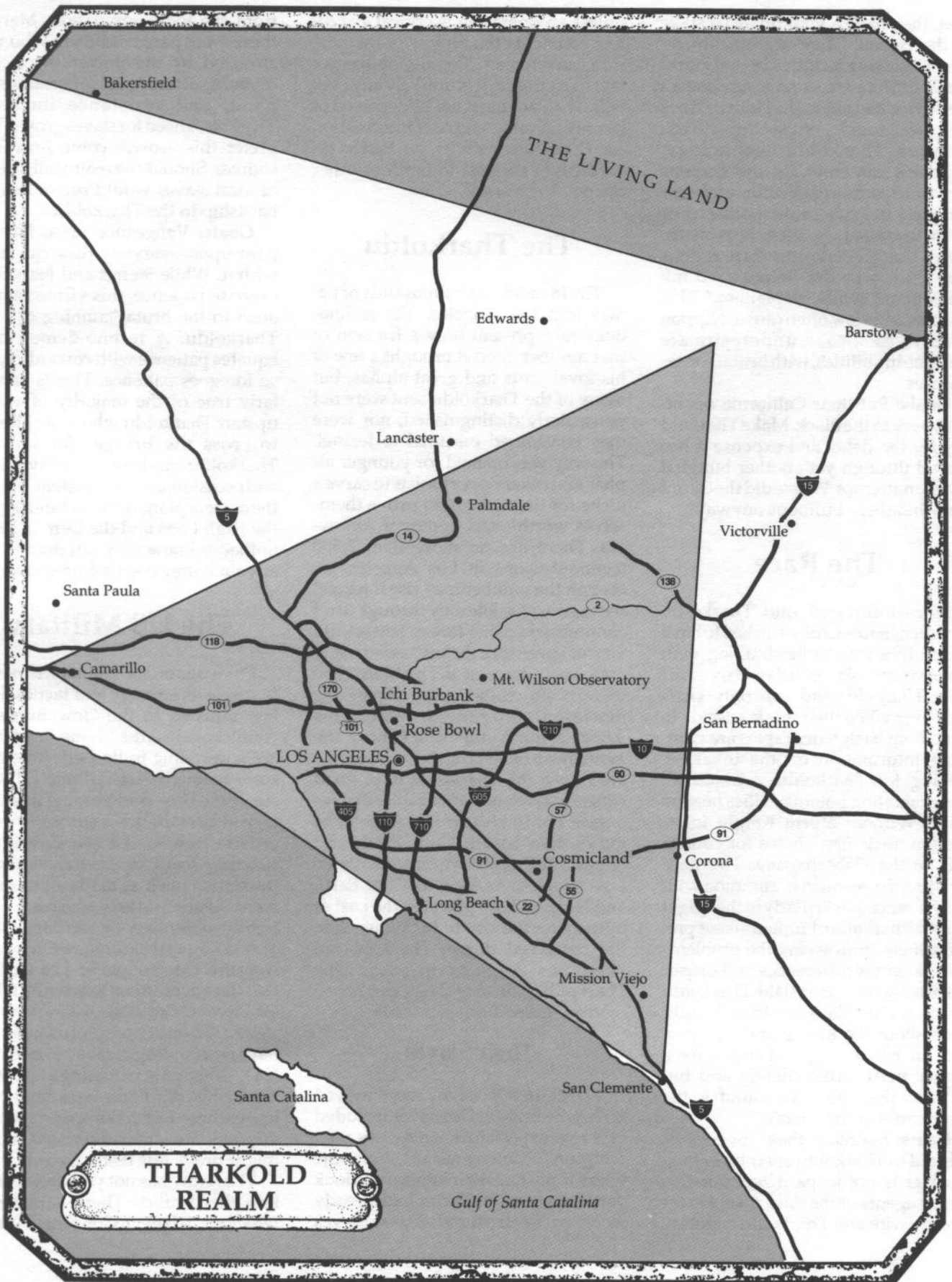
Goals: The optants wish to help their followers stay true to the teachings of Lanala. Lanala's love of life is a powerful weapon against the life-negating, walking demon-dead Tharkoldu. They send Jakatt teams in to plant hroct shoots and other plants in the concrete devastation of Los Angeles. They are willing to teach Core Earth residents how to best use the plants, and when they spread in an area, Jakatt teams use these "parks" to physically and spiritually renew themselves, allowing them to stay and help against the Tharkoldu.

Nippon Tech

Kanawa Corporation is not the only megacorporation to invest in the Los Angeles area, although they have risked the most. Minase Security and World Perfect, both subsidiaries of Asuga Hovercraft, managed to gain a foothold in Los Angeles, currently their only location on Earth. No one knows what leverage Asuga had on 3327 to allow them a part of the lucrative Earth market. Some believe that Kanawa Corporation had overextended itself and required working capital, with Los Angeles as part of the "stock offering." Seasoned Hantu Ltd. observers believe there is more to the story than that, but as yet can offer no clues.

With two megacorporations investing trillions of yen in the Los Angeles





area, they have a vital financial stake in the region. They are quickly re-trenching their facilities in the Southern California area, and extending all the advice and aid to the United States they see fit to give. While Nippon Tech admires Tharkoldu technology, Nippon's contempt for the demons backward social organization and their complete lack of a profit motive leads them to disparage their opponents: "Why don't Tharkoldu corporations ever show a profit? Because red ink looks better when it splatters." This disparaging view often causes Nippon executives to underestimate Tharkoldu abilities, with brutal consequences.

Goals: Put their California operations back in the black. Make Tharkold pay for the delay and expense it has caused through yet another bungled invasion attempt. Where did the Gaunt Man find these buffoons anyway?

The Race

Spies infiltrated into Tharkoldu slave pens successfully worked to have themselves sent to Earth along with other valued slaves. They are cut off from Tharkold, and can only cross back over when their master decide to send them back. These spies are gathering information on the invasion, looking for Tharkoldu weaknesses, and evaluating potential allies here on Earth. Without Storm Knight intervention, their first choice for contact will be the Cyberpapacy. The Race feels they have much in common with CyberFrance, particularly in their fight against Tharkoldu. Limited access prevents them from seeing the problems their religious differences will cause.

Direct action against the Tharkoldu is rare, and the Race is extremely judicious about the timing and extent of such an action: "Against such a foe a dagger must strike silently and but once, so that the only sound is the death rattle of the enemy."

Goals: Maintain their cover. Provide aid to Tharkoldu enemies as long as cover is not jeopardized. For this reason agents of the Race do not meet directly with any Tharkoldu enemies,

unless an operation is critical and direct contact is the only way the mission can succeed. No mission has yet met that criteria; it is unlikely any ever will. The Race must not be deprived of its only possible source of information on Tharkoldu activity on Earth, regardless of the cost to Earth or other realms.

The Tharkoldu

The invaders sent thousands of beings into Los Angeles. The techno-demons represent only a fraction of that number. Sterret brought a few of his loyal lords and great alphas, but many of the Tharkoldu sent were not particularly distinguished, nor were they considered essential to Jezrael. The way was opened for younger alphas and other opportunists to carve a niche for themselves, to prove themselves worthy and dominate followers. There are no more than 2,500 techno-demons in Los Angeles, although the number may rise if Jezrael sees a gain possible only through a full commitment of her forces. Jezrael and Sterret agree that the invasion is only marginally successful. They need time to work on strategies for expanding the realm, and time to rebuild the Apocularum so they can control the movement of their stelae. Until they are ready, the Tharkoldu have good reason to give nuclear-capable enemies reason not to reduce Los Angeles to radioactive basalt. Core Earth and Nippon Tech still have reason to value Los Angeles. As long as Core Earth and Nippon Tech perceive the cost of destroying the city to be higher than the perceived threat, Tharkold can keep Los Angeles in play. The Tharkoldu plan uses their opponents' monkey-greed until it is too late.

Their Slaves

About 16,000 slaves were moved across the bridge. The slaves included cyberware specialists, Janissaries, pain sculptors, occult technicians, and some who simply had the misfortune to look particularly tasty. Sterret had already recruited or captured 20,000 slaves

from the local population. Many of these were gang members who were attracted by the power the techno-demons offered. As operations expand, and resistance increases, Tharkold's need for slaves grows. They prefer this growth come from local sources. Should the realm fall, the loss of local slaves would prove less of a hardship to the Tharkoldu.

Goals: Vengeance upon Nippon, pain upon everyone they can inflict with it. While Sterret and Jezrael can exercise patience, this virtue remains alien to the brutal cunning of many Tharkoldu. A techno-demon often equates patience with cowardice, and so foregoes patience. This is particularly true of the majority of young, upstart Tharkoldu who were allowed to cross the bridge. As a result, Tharkoldu strategy is rarely subtle, and occasionally non-existent. This fits the current plans of Sterret and Jezrael; the High Lord and the Demon Prince of Blades know they can dominate at any time they need a true strategy.

The US Military

Once again, the military is having to revise its strategy and tactics. Having adjusted to the "low intensity" conflict against the Living Land, they are scrambling to find effective measures against the latest threat. Edwards Air Force Base is increasing its inventory of aircraft, but is currently under orders from the Delphi Council restricting them to "morale building missions," such as night missions directed against targets which are either lightly defended or perhaps abandoned. These missions are intended to reassure that people of Los Angeles that the government is actually taking effective action, while risking very few assets. The one important mission they have is providing combat air patrol for LAX, defending incoming and outgoing flights. Air Force personnel chafe under these restrictions, and continually ask for "clarifications" which might prove less restrictive.

The Army has not yet been ordered into the conflict. There is currently ferocious debate in Congress over the



role the Army have in meeting this current threat. The prevailing sentiment is to keep the Army on its current mission, patrolling the perimeter of the Living Land, driving into enemy territory on brief, fast-moving operations targeting gospog fields or other build up of Baruk Kaah's forces. The feeling is that the US is now winning the war against the Living Land, and that takes precedence over the unfortunate situation in Los Angeles.

Navy activity has been limited. Their orders have given priority to "hardening" the facilities in nearby Mission Park Bay in San Diego. They are trying to increase the security and defensibility of the base, should the technohorror move south. The government has even sponsored building a small Resistance Heritage Museum in Mission Park, gathering stories and artifacts from around the country heralding the American Spirit who defends her liberty. The unspoken hope is that museum will contain or create a hardpoint to bolster the defense of the base.

The Navy is now weathering some trouble with Congress. During the week after the invasion, a Tomahawk missile slammed into the already ravaged Ichi Entertainment building, killing an alpha and several techno-demons. This attack was never authorized by the US Government. The Navy denies one of its vessels launched the missile, but as Congressman Dean Chambers (R-Ark) said, "Admiral, a Tomahawk is not the sort of weapon you launch from a wind surfer." The good news for the Navy is that the day following the attack, Boruzai Construction offered to take on 30% of the construction at Mission Bay at a "small loss" allowing for more elaborate fortifications to be planned and built.

The Marines at Camp Pendleton have been authorized to take limited action against the enemy in Los Angeles. Units have been pulled from action in the Living Land, reassigned to Camp Pendleton and the new front of the Possibility Wars. The street gangs which serve Sterret are often better armed than the Marines, but they do

not have the discipline or tactical expertise. As one USMC corporal said, "We get a little banged up going in, but that's part of the job. We come out leaving fewer bad guys, and with some of these nifty weapons. Next time we go in, we don't get so banged up."

Sergeant Ted "Boomer" Nakamura, a weapons instructor reassigned to Pendleton, leads a squad which has achieved notoriety for "bagging two wings," killing two techno-demons. Stories of his confrontations with the Tharkoldu spread through LA, and grow almost daily.

Areas of the Realm

Tharkold's realm encompasses metro Los Angeles. Technohorror has transformed Los Angeles, but it has not destroyed the city. Cynics say LA was already on its way to becoming a horror, and the Tharkoldu simply hastened the next step in its evolution. Others say that the spirit of the city was strong enough to take in the technohorror and still resemble what it had been. Most citizens say it's worth fighting for, and you might survive if you do not take unnecessary chances, such as driving at night. The following brief descriptions highlight representative areas in the city, with emphasis on what Storm Knights might find of interest.

Freeway Names

On the map, Los Angeles freeways have numbers. To Los Angelenos, the freeways have names. For game-masters who want to add touches of local color, here are the freeway names. Some freeways have more than one name. For example highway 101 is called "Santa Ana" to the south, the "Ventura freeway" in the north, and the "Hollywood freeway" in the area around Hollywood. The invasion damaged some of the freeways, but all of them are open. During the day they can still be very busy. Nighttime is a different story.

2	Glendale
5	Golden State/ Santa Ana
10	San Bernadino/ Santa Monica
22	Garden Grove
30	Foothill
55	Newport
57	Orange
60	Pomona
71	Corona
90	Marina
91	Artesia/ Redondo Beach
101	Hollywood/ Santa Ana/ Ventura
110	Harbor/ Pasadena
118	San Fernando Valley
134	Ventura
170	Hollywood
210	Foothill
405	San Diego
605	San Gabriel
710	Long Beach

Anaheim and Cosmicland

The Miracle of California sparked a surge of reinvestment in Cosmicland and Anaheim stadium. Anonymous German investors teamed with Cosmic Inc. to retool the famous theme park. Nippon Tech's investment and the revitalization of the city led to a booming increase in the tourist trade. Cosmicland was heading for profitability when Tharkold descended. Faced with ruin a second time, Cosmicland executives are choosing to fight rather than pull out. New to Futureland is StrikeForce Proxima, a science fiction theme ride about a paramilitary organization of time-traveling heroes. The ride, while moderately popular, is largely an excuse to have heavily armed and armored security troops wandering through all portions of the park, albeit in costume. Their presence is explained by staged events and special effects, enough to be largely unobtrusive.

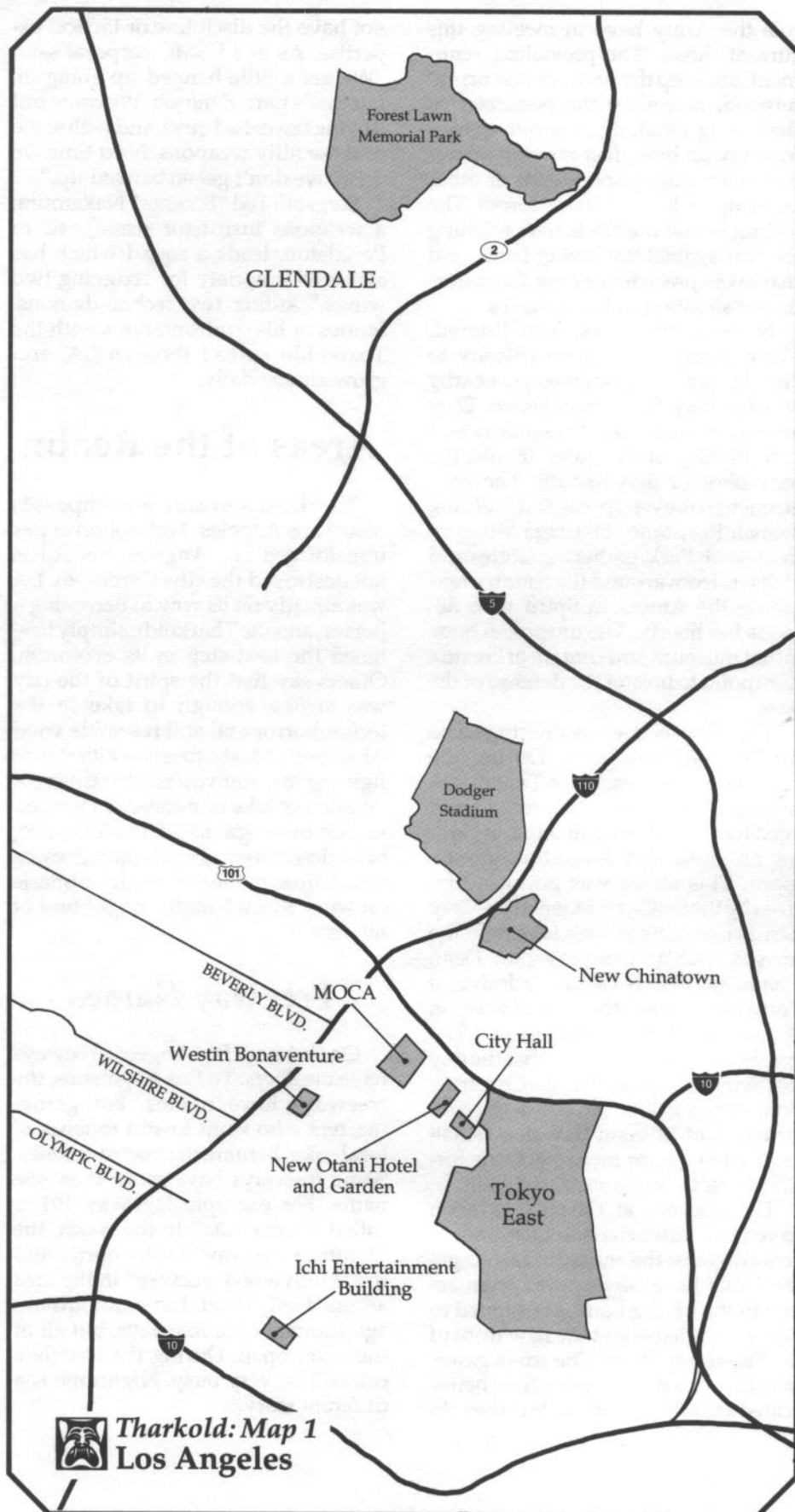
While the program has been quite successful at so far reducing incidents at Cosmicland to a minimum, retaining skilled security personnel on the job has been a problem. As Quin



Sebastian said, in an interview in *Soldier of Fortune*, "I have endured Sahara sandstorms, Cyberpapal sermons, and edeinosaurs 'cooking,' but working in the park was ridiculous. They pack you with enough firepower to level Ardinay's castle, then they pop you into this sparkling silver and blue hard-plastic costume, concealing most of your goodies and making your sweat glands put themselves on their 'Niagara' setting. Chatter in your left ear is telling you how close to the park the baddies have been sighted, chatter in your right is telling you where other members of your unit are going. You are standing in a crowd of targets, scanning up, with some kid dripping ice cream in your boots, a set of parents 'yoohooing' you for a picture with their brat, and some wiseass kid shouting, 'I bet you guys don't even know that the Feral Four have their secret hideout in Tibet, do ya?'" It was the last one that got me fired, when I levelled my Hornet 9mm at the kid and stage-whispered "Feral Four information has priority alpha, your possession illegal. You must be terminated." My bosses figured that wasn't part of the image of StrikeForce Proxima."

Anaheim Stadium is now abandoned. Reopened after the Miracle of California, Tharkoldu swarmed over the stadium shortly after the invasion. A televangelist's religious revival was being held in the stadium. He was captured by a great alpha Tharkoldu, hundreds of his followers were slain by other techno-demons, and thousands more were slaughtered and looted by gangslaves. The stadium was damaged in the attack. Worse, things were reportedly attracted to the killing ground, and now the stadium is avoided by all right-thinking people.

Storm Knight Items: A rogue demon sometimes hides within Cosmicland, using the *horrifying arrival* spell to conceal himself. He most often appears in Ardinay's castle or in Westernland's many caves. The rogue's attacks have been underreported, but Cosmicland officials want to rid the park of this rogue,



**Tharkold: Map 1
Los Angeles**



and are willing to pay up to \$500,000 to have it exterminated.

Under Anaheim stadium is a gospog field, buried in catacombs carved by Tharkoldu technology and magic. First planting gospog are now emerging. Second planting gospog should mature in three weeks. There are creatures lurking in the stadium, many of them fed by carrion delivered by Tharkoldu, or hunting throughout Anaheim for a fresher meal. There are wards to prevent the creatures from descending into the catacombs and disturbing the crop.

Bellflower

This area was abandoned in the first evacuation of Los Angeles, and it never recovered. A few stubborn residents stayed behind, to be joined by squatters several weeks later. The locals appealed to city hall for help, but were ignored. They took the law into their own hands, driving squatters from the local property. When the gangs moved in, the locals were organized enough to offer stiff resistance, limiting the gangs to a very few blocks of the city. During Nippon Tech's operations against LA gangs, Bellflower was given arms and other aid. Bellflower residents still have better things to say about Kanawa subsidiaries than about city hall.

The next visitor was Sterret, Prince of Blades. While he and his slaves stayed hidden, their gruesome handiwork dripped onto porches and smeared across living room walls. Bellflower's appeals for help were largely ignored. A cyberware surgical facility opened in an abandoned building, soon followed by others. With Sterret's help, gangs moved back into Bellflower. Many were wired-and-chipped, and then given to other techno-demons under Sterret's command. Bellflower's residents, stubborn to the end, have moved to one section of the neighborhood, built a stockade from rubble, concrete, cyclone fencing and abandoned vehicles. They refuse to surrender their neighborhood.

Storm Knight Items: While Sterret has dispersed his operations throughout the city, Bellflower still has more surgical facilities than any other neigh-

borhood. Consequentially it also has become a mecca for gangs, and many headquarter there. Not all of the gangs are currently slaves, but only those who have submitted to Tharkoldu are given cyberware. Sterret maintains an "apartment"—part trophy room, part bolt-hole, adjoining one of the cybersurgery facilities.

Beverly Hills

Beverly Hills incorporated itself during World War I, in part to establish an identity separate from that of Los Angeles. The residential city was completely surrounded by Los Angeles, and a great deal of money and effort was spent to keep Los Angeles' troubles from spilling across into this exclusive neighborhood. During the opening days of the Possibility Wars, Beverly Hills doubled the size of its police force. As the stars and wealthy dribbled out of the city, a policy of "homesteading" was adopted. Respectable (and desperate) families were hired by the wealthy to live in their homes and assure that no damage was done to the property, or to repair any that occurred. The homesteaders had to provide one family member to the Beverly Hills Preservation Force, an armed militia under the command of the Beverly Hills police force. As the war dragged on, some residents sold their property to foreign speculators, the majority of them Japanese. After the Miracle of California, most residents returned and Nippon investment rekindled the entertainment industry in Los Angeles. The law requiring one family member for the BHPF was amended to allow the hiring of mercenaries, who now make up the bulk of the force.

Storm Knight Items: Chuck Harris (page 53 of *The Living Land* sourcebook) has returned to Beverly Hills. The star of *Rex Able, Freelance Fighter* wants to film most of next season on location around Los Angeles. The market research people say technohorror ought to go over big with the American viewers, as long as the good guys can win. Chuck's limited abilities pose real problems for the producers of the show. They have decided to cast people who have fought and survived the

Possibility Wars, and hope to get lucky enough to land a Storm Knight or two. All sorts of parts are available, including co-starring roles. Signing a contract of course obligates the characters to finish filming, but the producers have thought ahead and are only signing people to six-episode contracts (although the contract states that should a character wish to resign, she agrees to do so for the same terms as the first contract).

Beverly Hills is still aghast about the murder at the Los Angeles Country Club. Four Beverly Hills residents were dining privately: Jon Kivstad, Humi Tanimura, Norman Brust and Stephanie Gladden. The room was filled with a smoky, inky darkness which chilled the staff and immobilized them. They could hear screams coming from the dining area, but could do nothing. Pleading voices alternated with guttural, laughing voices. When the blackness receded, the staff choked to see the shredded remains of Humi Tanimura. Norman Brust was mortally injured, and probably will not live. Kivstad and Gladden were cut, bleeding and shaken, but were clearly going to live. They told of technodemons ripping them in the blackness, and then vanishing inexplicably. The Los Angeles Country Club is negotiating with the Ayslish Embassy for wards to protect their facilities.

In truth, two Tharkoldu, an alpha and one of his pride, *popped* in, cast *chilling darkness*, and began the violence. The chief target was Humi Tanimura, CEO of a small optics firm which subcontracted considerable work from Hachiman Arms Ltd. They then toyed with the remaining victims until two, Jon Kivstad and Stephanie Gladden, submitted to them. They then gutted Brust, and cast *monkey mimic* to look like Kivstad and Gladden (the alpha chose Gladden's form). They then used *captive send* on the originals, sending them to the alpha's stronghold in Compton for later pleasure. They want to use their illusory identities to sniff around Beverly Hills, select the choicest targets, and savor the planning and execution of their vile acts. For this they are even willing to look like monkey spawn.



Burbank

Burbank housed several studios before the Possibility Wars. Toluca Lake, a community which manages to lie within both Burbank and Los Angeles, was home to those stars who could not afford, or who chose not, to live in Beverly Hills. NBC's Burbank facility was overrun and severely damaged, although the stories vary as to whether the damage was done by biker gangs, squatters, or Jakatt nomads. The Burbank Studios, housing Warner Bros. and Columbia Pictures, received less damage and were rebuilt after the Miracle of California. Just prior to the victory over the edeinos in California, Ichi Entertainment purchased NBC's Burbank facility. This shrewd investment allowed them to quickly resume production of sitcoms and soap operas — with American casts and tailored for American audiences. The facilities were projected to show a profit in the quarter during which Tharkold invaded. The studio is still open and working. Security is provided by the LAPD and private security firms, not all of which are subsidiaries of the Kanawa Corporation. As Ichi Entertainment Public Relations states, "Work forges ahead at Ichi Burbank, and who knows what the future has in store for this historical facility?"

Storm Knight Item: There is one show which is explicitly **not** being filmed for American audiences. Titled "LA Challenge," the format is part *Candid Camera*, part *American Gladiators*, spiced with a sadism usually displayed only in psychiatric journals. The host is Jake Nori, a smarmy, evil-spoken man with a talented pool of cruel writers. The audience consists of holograms which are obviously computer simulations. These can be tailored to imitate any personality or group the show wishes to lampoon. Live audience members are occasionally added to spice up the show. The show itself recruits desperate citizens of Los Angeles for challenges set in the city. The prizes range from as little as \$5,000 to over one million dollars. The prizes are awarded to winning contestants or "his assigns and heirs," whichever the case might be. The contestants must sign more waivers than baseball stars sign autographs; their

contracts prohibit them from telling anything about the show. Just to be on the safe side all of the show's key personnel have arranged (i.e. have paid huge bribes to Dr. Mobius) for diplomat status from the Nile Empire, giving them diplomatic immunity. The show is planning to tape 130 episodes for international syndication, 11 of which have already been filmed. The "challenges" are unfair. They often involve performing some stupid, highly visible stunts in some of the most dangerous areas of the city. Just to make sure of the odds, the show sometimes tips the balance, say by notifying a street gang that a man will be painting anti-gang graffiti on their turf, between the hours of 5:00 and 6:00 in the evening. The home audience is usually clued in to the nature of what host Nori calls "complicating factoids." These "challenges" almost always end in the contestant's death. But computer simulation to the rescue! The scenes are "reshot" with more sophisticated versions of the computer holography that makes up the audience; the results are given a happier ending for syndication. But the original (and true) tapes are duplicated and sold to twisted "connoisseurs" around the globe at a very high price. Test screenings project that the show will be popular in Asia and Europe. "Connoisseurs" will be solicited on an individual basis.

Compton

Compton has had better than two decades of hard times. Drugs and gang violence were the most recent manifestations of trouble. When Los Angeles was evacuated for the first time, a minority of Compton's residents stayed behind ... as did many of the gangs. At first little changed; the gangs killed each other, and the gangs preyed on the residents. But the change in scale changed the conflict. The remaining residents could barely support themselves, let alone carry the extra burden of crime. As Compton began to die, the gangs realized they were part of the problem. One result was a treacherous confederation, The Posse: a conduit for communication between the gangs, and a forum for disputes.

Occasionally the disputes brought to the Posse were resolved without much bloodshed.

The most important result was expansion of the territory over which the gangs operated, ranging more than fifty miles from their bases in Compton. Gangs in other areas were removed or allowed join The Posse. The gangs became smarter, noting an areas tolerance to "grazing," and shifting to a new area before the original target became too depleted of resources. The LAPD could only patrol a few neighborhoods, and even these were hardly immune. Until Nippon megacorporations tipped the scale, the gangs were the most powerful force in Los Angeles. The wars between Kanawa security forces and the gangs destroyed some gangs, and badly wounded most of them. Surviving gangs developed a fear and hatred for Nippon megacorps, emotions which made Sterret's recruitment efforts considerably easier.

Storm Knight Items: The original residents of Compton have been forgotten by the city, but they are still there. Some hold jobs at Nippon facilities, others scrape by by working the small subsistence plots in Compton, while others work in sweatshops established by callous entrepreneurs. Compton has become a neighborhood filled with "Lanala parks," the torn-up streets and vacant lots converted to gardens growing the hroctk shoots and other plants from the Living Land. With neighborhood help, Jakatt teams slip in and out of Compton. Some residents travel to Topanga State Park for "picnics" during which they are fed and learn more of the lore of Lanala from edeinos optants.

Downtown Los Angeles

Before the war, downtown LA was known for city hall, New Chinatown, Little Tokyo, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Music Center, and nearby Dodger stadium. Perhaps its most visible landmark was the five gleaming cylindrical towers of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

Shortly after the wars began, city

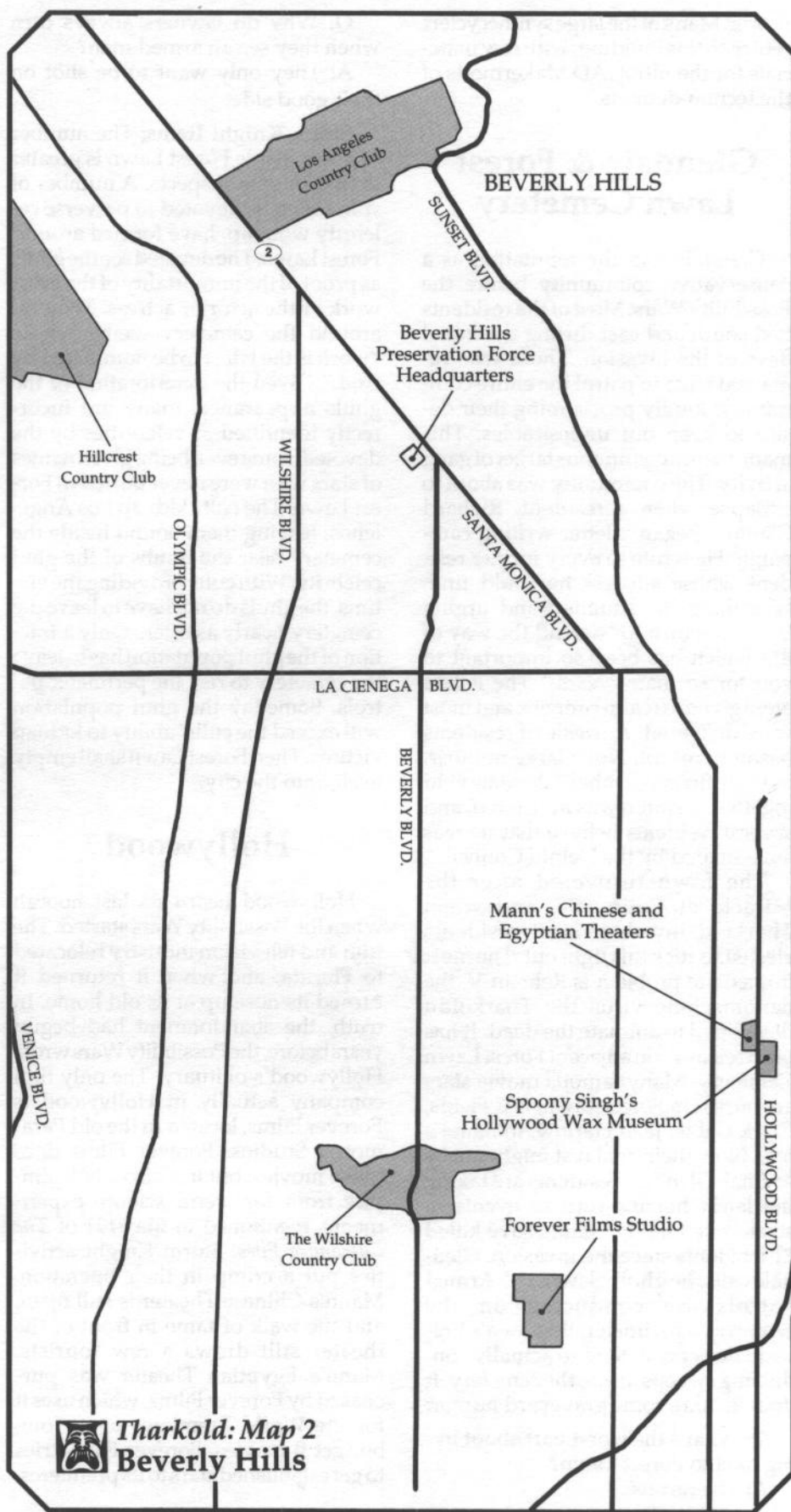


hall was reinforced with concrete barricades and police bunkers. The homeless chose to take up residence in the Music Center. MOCA was trashed and looted, losing over 75% of its collection by the time of the Miracle of California. New Chinatown sealed itself off, a citadel inside downtown Los Angeles. Little Tokyo was deserted, until a Soto Investments purchased and reopened the New Otani Hotel and Garden. The Westin Bonaventure remained open, giving free lodging to adventurers who would help defend the site. Other than graffiti, no one bothered Dodger Stadium.

The Miracle of California sparked burgeoning activity in Downtown L.A. As Nippon Tech moved in into the area in earnest, they snapped up the area around Little Tokyo, expanding the area over tenfold; it is now known as Tokyo East. Ichi Entertainment built its huge, 122-storey headquarters in the block of Maple Avenue and Pico Boulevard. City Hall gained barbed wire, sophisticated sensors, and some electrified fencing. With money donated by the Japanese, MOCA was touched up and began buying back some of the art which had been stolen. The homeless were pushed from the Music Center, but funds to refurbish the building were not available. The Dodgers returned.

The Tharkoldu bridge slammed down into Ichi Entertainment's North American Headquarters. Hundreds of important Kanawa personnel were slaughtered in the first few hours of the invasion. Techno-demons and their gangslaves made an assault on city hall. Prepared for a Kanawa assault that never materialized, the defenses of City Hall were damaged, but not breached. Mayor Terri Bender herself fought at one of the barricades, video of which made her a hero to the rest of the nation. City Hall continues to stand defiantly, less than a dozen blocks away from the site of the invasion.

Storm Knight Items: The ruins of the Apocularum lie atop the Ichi Entertainment building. The maelstrom bridge was placed slightly off-target, crashing through to the 118th floor. Many techno-demons and slaves still inhabit the building. Sterret himself frequents this building, although he maintains a secure apartment in Bell-



flower. Many of the large synthcyclers return to this building, with raw materials for the ultraCAD Makermods of the techno-demons.

Glendale & Forest Lawn Cemetery

Glendale had the reputation as a conservative community before the Possibility Wars. Most of the residents fled south and east during the initial days of the invasion. Those who remained tried to patrol the entire community, loudly proclaiming their desire to keep out undesirables. This made them a continuous target of gang activity. The community was about to collapse when a resident, Richard Clanton, began a letter-writing campaign. He wrote to every former resident whose address he could find, explaining the situation and urging them to return to "defend the way of life which has been so important to you for so many years." The letters were given to realm runners, and most were delivered. A trickle of residents began to return. Not a large number, but a sufficient number; Glendale held together. Clanton was murdered, and several residents believe that he was assassinated by the Delphi Council.

The town recovered after the Miracle of California, and when Tharkold invaded, most residents elected to stick this fight out. The most immediate problem is Relictin-V, the panomachine virus the Tharkoldu developed to animate the dead. It has been released on adjacent Forest Lawn Cemetery. Many famous movie stars are buried in Forest Lawn; WC Fields, Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, to name a few. Now their final rest might not be so final. Glendale residents are taking the latest horrific turn of events in stride, even though ghuls have killed 21 residents since the invasion. Glendale calls the ghuls "lawners." Armed patrols are conducted on the cemetery's perimeter: the town's bravado does not extend to actually conducting sweeps inside the cemetery. It does include some graveyard humor:

Q: What's the worst part about living next to Forest Lawn?

A: The reruns.

Q: Why do lawners always turn when they see an armed man?

A: They only want to be shot on their good side.

Storm Knight Items: The number of ghuls inside Forest Lawn is greater than Glendale suspects. A number of splinter cults, devoted to perverse celebrity worship, have formed around Forest Lawn. The devoted see the ghuls as proof of the immortality of the great work of the actor or actress. They flit around the cemetery seeing whose "work is the latest to be nominated by God." Given the deterioration of the ghuls appearance, many are incorrectly identified as celebrities by the devoted, some even being given names of stars who were never buried in Forest Lawn. The cults kidnap Los Angelenos, leaving them bound inside the cemetery near the tombs of the ghul celebrity. With cults providing the victims, the ghuls do not have to leave the cemetery nearly as often. Only a fraction of the ghul population has to leave the cemetery to risk the perimeter patrols. Someday the ghul population will exceed the cults' ability to kidnap victims. Then Forest Lawn shall empty itself onto the city.

Hollywood

Hollywood heard its last hoorah when the Possibility Wars started. The film and television industry relocated to Florida, and when it returned it turned its nose up at its old home. In truth, the abandonment had begun years before; the Possibility Wars wrote Hollywood's obituary. The only film company actually in Hollywood is Forever Films, located in the old Paramount Studios. Forever Films does make movies, but it is also a Nile Empire front for weird science experiments, mentioned in file #131 of *The Cassandra Files*. Storm Knight activities put a crimp in their operation. Mann's Chinese Theater is still open, and the walk of fame in front of the theater still draws a few tourists. Mann's Egyptian Theater was purchased by Forever Films, which uses it for the World Premieres of its low-budget B movies. Forever Films tries to get established stars to its premieres,

and fails with such alarming frequency that they have had to hire the homeless, clean and dress them up, just to fill the theaters. The Los Angeles Times once coyly reported a near-riot when Forever Films security reclaimed the clothes from the hired audience.

Storm Knight Items: A great alpha demon, Aras-benHav has taken part of his pride and moved into Spoony Singh's Hollywood Wax Museum. He has opened it for business. The museum contains figures from Hollywood's distant and recent past, as well as some contemporary stars. It also has a Chamber of Horrors, depicting scenes from old horror movies, as well as some props from the original movies. There is a figure of John F. Kennedy and even a tableau of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*. Aras-benHav and his minions use the *monkey form* spell when outside the museum, or when patrons are visiting the museum. His minions keep an eye on customers, to see those who might provide delicious nuances of pain or fear. The victims are later kidnapped, and their spirits and intellect are placed into wax figures. The bodies' physical action can be controlled by Tharkoldu, or they can choose to let the figure go on its own. The demons stage macabre dramas in which some, but not all of the figures, suffer painfully. When the drama is over, the minions repair the figure with mystically imbued wax, and it is ready for the next show. The imprisoned spirits have even added to the tourist traffic, for now it really does feel as if the figures are watching you.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

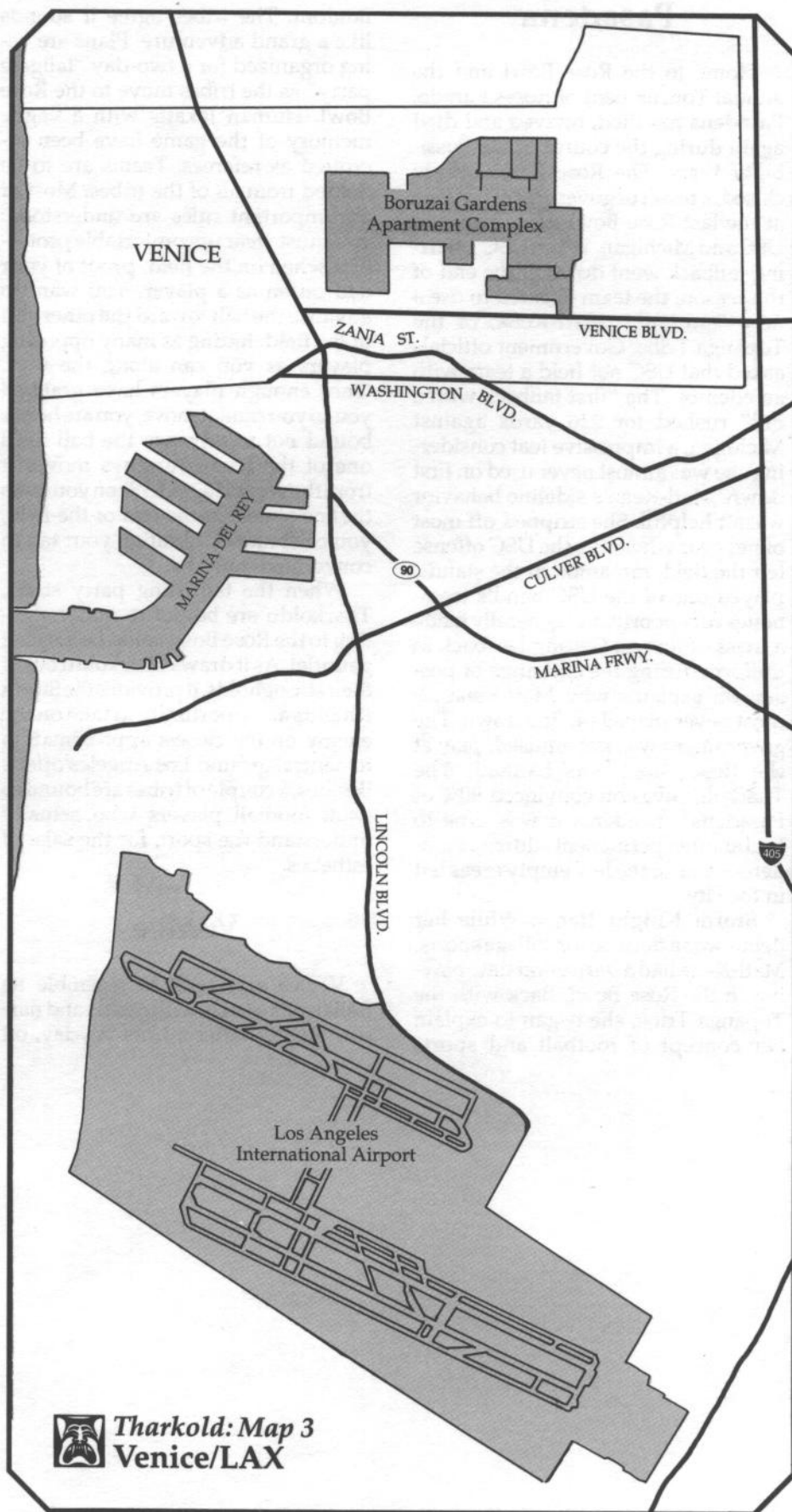
LAX is a critical lifeline for Los Angeles. Other transportation routes are still open, but LAX has the highest degree of security, and is cleaner of Tharkoldu influence than much of the city. Part of this is due to diligence of employees and the LAPD, with help from the US Military. Part of it is due to additional forces provided by Hachiman Arms, Ltd. The airport has



become symbol that Los Angeles is still part of the world. Nippon executives often arrive at the airport, meet their contacts in the airport, and then leave without ever entering Los Angeles proper. Some executives do hold meetings at the LAX Hilton, particularly if the meetings are with non-Nippon Tech contacts. The LAX Hilton is no longer secure, having been penetrated by Tharkoldu agents. The Hilton is still safer than most other areas of LA.

Even with security high, LAX only handles one-third the number of flights it did before the Possibility Wars. If not for flights to Asia, that number would be closer to one-eighth. The US Air Force provides air cover for flights in and out of LAX, sometimes flying escort for commercial flights until they clear LAX by 40 nautical miles.

Storm Knight Items: There are large numbers of Japanese and other Asian businesspeople wandering the airport. Careful observation (*Perception* difficulty of at least 12, up to 25 if the information is to be gleaned through a casual glance) shows that a number of businessmen walk from gate to bar to another gate, without ever actually getting on a plane. They have valid tickets and boarding passes, but they never use them. The megacorps pay full fare, and a computerized system obtains refunds for the tickets minutes before departure. Given the percentage of traffic the megacorps represent, the airlines do not complain. All of the business people carry expensive, top-of-the-line Yamaguchi Elite attache cases. These are Nippon Tech talismans, which are being shuttled from place to place around the airport to help provided defense against Tharkold reality. The talismans have a pure zone radius to 25 meters, and a dominant zone radius of 100 meters. Considerable work has gone into suppressing the no-magic fog effect associated with Nippon reality. It usually works, but occasionally parts of the airport mist up, which is explained away by everything from faulty climate control to a thwarted Tharkoldu attack.



**Tharkold: Map 3
Venice/LAX**



Pasadena

Home to the Rose Bowl and the annual Tournament of Roses Parade, Pasadena has died, revived and died again during the course of the Possibility Wars. The Rose Bowl is now closed, a result of government outrage at the last Rose Bowl game between USC and Michigan. When USC's starting tailback went down at the end of the season, the team decided to use a new "student," Matl-Kena, of the Topanga Tribe. Government officials asked that USC not field a team with an edein. The "first tailback with a tail" rushed for 226 yards against Michigan, a impressive feat considering she was almost never used on first down. Matl-Kena's sideline behavior wasn't helpful. She stripped off most of her gear whenever the USC offense left the field, ran amok in the stands, played one of the USC band's trombones very poorly, and generally made a mess of things. Getting her back in uniform during the exchange of possession explains why Matl-Kena almost never played on first down. The government was not amused; play at the Rose Bowl was banned. The Tharkold invasion convinced 90% of Pasadena's residents it was time to find another permanent address. Pasadena is one of the few empty areas left in the city.

Storm Knight Items: While her debut was a debacle for college sports, Matl-Kena had a darn good time playing in the Rose Bowl. Back with the Topanga Tribe, she began to explain her concept of football and sports

fandom. The tribes agree it sounds like a grand adventure. Plans are being organized for a two-day "tailgate party" as the tribes move to the Rose Bowl. Human Jakatts with a vague memory of the game have been recruited as referees. Teams are to be fielded from all of the tribes. Most of the important rules are understood: you must wear uncomfortable protection when on the field, proof of your dedication as a player. You want to advance the ball toward the other end of the field, hitting as many opposing players as you can along the way. Once enough players have grabbed you so you cannot move, you are honor bound not to advance the ball until one of the bent-over-guys moves it from the ground again. When you cross the line-almost-at-the-end-of-the-field, you celebrate by gyrating your tail in convoluted patterns.

When the tailgating party starts, Tharkoldu are bound to notice. Getting to the Rose Bowl could be a trying gauntlet. As it draws Tharkoldu out of their strongholds, it provides the Storm Knights an opportunity to take on the enemy on the closest approximation to neutral ground Los Angeles offers. Besides, a couple of tribes are bound to want football players who actually understand the sport, for the sake of esthetics.

Venice

Venice was built to resemble its Italian namesake, with canals and narrow streets. After a brief heyday, oil

was discovered. Residences and small businesses were ripped out and replaced with oil derricks. The decade prior to the Possibility Wars saw a renaissance start in this Venice, but that was abandoned when the edeinos overran the northern part of the state. Then Kanawa technicians discovered additional oil deposits under Venice. Property was quickly purchased, or otherwise acquired, from its rightful owners. Kanawa erected petro-complexes, combining derricks, refineries and manufacturing processes that use large amounts of petrochemicals. Boruzai built underground/ above ground apartment complexes in surrounding neighborhoods, such as Culver City, to provide housing for the thousands of workers required for manufacturing, administering and servicing the complexes and their personnel.

Storm Knight Items: Venice headquarters what remains of the Yakuza. Tharkoldu and their gang slaves killed a few key Yakuza during the initial week of the invasion. A prominent casualty was Akihiko Haragawa, son of Kentarou Haragawa, daimyo of the Tokyo Yakuza. Haragawa looks most favorably upon any Storm Knights efforts' against Tharkoldu. Modest monetary rewards, and some equipment, can be given to Storm Knights for operations against the techno-demons. The Yakuza's most important inducement in current information on Tharkoldu plans; the Yakuza has infiltrated a number of the gangs working with Tharkoldu.



Chapter Four

Axioms and World Laws



hen a High Lord drops a maelstrom bridge into our world and activates her stelae, the area she invades conforms to the natural laws of her cosm, not those of Core Earth. The axioms of the invading cosm dictate the levels of magical power, technological development, social organization, and spiritual intensity possible in a cosm, and thus, in any realm that is established when that cosm invades another.

In the Possibility Wars that ravage the Earth, things impossible to natives of our cosm can become commonplace, while things we do with ease become impossible, or even quite literally unthinkable.

Jezrael has brought the axioms of Tharkold to Los Angeles. Her realm is tiny compared to those of the other Possibility Raiders; only a single zone, and not even a full-sized one, barely a hundred miles on its longest side. But within its boundaries the conflicts between Core Earth reality and the paradigms of Tharkold generate great amounts of possibility energy.

The Magic Axiom: 12

When the War began the *Magic* axiom for Tharkold was 9, and over the next 1500 years it climbed to a peak of 15. Following the hideous Spasm of 1490, it seems to have begun its decline, though it was not until 2310 that Tharkoldu mages were able to verify rigorously that magic was in decline.

During the long "apprenticeship" that Kranod, Thratchen, and other powerful demons spent as minions of the Gaunt Man, their sinister master

provided the minimum possibility energy necessary to hold the *Magic* axiom of Tharkold oscillating between 7 and 8.

When Kranod became High Lord of Tharkold, it began expending the possibility energy looted from conquered cosms at a prodigious rate, forcing the axiom to climb.

The *Magic* axiom stabilized at 12 only recently, about 80 years ago. Attempts to force it higher have so far failed. The reason for this failure is not known, but are generally blamed on imbalances created during the Spasm. Many areas on Tharkold have local *Magic* axioms higher, or lower, than 12. Many areas nestled among the peaks of the Alps have *Magic* levels as low as 5, which is one reason that Hefei has long been a stronghold of the Race. The hideous enchantments of Prince Viruxhmugla the Necromancer flourish at his stronghold in the Jungle of Souls, the counterpart of Earth's Yucatan, where the *Magic* axiom cycles on an irregular schedule from a low of 12 up to a high of 16. Similar odd locations exist all over Tharkold.

Before the Spasm, Tharkold achieved great expertise in the magical arts. In martial applications of magic, they equalled and surpassed most Ayslish mages. Much knowledge was lost in the Spasm, or was forgotten as the spells stopped working.

Since the resurgence of magic, the Tharkoldu have worked diligently to recover their former skill.

Availability of magic: The demons are the principle masters of magic on Tharkold. The Race is highly suspicious of the supernatural, since the rise of magic has been accompanied by demonic victories.

Magical knowledge is not as widely



available on Tharkold as it is in Aysle, even among the demons. When a solitary magician, or a pride that specializes in magic, creates a new or more effective spell, the knowledge is kept as a secret weapon. The same applies to technomagical advances.

Gaining magical skill is a matter of self-training, or finding a teacher willing to accept the student. Almost invariably, teachers, whether demon or Race, only accept students who are willing and able to "submit" to them (see "World Laws," below). Humans have been known to submit to demons in return for magical knowledge, becoming their agents among the Race. These incidents fuel the Race's distrust of magic and magicians.

Spells: Any Tharkoldu magician will have access to common grimoire spells, whether she wants to learn one, which costs a possibility as always, or program one onto a SpellChip, using *occultech* skill. Common grimoire spells are listed in Chapter 10 of the *Torg Rulebook*, and described on page 4 of *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*. They exist in written and computer-stored grimoires all over Tharkold.

More advanced grimoire spells, on the order of those in the *Aysle* sourcebook and *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*, are available only from highly advanced magicians or personal grimoires found in the course of an adventure. A character with an Ayslish spell of this quality would be able to sell it to a Tharkoldu for a high price.

As a rule, Tharkold has no recent spells with an axiom level higher than 13. Records from the time of the Spasm and before, include spells with a higher axiom, up to 16 or more.

One interesting twist made possible by Tharkold's technological advances is that many magicians, especially those using technomagic, keep their grimoires in computers, so that an enterprising decker can go after spell files for a magician. Of course, a magician will guard the vaults containing his grimoire database with security programs of the most lethal intensity.

Technomagic: Tharkold's greatest magical advance is the development of technomagic. Technomagic is a product of the Law of Domination, bending technology to support and

augment magic. Technomagical research requires a *Tech* value of at least 24. Magical cyberware is a product of *Tech* value 26, and is the level of technomagic required to mimic magical skills rather than enhance natural skills.

Technomagic's dependence on the Law of Domination makes technomagic at least a one-case contradiction for all other realms. Tharkoldu technomagic requires *Tech* 26 and *Magic* 12.

The Social Axiom: 20

The *Social* axiom has climbed steadily throughout Tharkoldu history, with the Race generally making advances in social organization and the demons adapting to the cooperative monkey-tricks of the human scum as best they could.

In a sense, the Race have provided the means by which the demons can continue to oppose them. The Race have forced the *Social* axiom, and often the *Tech* axiom as well, higher and higher. Tharkoldu are equally empowered by the heightened axioms and adopt or adapt the human advances to their own purposes.

Neither species has developed culturally to match the full potential of the axiom. The constant demands of the War have seen to that.

Demonic art and literature remains on an almost tribal level, with a few central epics shared by the species as a whole, but almost no other works of art or expressions of culture outside of personal genealogies and pride histories. Many demons practice terrible arts of terror and pain in creative, even ingenious ways. Of course these arts are not exactly consonant with a high *Social* axiom.

The Race must, of necessity, be warriors almost from childhood and military organization is the blueprint of the Free Nations. Even Aurioch, the most liberal of the Racial strongholds, is ruled by an oligarchy largely composed of military leaders. The other Free Nations are military dictatorships in fact, if not in name. While the fine arts are more highly developed among

the Race, they are almost always turned towards purposes of morale. Art for art's sake is virtually unknown.

Both the demons and the Race maintain extensive communications networks. The media are subject to tight censorship and all forms of communication are loaded with heavy security countermeasures. This is especially true for computer systems, since cyberdeck technology makes any publicly accessible computer network terribly vulnerable to invasion and subversion.

The *Social* axiom is limited by the Law of Ferocity, limited to a value of 11 or 12 in non-violent social interaction. See the "Law of Ferocity" below.

The Spiritual Axiom: 17

The War has shaped the spirits of the natives into forms some might find terrible. The religions of the demon and the Race, not surprisingly, are opposed belief systems. The demands of survival have led mystics on both sides to attain potent miracles. Yet, at the same time, the unbending opposition of two equally powerful spiritual currents prevents either side from acquiring miracles that would unconditionally overcome the other.

As technology has been a mainstay in the survival of the Tharkoldu, certain miracles have evolved which recognize the divine components of mechanism, and have been adopted by both of the War-torn cosm's principle religions.

See Chapter Seven for a description of the miracles available to members of these religions.

Tharkold and other religions: Perhaps because the power of the Spirit is so strong in Tharkold, the demons have learned, rather to their dismay, that they are vulnerable to miracles which are defined in a mythos as opposing demons.

Ward enemy, as described on page 131 of the *Torg Rulebook* or elsewhere in other sourcebooks, is effective against the demons. Fortunately, as far as the demons of Tharkold are concerned, they are not vulnerable to magical exorcisms, bindings, or con-



straints such as those practiced in Aysle, unless they were drawn to the cosm by means of a magical summoning. If they got there by some other means (dimthread, maelstrom bridge, 747, etc.) these spells do not affect them.

Tharkold is torn between two strong religions. The power of the *Spiritual* axiom is influenced by the world laws to prevent miracles from other religions. Miracles from other religions suffer at least a one-case contradiction in Tharkold. The one exception to this rule is *ward enemy*, which seems to work just fine no matter what cosm the miracles is from.

The Technological Axiom: 26

Tharkold's tech value defines the overall tone of the realm, as it does for the Cyberpapacy. Even magic and religion are powerfully influenced by a *Tech* axiom that, after the Spasm, rocketed upward faster than Core Earth's. It is hard to imagine the heights to which Tharkoldu science would have reached had the natives not handicapped themselves with the Spasm. But then, it is possible that without the bloody spur of the War, Tharkold would not have advanced at this rate in the first place.

Tharkold is not as limited by cultural taboos as the Cyberpapacy. *Peré Jean* would never authorize research into technomagic, since such work violates his faith. To Tharkoldu, no such barriers exist. Since the cultural foundation of both species is to survive and conquer, there are few constraints on research.

The *Technological* axiom's climb upwards only slowed in the last few centuries as the demons achieved near-victory in the War. The combined efforts of the High Lord and subtle, or sometimes brutal, sabotage of dangerous Racial research projects has retarded technological development.

Demonic tech is designed with extravagant use of resources and energy, since their relatively small population can exploit most of Tharkold freely, and there are always slave cosms to take up any slack. Possibility energy isn't the only thing you can get

out of a cosm, after all. Oil, fissionables, and other raw materials can cross a Maelstrom Bridge as well.

Racial tech is much more efficient. It has to be, since the Race don't have access to the resources the demons do.

Since Tharkold was running pretty low on some resources before Kranod became a possibility raider, the Tharkoldu became experts at recycling, and that skill remains. Scavenger devices can reclaim and recycle various materials from urban and polluted environments.

Computers: Tharkold has massively parallel processing technology capable of installing multi-gigabyte processors on a single chip. This technology, coupled with VX, Virtual Experience, allows the Tharkoldu Grid to come close to the power of the GodNet. Close, but not quite equal. The Grid and the GodNet have similar technological architectures, but the Grid doesn't have a Darkness Device as its master processor. Tharkoldu cyberdecks function in the GodNet every bit as well as Cyberpapal decks do, and conversely, deckers from CyberFrance will find the Grid a familiar environment in many ways, though completely free of the overt religious symbolism of the GodNet.

A decker can still die in either system, a case of program transportability that hackers would probably prefer to do without; but it is a tough, virtual, world out there.

Medicine: If a world has been dealing with combat trauma and bioweapons for a few millennia, and doesn't kill itself off, its medical arts tend to advance. Tharkold is evidence for this assertion. One obvious form of this is cyberware. In other areas, nanotechnological "first aid" is capable of healing that a top Core Earth trauma unit would be hard put to match. The new "Vat" technology has virtually automated even the most delicate surgical procedures.

Most infectious and degenerative diseases are conquered. The present generations of Tharkoldu are the descendants of folk who survived massive plagues. High resistance to disease has been selected for in the brutal evolution of Tharkold. Nanotech makes short work of most infectious diseases. Cyberware makes the effects

of age on tissues almost a minor concern. Of course, old age was rarely a common cause of death on Tharkold even before these advances.

Genetic engineering is known but results are uneven. The high mutagen level in Tharkold's environment has made genomes almost impossible to map. Tharkoldu, with greater research resources than the Free Nations, lack patience for research that fails far more often than it succeeds. Some demons use engineering to produce monsters that prey upon the Race, but precise results remain an elusive goal.

Military: Virtually every technological advance for three millennia has been made as part of the War effort. The results: powered armor, cyberweapons, energy weapons and high-powered firearms, explosives large and small, conventional and nuclear.

Power Sources: Clean fusion processes provide nearly unlimited power. Minifusors drive larger vehicles, automated factories, and such, allowing them to operate independently of exterior fuel or power. Rechargeable power cells energize smaller devices.

Transport: Less advanced. Commerce, one of the great spurs to transportation development, is diminished or absent in most of Tharkold. Once designs reached a desired performance, there was little incentive to improve them. Hover technology is the norm for ground, sea, and close-support vehicles. Jet aircraft are efficient and fast, but little used since available anti-aircraft weapons are even more efficient.

UltraCAD: UltraCAD is more accurately called UltraCAD/M, for Ultra Computer Aided Design and Manufacture, but the label UltraCAD has stuck with the common Race and techno-demon. The inaccuracy of the phrase irritates research scientists, but as most of them are slaves, no one has to care.

Industry is decentralized to a large extent, with cybernetic autofactories producing devices as needed. Send a scavenger unit, called a SyntheCycler, into a ruined urban area. If it wasn't ruined before, it is now. The scavenger modules recover iron, tungsten, silicon, aluminum, hydrocarbons, whatever they need, from the area.



SyntheCyclers can also search for trace elements, rare earths, radioactives, but are slower in such searches. The reclaimed materials cycle through MakerMod units programmed to produce a given artifact and out comes a gun, a car, a plane, a power suit, cyberware, decks, etc. Even more UltraCAD units, if desired.

Tharkold and Reconnection to Reality

The link difficulties for a Tharkold character when in another realm are:

Core Earth	12
Living Land	21
Aysle	14
Nippon	14
Cyberpapacy	6
Orrorsh	9
Nile Empire	8
Land Below	17
Space Gods	8

The link difficulties for characters from other realms when in Tharkold are:

Core Earth	4
Living Land	9
Aysle	8
Nippon	5
Cyberpapacy	3
Orrorsh	6
Nile Empire	3
Land Below	3
Space Gods	10

World Laws

The world laws of Tharkold reflect the savage nature of the cosm. While Kranod extended and intensified the effects of the world laws, in most cases the power of the High Lord simply worked with what was already there. These world laws develop the feel and mood of the realm while the axioms dictate the bounds of reality.

Tharkold world laws affect all characters who are in the reality of Tharkold. They may also be used by Tharkold characters outside of their home realm, but such use always causes a one-case contradiction, re-

gardless of the axiom levels of the area they are in (Akasha is the exception).

Law of Ferocity

Ferocity is a key to success in any destructive competition or challenge. This can be a furious berserker charge, or perhaps worse, a methodical and ruthless destruction of an opponent or hindrance.

An attacker who makes an all out attack ignores K, O, or K/O results scored against her. These results have no effect on her. KO results still put her down. This immunity only lasts until her time to act during the next round. Wounds and shock damage are still suffered normally.

A character receives a +3 to her *intimidation* and *taunt* bonus numbers. *Willpower* or *Mind* values are increased by +3 against *charm* and *persuasion* when these skills are used on a Tharkoldu by any character who is not from their pride (if demon), from their nation (if a citizen of the Free Nations), or immediate social group (if other humans). **Note that these modifiers do not apply to interactions between a dominant and a submissive (see the Law of Domination, below).**

Tharkold characters react so quickly and violently in combat that normal surprise is impossible against them, and complete surprise only has the effects of normal surprise (see page 78, *Torg Rulebook*).

Limit on Social Interaction

The Law of Ferocity aids violent action, and penalizes non-violent social cooperation. Only war is supported to the full *Social* axiom value of 20. The *Social* axiom value is 11 for economic interactions. This has hampered commerce and the building of a developed economy. Combined with the Law of Domination, the result is a quasi-feudal command economy, where goods are produced because someone in authority orders their production and distribution. Production of weaponry and war materiel is exempt from this limit. War production may be organized along the limits of *Social* axiom value 20, but these are supported by a value 11 economy. There are inefficiencies that would drive a Nippon Tech CEO insane.

Other interactions are limited to a *Social* axiom value 12. News services and computer nets are possible. Cultural ideas may be traded, but the Laws of Ferocity and Domination combine to create suspicion and chauvinism to any idea not developed by the character's culture.

Apart from rules effects, the law manifests as a tendency by all Tharkold characters to react violently to any opposition, emotionally if not physically. A character who quietly accepts defeat is usually planning a blood-curdling revenge.

The Law Of Pain

Eight hundred years ago, the Racial philosopher Dantohs wrote, "Pain is the great teacher." He was among the survivors of a demon massacre in Etruskum. The descendants of those survivors built up a highly capable force during the next three generations, before returning to their home, destroying Tharkoldu who infested the land, and teaching them the same lesson their ancestors had profited from.

A character earns a *roll again* when he inflicts pain on an enemy (K, wound or better result.), or when pain is inflicted on him by an enemy. The *roll again* works just as if the player had spent a possibility, including a minimum of 10 on the *roll again*. Both ords and possibility-rated characters may earn the *roll again* through the Law of Pain. This *roll again* cannot be transferred to another character, even by magical means. Pain for this purpose is defined as deliberate injury, either for the express purpose of causing pain, or inflicting at least one Wound in combat.

The character who inflicted the pain may use the *roll again* on any character **except** the one upon whom he inflicted the pain. If the *roll again* is not used within 30 minutes of inflicting the pain, it is lost. If the character kills his victim, the *roll again* is lost.

The character who suffered the pain receives a *roll again* 24 hours after he suffered the pain. He may use the *roll again* only against the character who inflicted the pain. This *roll again* may be saved for days, weeks or years until





used. Until the *roll again* is used, the Law of Pain has no effect on interactions between the tormentor and the victim; no more *roll agains* may be gained by the original tormentor. As soon as the original victim uses the *roll again* on the original tormentor, the Law of Pain goes into effect. If the victim uses his *roll again* to inflict pain his tormentor, the Law of Pain goes into action, but now the roles are reversed.

Psychological pain (for example, a spectacular use of *intimidate* or even *taunt*) may count under the Law of Pain, at the gamemaster's discretion. Generally this must cause psychological anguish (six result points on the Interaction table.). Telling a foe, using *taunt*, that his family has been killed or kidnapped, counts for the purposes of the Law of Pain.

The use of a pain weapon also fulfills this Law, as long as it does at least a K result.

There is an important exception to this Law, caused by its interaction with

the Law of Domination (see below): If a dominant inflicts pain upon one of his submissives, neither gains a *roll again*, for this is part of the natural order of the cosm imposed by the Law of Domination.

Law of Domination

"You may only serve one master. Its master is not yours, until it proves its worth as a dominant. Never bow before two."

"You may dominate as many as your talons can rake. Many may bow before you. Make them bow. Such is the wisdom of Omoo-Zhan"

— Krom-Ashur the Undying

When a character formally submits or surrenders to anyone, the Law of Domination takes effect. The submitting character becomes a submissive to the other character, who becomes the dominant. The submissive suffers a -3 bonus modifier for actions that oppose or harm the dominant, either

directly or indirectly. Similarly, the submissive will receive a +1 bonus modifier for skills used to protect or benefit the dominant.

The dominant receives a +3 bonus modifier on all interactions with the submissive: *persuade*, *intimidate*, *taunt*, *charm*.

Submission: What constitutes submission? Kranod and Malgest have spent decades modifying this world law to favor the demons.

Tharkoldu submit one of two ways. The first is a formal and deliberate action: a verbal statement of submission, accompanied by a dance-like series of bows and prostrations before the dominant. The second is to accept a role in the breeding cycle initiated by another character. The role may be refused, but death is the usual alternative. Some demons prefer death, others do not.

If one Race submits to another, it requires a formal vow of submission. This is common in Mizatyan and Kham, rare in the other Free Nations,



and almost unheard of among enslaved Race.

Where the law really favors Tharkoldu is in domination between the species. If a demon overcomes a Race in combat and captures the human alive, that event constitutes submission by the loser and breaks any existing relationships the human might have. The human is now a slave to the dominant demon and submissive to him.

It doesn't work that way if a human overcomes Tharkoldu. A demon can only submit to a member of another species through a deliberate act, including the dance-like acts of submission. Most demons would prefer death, which suits the Race just fine.

Humans can submit to demons voluntarily and throughout the history of the War, many have. Submission under duress is valid submission. Human populations submitting before a demon overlord under threat of death are subject to all the constraints of the Law of Domination.

Escaping submission: A submissive can reverse the relationship by forcing the dominant to submit in turn. Submission ends if the dominant dies. The miracle *liberation* available to humans who follow the Way of the Race, can release human slaves from their involuntary submission. A dominant can release a submissive from the relationship at any time.

Changing submission: Humans cannot voluntarily change their submission. Moreover, if a demon dominates a human, the demon may "give" the submissive to another dominant, of either species, changing the human's relationship whether the human wants to or not.

Tharkoldu can try to change relationships by offering its submission to a more powerful dominant. The new dominant has to accept the submission, and must generate a *Spirit* total against a difficulty equal to the current dominant's *Spirit*. If this fails, the submissive **cannot ever** voluntarily terminate its relationship with the cur-

rent dominant. The relationship ends when the dominant releases the submissive, when the dominant dies, or if the dominant is forced to release the submissive due to circular chain of dominance (see "Chain of Dominance" below).

Tharkoldu can also change allegiance when its dominant submits to another, offering submission directly to the new dominant. No *Spirit* check is required in this case, but the new dominant must accept the submission. If the submission is rejected, then the demon is released from its submissive relationship completely.

The chain of dominance: A character can dominate any number of submissives, but can only submit to one dominant at a time.

Domination does not extend past the immediate relationship. It is not transitive. That is, if Ubbo-sagla dominates Nuctebis, and Nuctebis dominates Ishtoth, Ishtoth can act against Ubbo-sagla without penalties and act on behalf of Ubbo-sagla without bonuses. There is no dominant/submissive relationship between them.

Ubbo-sagla can order Nuctebis to order Ishtoth to do something. Nuctebis cannot order Ishtoth to "always obey Ubbo-sagla as you would me," as that would make Ishtoth submissive to two demons. Nuctebis could grant Ubbo-sagla the use of Ishtoth for a period of time, but then Ishtoth would not have to take orders from Nuctebis.

Circular chains of dominance are prohibited under the Law of Domination. If Ubbo-sagla submits to Ishtoth, it creates a circular chain: Ubbo-sagla dominates Nectubis who dominates Ishtoth who dominates Ubbo-sagla. The Law of Domination favors the most recent victor and punishes the most recent loser. If Ubbo-sagla submits to Ishtoth, it loses dominance over Nectubis.

Tracking Chains of Dominance

The immediate relationship, if any, between the characters in a given scene is all you really need to worry about.

For example, if a group of Storm Knights is trying to fight its way past a group of slave troops defending their Tharkoldu master, the troops would receive a +1 bonus modifier in the fight, since they are acting on behalf of their dominant. If one of the slaves threw in her lot with the Storm Knights, she would suffer a -3 bonus modifier fighting her former colleagues, or in anything else she does to help the Storm Knights, since she is acting against the welfare of her dominant. The same slave could help the Knights against another Tharkoldu at no penalty, since that Tharkoldu is not her dominant.

Dominance in daily life: The Law of Dominance does not make a submissive mindlessly obedient to the dominant. Apart from the modifiers to various acts, it leaves their interactions as free as any other being's. Human slaves of Tharkoldu are controlled by force and fear, and such methods as SlaveChips and the demonic miracle of *enslavement*.

When one being in Tharkold reality acknowledges the superiority of another, that acknowledgement colors their relationship indefinitely. The law expresses the normal dynamics of Tharkoldu biology and instinct, but demons are sentient. They can transcend the dictates of their instincts, just like any intelligent species. The Race operate more efficiently through cooperation than through coercion, which is the fruit of their instincts. They have turned the Law to their advantage to an extent, by incorporating it into the structure of military and other pursuits. Humans sometimes form short chains of dominance, with soldiers vowing submission to their officer, or techs to their chief researcher, in order to enhance their activities on the dominant's behalf. This has proven counterproductive if the dominant is not more than normally competent, since it makes the usual interaction of cooperation harder. An incompetent dominant's interaction bonuses can often override the superior common sense of one of its submissives.



Chapter Five

Skills



kills available in Tharkold include some basic skills from gamemaster chapter three of the *Torg Rulebook* that are available only in certain cosms, as well as new skills based on the advanced technology and magical nature of the cosm.

Some of these skills will be identical to those found in *The Cyberpapacy* sourcebook.

Dexterity Skills

All forms of weapon skills, save *biotech weapons*, are available to Tharkold characters. Demons can use (and purchase) *flight* as a skill. These skills are defined in the *Torg Rulebook*.

Perception Skills

Cyberdeck Operation

This skill allows a character to travel through the Grid, manipulate computer systems, and engage in Grid combat. The skill also governs building, repairing, and upgrading decks.

It is virtually identical to the Cyberpapal form of the skill. A Tharkoldu with *cyberdeck operation* can use it in the GodNet. A character with *cyberdeck operation* can use it in the Grid.

Cyberdeck operation is essential to a character if she wants to operate successfully in the Grid. Her vital "net skills" in the Grid are calculated by adding skill values to her *cyberdeck operation* rating.

Net Attack = attack skill value plus adds of *cyberdeck operation*. Add response adds of cyberdeck plus adds from attack programs for the final value.

Net Defense = best defensive skill value plus adds of *cyberdeck operation*. Add response adds of cyberdeck for the final value.

Net Find = *find* value plus adds of cyberdeck operation. Add the value of scan programs for the final value.

Net Manipulation = *Cyberdeck operation* value plus cyberdeck's response adds, plus any manipulation programs being run for the final value.

Net Stealth = *Stealth* value plus adds of cyberdeck operation. Add cyberdeck stealth adds, plus any stealth programs being run for the final value.

Net Tracking = *Tracking* value plus adds of cyberdeck operation. Add response adds and any tracking programs being run for the final value.

Details of Gridrunning are given in Chapter Eleven of this book. Details of the GodNet are in *The GodNet* supplement to *Torg*.

Cyberdeck operation **cannot** be used unskilled. However, *science (computer)* (see below) can be substituted for *cyberdeck operation*. In this case, it counts as unskilled use.

Mind Skills

Cybertech

Cybertech is used to build and repair cyberware. It provides knowledge of the engineering behind cyberware implants.

Building or Modifying Cyberware: Cyberware can be built from parts or the cybertech can modify off-the-shelf cyberware implants in an effort to improve them. Parts and finished implants are both manufactured using the ultraCAD process.

The process takes three days. At the end of that time, a cybertech check is made. The difficulty number is based



on the cyber rating of the item, as shown on the Cybertech Chart.

Cyberware intended to be used in pairs can be built in one task, which increases the base time to 6 days. The difficulty of the check is increased by +2. The results of success affect both limbs equally. For example, if the character is working on a pair of arms and gets a result that makes them a flawed system, both arms are prone to systems failure on a roll of 1 or 2.

Cybertech Chart

Cyber Rating	Difficulty Number
1	8
2	9
3	11
4	13
5	15
6	17
+1	+2

The success level of the *cybertech* check determines how effective the cyberware is.

On an *abysmal failure* (the difficulty is at least 10 greater than the *cybertech* total) the parts are damaged and useless. On a simple failure the *cybertech* can try the job again.

On a *Minimal* success, the piece is a faulty system and malfunctions on a roll of 1 or 2. This overrides the effects of above-average surgical installation (see Chapter Nine). Well-installed junk is still junk.

On an *Average* or *Good* success the item is made to specification. It will function normally as described in Chapter Nine.

On a *Superior* success the cyberware cannot suffer systems failure. Poor surgery can negate this benefit as described in Chapter Nine. A badly installed masterpiece is still badly installed. Any adds or other score that measures the item's performance is increased by one point with no increase in its cyber rating.

On a *Spectacular* success, the item gets the same benefits as on a *superior* success. In addition, it is so well crafted that the difficulty number of the surgery is reduced by 1.

Example: *Viktos of Helsei is working on a pair of cyberlegs with a Strength +3, which gives them a cyber rating of 4. The base difficulty is 13. Viktos is equipped with some useful cyber himself, that reduces the difficulty of micro-construction by 3 points, for a final difficulty of 10.*

Viktos has cybertech 14 and rolls a 16. The total is 14+3, or 17. This is a superior success. Therefore, the legs' performance is increased to Strength +4...each! The cyber rating remains 4 for the pair. Moreover, if the installing surgeon gets an average success or better, the cyberlegs cannot suffer a systems failure.

Repairs: Repairing damaged cyberware or a damaged cyberdeck takes one day. The *cybertech* total must beat a difficulty of 8. Each level of success reduces the time value for the repairs by two.

Thus, on an average success repairs take 10 hours. *Good* success takes 4 hours. *Superior* success takes 90 minutes and a *spectacular* success takes half an hour.

Cybertech cannot be used unskilled.

Psychology

Psychology helps a character recover from mental wounds and can help reduce the effects of cyberpsychosis. It is also used to brainwash characters and can be used to design an environment that has specific psychological effects.

Healing Mental Damage: This requires a skill check against a difficulty based on the patient's mental wound level. The difficulties are the same as for physical wounds: eight for a wound, 12 for a heavy wound, and 15 for a mortal wound.

If the *psychology* check succeeds, the patient adds the result points from the check to the bonus rolled for his next recovery check.

Only one *psychology* check may be made for one character in one day.

Overcoming Cyberpsychosis: *Psychology* may be used to reduce a character's cyber value. The patient must spend a week in therapy with the psychologist. A psychologist can treat a number of patients in the same week equal to his *psychology* adds. A psy-

chologist cannot give therapy to himself in this matter.

For the patient, therapy involves rest, simple pleasures that reconnect him to his alienated sense of humanity (or else massive amounts of tranquilizers in the case of violent cases), and psychoanalysis. It is a full time regimen and the patient can do nothing else. If a patient engages in any dangerous or stressful activity during the week, his therapy has been interrupted and he must start over.

The patient selects one item of cyberware with which he wants help. At the end of the week, generate a *psychology* total. The difficulty number is equal to the patient's total cyber value.

If the psychologist beats the difficulty number, then reduce the cyber rating of the specified cyberware by one point.

The minimum cyber rating for a given implant is one. The rating can never be reduced below one. The minimum cyber rating for a piece of demon cyberware implanted in a human is equal to the basic cyber rating of that implant.

If the *psychology* check fails by 5 or more points, the cyber rating of the implant is **raised** by 2 points! Quacks do harm, no matter what cosm they are in.

Brainwashing: Brainwashing uses psychological pressure to extract information from a victim, to alter a victim's basic attitude towards the brainwasher or some individual or group specified by the brainwasher, or to implant commands in the victim.

An attempt to brainwash a character takes a number of days equal to the victim's *Spirit*. The brainwasher can reduce this but the difficulty of the *psychology* check is increased by two for every day less spent working on the victim. The minimum time is one day.

At the end of this time, generate a *psychology* total against the victim's *Spirit*. The level of success determines the results:

Minimal or *Average* success: The brainwashing has not succeeded, but the victim's resolve is weakened. Reduce the difficulty of the next *psychology* check by the brainwasher's *psychology* adds.



Good or *superior* success, the brainwasher may reduce the difficulty and repeat the process in order to get a better result, or may select one of the following results:

- the victim will answer any questions to the best of his ability. He will betray any secret, giving the brainwasher any information she asks for.
- the victim will assume a base attitude of *friendly* or *hostile* to any individual or organization the brainwasher specifies.
- the victim will carry out any commands that do not directly harm himself or his friends. This can be used to deadly effect if the brainwasher uses some subtlety. Rather than ordering the victim to shoot his best friend, she might order him to deliver a "harmless package" to the friend (tick-tick-tick...BOOM!). She can also order the victim to forget about being brainwashed and to cooperate in covering up his absence for the past days.

Spectacular success: The victim will automatically forget about being brainwashed and cooperate in setting up a cover story for this absence. In addition, the brainwasher can exercise any one of the preceding options or may select any one of these...

- the victim will assume a base attitude of *loyal* or *enemy* to any individual or organization the brainwasher specifies.
- the victim will carry out any orders at all, even orders directly harmful to himself or his friends.

When implanting commands, the brainwasher may give as many commands as she has *psychology* adds. She may give commands in detail at the time of brainwashing, or hold them in reserve and use them at any later time.

Whenever a command is given, the victim is allowed to generate a *Spirit* total against the brainwasher's *psychology* skill. If the check succeeds, the victim can resist that command. The brainwasher may use another command, if she has any left, to try and get the victim to comply.

Characters can spend possibilities to resist commands.

Psychological Environment: A psychologist can imbue an area with a

desired emotional charge. It can be peaceful, frightful, make people feel angry or friendly, any single emotional theme may be reinforced.

The psychologist must work in building or decorating the area, and generate a total against the same difficulty the architect, builder, or interior designer faces in the primary construction check. For example, using an ultraCAD construction module to build a house might have a difficulty of 12. The psychologist must generate a *psychology* total of 12 or more. The level of success of the *psychology* check modifies actions within the environment according to the emotional theme. That is, for *minimal* success the modifier would be 1, for an *average*, a 2, etc.

This modifier applies to bonus numbers in any way the gamemaster deems fit. For example, if a psychologist designed a room to induce intense fear, that might increase brainwashing checks made in it, or *intimidation* checks. It might reduce attacks and defense values. Similarly, a room designed to relax people might enhance *charm* and *persuasion* totals, while reducing *intimidation*. An "anger" environment would enhance attack values, but reduce defense.

The psychologist himself is immune to the effects of his own creation, and can condition others to resist the effect. No test is required. The psychologist can condition a number of people equal to his *psychology* adds in one hour.

Psychology cannot be used unskilled.

Science (Computers)

Science (computers) or *computer science* is the rigorous theory of information systems, computer architecture, and program design.

It may be used in place of *cyberdeck operation*, but this counts as "unskilled" use of that skill in the Grid.

It is involved in cyberdeck design and modifications, as described under *cybertech* skill.

However, the principle use of *computer science* is to write, protect, and remove protection from computer programs.

Writing programs: Writing a pro-

gram takes 20 hours per power level of the program. Coding an Attack 2 program would take 40 hours. Time must be spent in one hour increments, but need not be spent consecutively. The maximum power level of a program is the programmer's *computer science* skill adds.

The difficulty of writing a program varies (see Chapter Eleven). At the end of the necessary time, the programmer makes a *computer science* check against the difficulty of the program.

On a *Superior* result, the program's size is reduced by 1. On a *Spectacular* result, the programmer may choose to reduce the size by 1 or increase the program's power by 1.

On a failure, the programmer may continue working on the program at no penalty to effectiveness or time. Tharkoldu *computer science* has more effective debugging algorithms and compilers than the Cyberpapacy, so the 50 percent time penalty specified on page 59 of *The GodNet* does not apply. If the programmer is using a Cyberpapal computer or deck, then the 50 percent penalty applies.

Copy Protection: A programmer may choose to copy protect a finished program or not. Most do, since this is their bread and butter. The copy protection value of a program is the *computer science* total the programmer generated when she finished writing it.

A programmer can try to improve the protection on her programs. This takes four hours. She simply generates a new *computer science* total at the end of that time and applies it to copy protection. These totals do **not** alter the program's effectiveness.

A programmer can always remove her own copy protection from a program.

Cracking copy protection: Attempting to remove copy protection from a program requires four hours. At the end of that time, the programmer generates a *computer science* total. If his total beats the copy protection rating of the program, he succeeds in removing it.

If he fails, he must spend another four hours before he can try to crack the protection. If he fails by 5 points or more, he has damaged his master copy of the program. Reduce its power by 1



AngelBusters

AngelBusters, described in *The GodNet* supplement, are part of computer science as known and practiced on Tharkold. However, they are not used in the simplified rules presented in this book for the Grid. If you plan to use the more detailed GodNet rules for Gridruns as well, then use the rules for AngelBusters as specified on page 59 of *The GodNet*.

point. On an *abysmal failure*, missing the check by 10 points or more, his master copy of the program is wiped out.

Other Cosms

Core Earth, Nippon Tech, and the Akashans also have computer science. When trying to write programs for the Grid of the GodNet, Core Earth programmers have a -5 bonus modifier, due the lack of sophistication of their science. Nippon Tech programmer suffer a -3 bonus modifier. Akashans gain a +3 bonus modifier when writing programs for the Grid or the GodNet.

Computer science **cannot** be used unskilled.

Spirit Skills

Occultech

Occultech is the skill which blends Tharkold's technology with the forces of magic. It is needed to build and install cyberware for Tharkoldu, in addition to the normal skills of *cybertech* and *medicine*. It can enchant human cyberware for demon use, or exorcise demon cyberware for human use.

Occultech is used instead of *cybertech* to build and improve technomagical implants of all kinds and to manufacture technomagical devices such as Pain Weapons and *vril* batteries.

Build/Improve Demon Cyberware: In order to make cyberware that demons can use, the maker(s) must combine the effects of *occultech* and

cybertech. The progress of the job is the same as for non-occult *cybertech* design, but when the skill check is made, there is an interplay of the two skills.

This can be done in several ways.

If one character is doing the work, she must, of course, have both *cybertech* and *occultech*. She uses the lower of the two skills for the checks involved.

If more than one character is involved, their efforts may be summed, as described on page 47 of the *Torg Rulebook*. The lead character may be the one with the highest score in either *cybertech* or *occultech* and characters with either skill may try assist the lead character. However, at least one character must provide *cybertech* and one must provide *occultech* skill. The coordination difficulty of the task is 12.

The results of the check are identical to those described for *cybertech* skill. However, cyberware produced in this manner is demon cyberware. It may be used normally by Tharkoldu but has deleterious effects when used by humans. See Chapter Nine for details.

Exorcising Demon Cyberware: An *occultech* can "exorcise" Tharkoldu cyberware, cancelling out the magical vibrations that attune it to the demonic metabolism. This renders it useless to a demon and safe for use by a human.

Attempting to exorcise cyberware takes one day and has a difficulty of 8. The level of success determines how effective the exorcism is.

On a *Minimal* success, the cyberware retains some of its demonic vibrations. Its cyber rating can never be reduced below its basic rating. It is also a flawed system.

On an *Average* success, the cyberware is completely exorcised but its function is damaged. It is a flawed system.

On a *Superior* or better success, the cyberware is completely exorcised and retains all its normal functions.

Enchanting Demon Cyberware: *Occultech* skill can change ordinary cyberware into Tharkoldu cyberware. This takes one day. At the end of the day, generate an *occultech* total against a difficulty of 8.

On a *Minimal* or *Average* success the item is transformed into demon cyberware but is a flawed system.

On a *Good* or *Superior* success, the item becomes demon cyberware with

all its normal functions intact.

On a *Spectacular* success the item becomes so attuned to the magical vibrations of Demonkind that it is not capable of systems failure. This benefit can be negated by shoddy installation as described in Chapter Nine.

Making *vril* Batteries: *Vril* batteries are power cells suitable for use in cyberware, energy weapons, and other electrically-powered equipment. They never need recharging. Only demons may create *vril* batteries.

Vril batteries are created using the life force of possibility-rated characters as they are slowly killed. The process is made possible by the Law of Pain. Manufacture or possession of *vril* batteries is punishable by death in the Free Nations, but they are rare even among the Demons. While a Tharkoldu has no scruples about turning its enemies into screaming fountains of electrical power, it rarely has any great number of possibility-rated prisoners whom it can turn into *vril*.

Earth's high population of stormers and Storm Knights could fuel something of an industrial revolution for Tharkoldu.

To make *vril* batteries, the *occultech* must first prepare a number of battery casings. Generate an *occultech* total. This is the number of casings that the character can prepare in a day.

Once it has prepared the casings, which may be made in advance and stored until needed, the demon needs a living, possibility-rated prisoner.

The process of charging the casings is a single ritual, measured in one hour increments. During each hour that the ritual continues, the demon applies a Pain Weapon to the prisoner. Damage is determined at the end of each hour, using *occultech* skill as the effect value instead of *pain weapon* skill. Thus, the Pain Weapon does damage equal to the Demon's *occultech* skill plus any damage bonus the weapon may have. This is Spiritual Stun damage, as described under *pain weapon* skill below.

For every three points of shock damage that these attacks do, one of the victim's possibilities is drained into a battery casing, charging it so that it becomes a *vril* battery.

The ritual must continue until the damage kills the victim, whereupon his remaining possibilities will charge



an equal number of batteries, or until the victim runs out of possibilities or the demon has charged all its available battery casings. In either of these cases, the demon simply kills its victim.

If the ritual is interrupted while the victim is still alive, then all the stolen possibilities flow back into him. Interrupting the ritual means preventing the demon from applying the pain weapon for a few seconds more than an entire hour; an hour plus ten seconds is enough. If the victim dies through other means before the process is complete, any remaining possibility energy is lost. It does not charge the batteries. However, any batteries that have already been charged retain their power.

Technomagical devices: These are constructed using the same procedures as nonmagical cyberware, but only *occultech* skill is used. *Cybertech* skill is neither needed nor effective.

This applies for both Tharkoldu and Race implants, though technomagical implants made for demons is still demon cyberware.

Pain Weapons are made under the same rules as technomagical cyberware, with a "cyber rating" equal to their damage add used whenever a cyber rating is needed in the process.

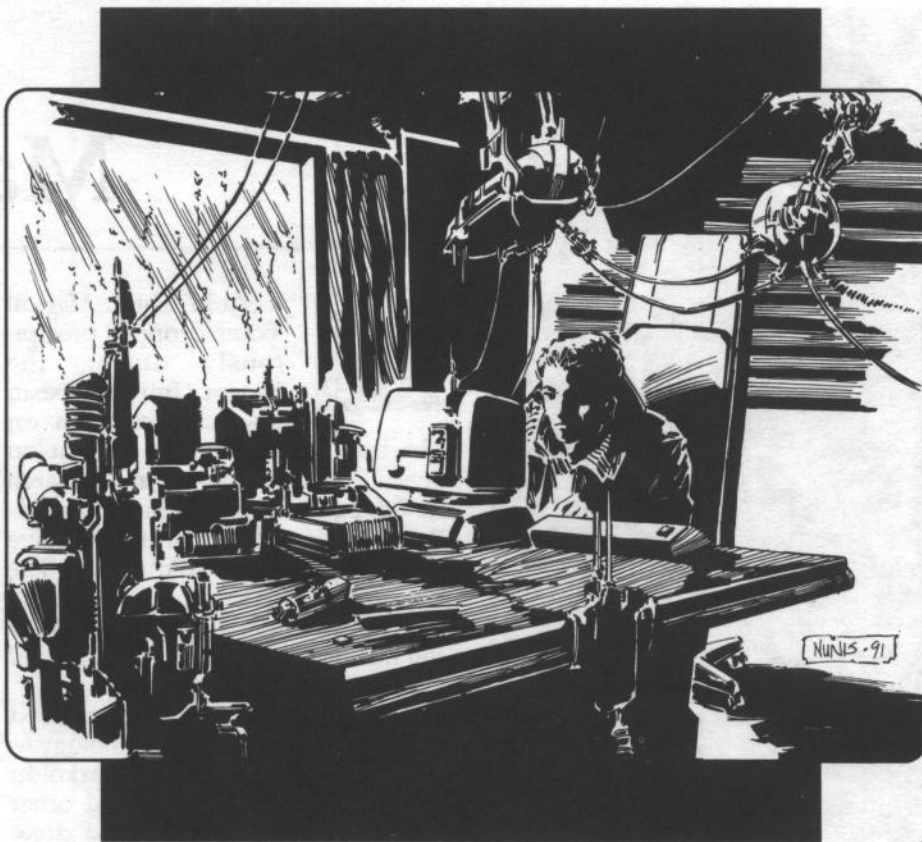
Occultech cannot be used unskilled.

Pain Weapon

Pain weapons are a vicious Tharkoldu invention. *Pain weapon* skill is used both to induce the pain effect and to resist it.

When an attacker successfully strikes a target with a Pain Weapon (using *melee weapon* or *unarmed combat*) the effect value of the weapon is based on the user's *pain weapon* skill. The victim of the blow resists with *pain weapon*, or *Spirit* if he is unskilled.

Pain Weapons do spiritual stun damage. This is stun damage, so any wounds it does are reduced one level, as specified on page 76 of the *Torg Rulebook*. It is also spiritual damage, with results that can affect *focus* and



faith as described on page 125 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Pain weapon cannot be used unskilled.

Example: Zernod has *melee weapon* 16 and *pain weapon* 13. It strikes at a victim with a *Pain Wand* using *melee weapon* and hits. Zernod scores a +3 bonus, so its blow has a damage value of 13 (its *pain weapon* skill) + 3 (its bonus), for a total of 16. Zernod's victim is an ord with a *Spirit* of 7. The blow gets 9 result points. That's a wound, K/O 9. The poor ord, writhing in agony, hits the floor and loses consciousness, with 9 points of shock damage. However, since this is stun damage, the single wound is dropped.

If the ord has the *focus* skill, it is temporarily lost since he has suffered a K/O.

If a wound from a *Pain Weapon* raises a victim's wound level to heavily wounded or worse, the victim also loses his *faith* skill.

UltraCAD Operation

Tharkold has a post-industrial economy, based on the use of automated ultraCAD modules.

UltraCAD operation is a special skill, consisting only of a skill add, with no base attribute. It is added to an appropriate "base" skill when working with ultraCAD modules to measure the operator's effective ability to design or manufacture artifacts with that technology. For example, if she was manufacturing a pistol, a character would add her rating in *ultraCAD operation* to her *fire combat* skill.

Storm Knights who eliminate all the members of a pride who have *UltraCAD* and *energy weapons* have eliminated the pride's ability to manufacture energy weapons.





Chapter Six

Magic



Tharkold's high *Magical* axiom dropped precipitously during the Spasm. Until the Spasm magical research on Tharkold was analogous to that on Aysle. Spell development and research developed along similar lines, although Tharkold's world laws have always colored Tharkoldu magic. The Spasm forced demon researchers to look for ways to sustain magic against the inexorable decline of the *Magical* axiom. Most research failed.

Two avenues of research proved fruitful. Occultech bent technology to the service of magic, and Tharkoldu managed to create spells and other magics that were tied to and drew power from Tharkold's world laws.

Occultech and Technomagic

The development of occultech was a crucial turning point in Tharkold history. Before the advent of occultech the Tharkoldu were demons. After occultech, Tharkoldu became technodemons, creatures identified by their fusion of technology to magic. Occultech was a development born of desperation during the Spasm.

Occultech depends on the world laws of Tharkold. Ancient demon scholars believed the Law of Domination should apply at a metaphysical as well as social level. As demons were creatures that required magic to exist, and the Race were not, then magic must come to dominate the cosm of Tharkold if the demons were to triumph.

The demons quested for a way to have the *Magical* axiom dominate the other axioms. Occultech is the way in

which magic dominates technology; it is technology that has been bent to the service of magic. Occultech allows magical effects to be created through technological means: technomagic. Through occultech, magical effects requiring axiom levels greater than Tharkold's could be achieved through technomagical equipment. The *Magical* axiom was "boosted" by its dominance over the *Technological* axiom. The greater the difference between the *Magical* axiom and the *Technological* axiom, the greater the possible boost. The *Magical* axiom is literally buoyed up on the back of its dominance of the *Technological* axiom, rising part of the way to the *Technological* axiom level. With a *Magical* axiom of 12 and a *Technological* axiom of 26, occultech has been able to create magical effects requiring a *Magical* axiom of 17, a five-point boost. Tharkoldu research has been unable to push the boost any farther, and the techno-demons now suspect their research has slammed into a metaphysical ceiling.

The Race has taken consolation that Tharkoldu cannot find ways to have magic dominate the other axioms. Tharkoldu deem those other avenues of research as impossible or, given the disparity between the *Technological* axiom and the *Spiritual* and *Social* axioms, a gargantuan waste of time.

Occultech is peculiar to Tharkold, and its use in any other cosm causes at least a one-case contradiction. Occultech requires a *Technological* axiom of 26 and a *Magical* axiom of 12.

Technomagical implants change the way Tharkoldu use magic. For example, with the right cyberware, Tharkoldu can use virtual components to cast an *altered fireball* rather than a burning ball of pitch. See Chapter Nine for technomagical equipment and cyberware.



World Laws and Spells

Before occulttech demon researchers had discovered ways of binding spells and other magical effects directly to Tharkold's world laws. These methods also relied on the metaphysical properties of the Law of Domination. Scholars derived spells which gained effectiveness when bound to the world laws, especially the Law of Pain and Law of Ferocity. Demons found they could generate effects which were slightly beyond Tharkold's current *Magical* axiom level. They also discovered they could generate sequences of effects that Aysle magicians deem impossible. Magic bound to the world laws is less flexible than Ayslish magic. Such spells often dictate specific actions the caster must take. These actions might be before, during, or *after* the spell is cast. The caster has no choice in this matter once the choice has been made to cast the spell.

Spells bound to world laws are usually impossible to manipulate. If such a spell cannot be manipulated upon creation, it can never be manipulated. No number of theory adds is sufficient to manipulate one of these spells.

Spells bound to Tharkold's world laws are peculiar to Tharkold. Use of any such spell in a different cosm causes at least a one-case contradiction.

Other Magic Notes

For the purposes of arcane knowledge restrictions, the Race are considered *folk*. Tharkoldu are considered *entities*. Tharkoldu are not meant to exist in the natural world. Tharkoldu are entities even though Tharkoldu do define themselves in relation to others of their kind (through the Law of Domination), which is the definition of *folk*. Tharkoldu are just better defined by the ways in which they conflict or pervert the natural world. Grumpy Ayslish magicians can take some consolation that the Tharkoldu ability to bend magic and the metaphysical nature of the world is precisely because

they are entities, not *folk*. By existing outside the natural world, Tharkoldu can define, grasp and distort the laws of the natural world without affecting themselves or their own nature. This is not possible for a being who exists within, and is a part of, the natural world.

Nile and Cyberpapal magic works normally in Tharkold. Ayslish magic works normally as long as the spell has axiom level of 12 or less. Orrorsh spells work normally as long as their axiom level is 12 or less. Use of the Orrorshan *occult* causes a one- or four-case contradiction, depending on where the caster is from.

Tharkoldu can learn Ayslish spells as long as they have the requisite skill and arcane knowledge.

Spells

The Tharkoldu have nearly identical versions of at least the following spells:

Torg Rulebook: *altered fireball, away sight, bullet, extradimensional gate, fog, haste, lightning, mage dark, mage light, open lock, pathfinder, ritual of mind preparation, ritual of perception preparation, stealth walk, strength, tracker.*

Aysle: *altered fireball (improved), brittle walls, cast lasher, create fear, dispel magic, enchant armor, hide from magic, imprisonment, telepathy.*

Pixaud's Practical Grimoire: *astral self, awaken, black bart's deadly darts, conceal evil, demon soul ring, facade of normality, first aid, frigid air, invisibility, mirror of other worlds, restore limb, scarebeast, speak to enchanted, summon demon, talking dead, vigor, withering touch, zero light.*

Spells which are meant to affect demons, such as *haste*, use the arcane knowledge of *entity* rather than *folk*. They are otherwise the same as the published version of the spell.

In the spells listed below there are spells with an axiom level greater than 12. This is not a mistake. During Tharkold's long history, spells were developed when the *Magical* axiom was higher than it is now. Many spells were forgotten after centuries of neglect, some remain. Tharkoldu using these spells suffer a four-case contra-

diction, unless their spell casting is augmented by technomagical means.

An entry with "**Manipulation:** world laws" means the spell is bound with the world laws of Tharkold and cannot be manipulated. It also means that using this spell in any other cosm creates at least a one-case contradiction.

Alpha Stech

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *apportation/living forces* 19

Backlash: 16

Difficulty: 12

Effect Value: 28

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: 14 (ten minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (ten seconds)

Manipulation: world laws

"Stech" is a Tharkoldu term meaning "to have others take consequences for you."

Alpha stech is a spell which transfers damage from the caster onto her slaves or others who have formally submitted to her. The slaves must be within 100 meters of the caster, and they must be alive. Compare the effect total to the *Toughness* of the caster. The maximum amount of damage which can be transferred in a round is equal to result points read on the appropriate combat results table. The caster can determine which of its slaves take what damage.

Example: An ord techno-demon gets an effect total of 29. It has a *Toughness* of 17, for 12 result points. The techno-demon may transfer up to "2Wnd KO 12" to its slaves.

Lord Stech: There is a more powerful version of this spell, usable only by Tharkoldu who are demon lords or higher in rank. It is *apportation/living forces* 22, and has an effect value of 40, and the slaves may be anywhere within a kilometer of their lord. Otherwise the spell is the same.

Attack Dominant

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *alteration/entity* 19



Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 26
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 11 (150 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (ten seconds)
Manipulation: world laws

The caster must know the name of the target in order to cast this spell. This does not have to be the "true" name of the target, but should the caster somehow acquire the true name of the target, she receives a +5 bonus modifier to this spell. The spell causes damage by temporarily changing the cell structure of the target character, causing the cell walls to lose their integrity. If completely successful (i.e. if the spell kills the target), the target is reduced to a frothing ooze. At the end of the spell's duration the cells revert to normal, in whatever shape they happen to be in at the time. The result is often fatal.

The target takes damage for each round of the spell's duration. If she dies from the spell, she is reduced to a shapeless puddle. This spell uses the Law of Pain and the Law of Domination in a way Tharkoldu see as extremely perverse; it can only affect characters who dominate the caster. While the Race is blamed for this spell, it is more likely the work of an ambitious and rebellious demon.

Captive Send

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *conjuration/living forces* 18

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 15
Effect Value: 28
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (ten seconds)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: world laws

This **focused** spell sends one captive of the caster's choice back to her stronghold. The lair must be within 400 kilometers (value 28) of the caster. The spell opens an ephemeral gate to the caster's stronghold, and pushes the captive through. The effect value of the spell is the maximum range the slave can be teleported. This gate is

linked to the captive; it literally exists only for the captive. No other character can use the gate, and most would not even perceive the gate. The captive just vanishes into thin air.

The only possible destination for the spell is the stronghold, the primary residence, of the caster. A technodemon whose lair is in Los Angeles who then spends a couple of weeks in Mexico City could not use *captive send* to whisk someone to her hotel room. A caster without a permanent residence would discover the spell would not work for her.

This spell only affects characters who have formally submitted to the caster. Even for pitiful targets of the Race, formal submission is necessary for this spell. The submission must be a deliberate act. A simple verbal agreement will work for non-demon targets. This agreement may be extracted under duress, but simply defeating the target in combat, or capturing the target, does not satisfy the need for a formal submission.

The reason for the formal submission is twofold: one, it allows for the *exclusion* theorem to work within the spell and, two, it circumvents the need for the effect value of the spell to beat the target's highest attribute. The target "submits" to the effect of the spell.

Chilling Darkness

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *alteration/darkness* 15

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 15
Effect Value: 22
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 12 (three minutes)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: cast time, control, duration

This illusory spell is **focused** on the mage himself. It alters available darkness, changing its attributes. The darkness expands to fill a 25-meter radius sphere—although the caster may have the darkness take any shape he chooses, as long as the shape can fit entirely within a 25-meter radius sphere.

The effect total acts as an *intimidation* total against any characters within

the darkness. Any characters who receive any result points from chilling darkness feel as if they have been struck by a penetrating cold. Characters who are *setback* by the attack can do nothing but shiver helplessly for the duration of the spell, or until they disbelieve its effects.

The spell can be disbelieved on a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 22.

Corpse Keep

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *apportation/inanimate forces* 15

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: world laws

Corpse keep is actually two *inanimate forces* spells which have been joined together, one spell dominating the other. The first spell moves a corpse killed by the caster (and only a corpse killed by the caster may be the target of this spell) to a place previously chosen by the caster. The corpse moves at speed value of 12, avoiding obstacles in its path. The dominated spell chills the corpse to preserve its freshness for later. Both spells are **focused** on the corpse.

The caster marks the destination with a preserved body of some kind, into which he has carved his initials or other identifying marks.

Dominant Vision

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/entity* 18

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 23
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 21 (four hours)
Cast Time: 13 (ten minutes)
Manipulation: world laws

The mage casts this **focused** spell upon herself. Record the effect total of the spell. For the duration of the spell the caster is immune to any of her own illusions that have a disbelief value



less than the *dominant vision* total. This immunity *does not* dispel the illusion, but provides an exception to the rule of page 114 of the *Torg Rulebook*. Instead, the caster has dominated all of her illusions to the point where they can exist without affecting her.

Any characters in range of the spell — and dominated by the caster — share the vision of their leader. They are not affected by illusions cast by their leader. Dominated characters under the effect of *dominant vision* can be affected by their own illusions, however — as per page 114 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Foeblaster

Axiom Level: 11 (17)

Skill: *alteration/entity* 20

Backlash: 19

Difficulty: 10

Effect Value: 25

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)

Duration: 5 (10 seconds)

Cast Time: 7 (25 seconds)

Manipulation: world laws

Foeblaster may be cast directly or **impressed**, if the caster has enough *technomagical implants* (see the section on *technomagical implants* for why this works). Once released, the spell effect fills a sphere with a radius of 40 meters. The spell effect is centered on the caster. The caster and every creature which has formally submitted to the caster is immune to the spell's damage. All other creatures suffer damage equal to the effect total of the spell.

Foeblaster amplifies the energy in the caster's own body, then blasts the energy out in waves. To other characters in the area, it looks as if the caster has become iridescent, emitting pulsing waves that ripple and distort perception of the area. The effect value of the spell is used as the damage value on the Combat Results Table.

Foe Stech

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *apportation/living forces* 19

Backlash: 24

Difficulty: 16

Effect Value: 28

Bonus Number to: effect



Range: 11 (150 meters)

Duration: 14 (ten minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (ten seconds)

Manipulation: world laws

Foe stech is a spell which transfers damage from the caster onto a single target character. The character cannot dominate, nor be dominated by, the caster. The casting total must be greater than or equal to the target's *Spirit* or *faith*. Compare the effect total to the *Toughness* of the caster. The maximum amount of damage which can be transferred in a round is equal to the result points of the effect value.

Example: A possibility rated *techno-demon* gets an effect total of 29. It has a *Toughness* of 17, for 12 result points. The *techno-demon* may transfer up to 12 result points of damage to its chosen adversary.

If the target generates a *Mind* or *will-power* total greater than or equal to the casting total, the spell is dispelled. If the caster wants to target a different character another spell must be cast. The caster may have more than one *foe stech* active at one time, allocating damage between victims as the caster sees fit.

Flesh Link

Axiom Level: 12 (17)

Skill: *apportation/living forces* 21

Backlash: 22

Difficulty: 16

Effect Value: 33

Bonus Number to: range

Range: 31 (1,500 kilometers)

Duration: 29 (one week)

Cast Time: 21 (four hours)

Manipulation: cast time, control, duration, range

This **impressed, focused** spell is released by touching the target character with a lock of hair, piece of skin, or another specific contagion from the flesh captive. The flesh captive is a slave or other prisoner who the caster has hidden in a secure location. As long as the target character is within the spell's range of the flesh captive, any damage done to the flesh captive also appears on the target character. The target character also suffers any pain the flesh captive suffers. The target character suffers no more damage than the flesh captive. The maximum damage is also limited by the effect value of the spell. As all



damage is done directly to *Toughness* (no armor adds count), an effect value of 33 has proven sufficient for most Tharkoldu needs.

If the flesh captive is healed, the target character **cannot** be healed. Only pain and damage are transmitted. Tharkoldu deal with particularly tough target characters by healing the flesh captive and doing repeated damage to him. The only effective remedies to *flesh link* are moving out of the spell's range, or rescuing the flesh captive.

Horrrifying Arrival

Axiom Level: 12

Skill: *alteration/entity* 19

Backlash: 17

Difficulty: 12

Effect Value: 26

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: Self

Duration: 18 (one hour)

Cast Time: 9 (one minute)

Manipulation: world laws

This *illusory* spell renders the caster effectively invisible when the spell is first cast. Any other character not immune to illusions needs a *Perception* or *find* total equal to the effect total of the spell in order to notice the caster. At any time during the duration of the spell, the caster may decide to become visible and attack a character. For the round in which the caster appears, the effect total of *horrrifying arrival* is used as an *intimidation* attack on one specific character. Disbelieving the illusion requires a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 20 or better.

Horrrifying arrival derives its *intimidation* effect from binding the spell to the Law of Ferocity. This binding forces the caster to attack a character sometime during the spell's duration. A techno-demon must even attack a dominant demon if there is no other target available. If the caster cannot find or is prevented from attempting an attack, the caster takes damage equal to the effect total of the spell. Armor does not provide protection from this attack.

Laser Armor

Axiom Level: 11

Skill: *alteration/light* 18

Backlash: 16

Difficulty: 12

Effect Value: 24

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 12 (four minutes)

Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)

Manipulation: control, cast time

Casting this *focused* spell requires a source of light and focusing or light-emitting components from a laser. The caster holds the laser components in contact with the recipient, making sure some light hits the components as he casts the spell. As soon as the casting word is spoken, the recipient is instantly surrounded by thousands of thin beams of laser light, as if a pair of lasers were reflected by hundreds of moving, invisible mirrors. For reasons forgotten during the long war, the Race version of this spell produces cobalt-blue beams, while the Tharkoldu version emits a green beam. The spell continues for its full duration, which could be inconvenient if the wearer wishes to hide.

The effect total of the spell becomes the armor value for the character. If the recipient's armor value is already higher than the effect total, she receives no armor benefit from the spell. The effect total of the armor may also be used as the damage value for *unarmed combat* attacks — or if someone merely attempts to touch the recipient of the spell.

Laser armor integrates knowledge about laser technology. It requires *Tech* level 22 to work without contradiction.

Monkey Form

Axiom Level: 11

Skill: *alteration/entity* 13

Backlash: 17

Difficulty: 11

Effect Value: 17

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 18 (one hour)

Cast Time: 9 (one minute)

Manipulation: control, duration

Monkey Form is a *focused illusory* spell used by Tharkoldu to take on the appearance of one of the Race or other humans. The caster makes stylized gestures and expressions typical of

the race whose form she is taking. She then speaks of the type of character she wishes to resemble, such as an "older dockworker." *Monkey form* may not be used to take on the appearance of a specific character, only generic types. The illusion can disguise the Tharkoldu's size, and the illusion exists for all five natural senses. The wearer may dispel the illusion any time she wishes.

A character may spot a discrepancy or unnatural feel to the illusion by generating a *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total equal to or greater than the spell's effect total. A character can disbelieve the illusion on a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 18. The spell may be used to mimic folk other than humans, but if the illusion is of a nonhuman race, viewers receive a +3 bonus modifier to any disbelief attempts.

Monkey Mimic

Axiom Level: 11

Skill: *alteration/entity* 19

Backlash: 16

Difficulty: 12

Effect Value: 27

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 23 (10 hours)

Cast Time: 9 (one minute)

Manipulation: world laws

Monkey mimic is a *focused illusory* spell Tharkoldu use to take on the appearance of a specific character, as long as the character is a member of the Race or other human. In addition to having seen the specific character to be mimicked, the caster must have touched or smelled the character to cast the specific illusion. *Monkey mimic* may instead be used as a more potent version of *monkey form*, generating the illusion of a generic folk type; the effect of *monkey form* is dominated by the effect of *monkey mimic*. The wearer may dispel the illusion any time she wishes.

A character may spot a discrepancy or unnatural feel to the illusion by generating a *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total equal to or greater than the spell's effect total. A character can disbelieve the illusion on a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 24. The spell may be used to mimic folk other than humans,



but if the illusion is of a nonhuman race viewers receive a +3 bonus modifier to any disbelief attempts.

Muzzle Booster

Axiom Level: 9

Skill: *alteration/inanimate forces* 18

Backlash: 22

Difficulty: 15

Effect Value: 27

Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch

Duration: 14 (10 minutes)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Manipulation: control, speed, state

Muzzle booster is a **focused** spell used to boost the damage value of chemically-propelled firearms. The caster's hand gesture mimics the spinning flight of a bullet from the barrel of the weapon to be boosted. He then fires the weapon once. Compare the effect value of the spell with damage value of the weapon, reading the result points on the Power Push Table. The resulting bonus is the increase to the weapon's damage value for the duration of the spell. If the effect value of the spell is lower, then use the weapon's normal damage value.

This spell incorporates chemical knowledge first available at *Tech* level 20. It requires *Tech* level 20 to work without contradiction.

Pain Flip

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *alteration/living forces* 15

Backlash: 20

Difficulty: 16

Effect Value: 22

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 29 (one week)

Cast Time: 21 (four hours)

Manipulation: control, state

Pain flip is a **focused** spell. The caster makes four small incisions into the target with a drug-coated knife. The drug used causes the victim to feel a fleeting sense of euphoria, that then fades until the next incision is made. When the casting is complete, compare the effect total of the spell to the

victim's *Spirit* or *faith*. Read the results on the *intimidate* column of the Interaction Results Table. If the result is *unskilled* or *stymied*, the victim's ability to feel pain is blocked. On a *setback* or *break*, any pain experienced by the victim is felt as pleasure. On a *player's call* result, the caster can suggest painful actions to the victim; unless the victim generates a *willpower* total equal to or greater than the caster's *Spirit*, he will perform the action. If the victim ever generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total greater than the casting total, the spell is dispelled.

Tharkoldu use *pain flip* as a disciplinary tool on slaves. Tharkoldu are not concerned about disciplining the victim; they enjoy the effect the spell has on the other slaves who see the victim. Also, while under the effects of this spell, characters ignore knock-down results and the effects of heavy and mortal wounds (though they still take the wounds and die from them, they are unaware of them otherwise).

Pav Crush

Axiom Level: 11 (17)

Skill: *alteration/inanimate forces* 20

Backlash: 20

Difficulty: 15

Effect Value: 31

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 9 (60 meters)

Duration: 28 (four days)

Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)

Manipulation: world laws

The caster targets this **ward** spell on her victim by pressing on her own throat in a swift choking motion. As the spell is cast, the victim feels a sharp pressure around his chest and throat, but the pressure quickly subsides. Any time the victim takes an action which opposes the interest of the caster, the spell does damage to him, using the effect total as the damage value. Armor does not shield the character from this damage. Full damage is rarely done to the victim. If the victim's actions pose a direct threat to the caster, the spell will do as much damage as necessary to incapacitate the character. If not, the spell does no more than 10 result points of damage to the char-

acter. It will often do less — the caster has full control over how much damage *pav crush* does in any one attack, up to the effect value of the spell. The purpose of the spell is to crush the victim's will to resist, not his body.

Should the victim generate a *Mind* or *willpower* total which exceeds the casting total, *pav crush* is dispelled. If the victim makes a formal submission to the caster, *pav crush* is dispelled.

Pleasure Flip

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *alteration/living force* 15

Backlash: 18

Difficulty: 11

Effect Value: 22

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 29 (one week)

Cast Time: 21 (four hours)

Manipulation: control, state

Pleasure flip is a **focused** spell. The caster massages the victim four times with a topical irritant. The irritant takes hold quickly, causing a burning itch which then slowly fades until the next massage. When casting is complete, compare the effect total of the spell to the victim's *Spirit* or *faith*. Read the results on the *intimidate* column of the Interaction Results Table. If the result is *unskilled* or *stymied*, the victim's ability to feel pleasure is blocked. On a *setback* or *break* any pleasure experienced by the victim is felt as pain. On a *player's call* result, the caster can point out pleasurable actions the victim ought to avoid. Such pleasures can include tasks such as eating when hungry. Unless the victim generates a *willpower* total equal to or greater than the caster's *Spirit*, he will avoid the action. If the victim ever generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total greater than the casting total, the spell is dispelled.

Tharkoldu use a trio of spells, *flesh link*, *pain flip* and *pleasure flip* to create horrific "art forms" they call "pain gardens" or "flesh sculptures." These appeal to a Tharkoldu esthetic they call "beauty," but which contains absolutely nothing folk races would consider beauty.





Pop

Axiom Level: 12

Skill: *apportation/entity* 17

Backlash: 17

Difficulty: 10

Effect Value: 15

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: 2 (2.5 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Manipulation: world laws

Pop is a variable range gate spell usable only by the caster of the spell. The gate opens at the caster's location and his chosen destination. The destination must be within the range of the spell. The caster must see, or have just seen, the destination. Television cameras or other technological imaging systems count as "seeing" for the purpose of this spell. If the caster is not currently viewing the location, the backlash and the difficulty is increased by +3.

As the spell is cast, a rune draws itself in front of the caster. An identical rune draws itself at the destination, accompanied by a soft hiss. Characters hear the hiss on *Perception* or *find* totals of 15 or greater. The rune is clearly visible to any character at the destination. The effect total of the spell is the maximum weight that can go through the gate. The caster must step through the gate immediately upon completing the casting. He steps through, arriving in a brilliant flash of light and a loud "pop."

The range of the spell is dominated and linked to the cast time. This means the caster may increase the range value by increasing the cast time value, on a one-for-one basis. If the caster spends an hour casting the spell, the range is increased to 23 (40 kilometers). The rune draws itself at the destination for the full hour, so long-range *pops* are not used when surprise is necessary.

Note: If the caster generates an effect value lower than the total weight

needed to transfer her from one place to another and for some reason enters the gate, she is trapped "between" places. No one in Tharkoldu history has ever returned from being trapped — but that doesn't mean it hasn't happened. Certainly, most Tharkoldu see this as being certain death and will not willingly enter such a gate — except when remaining behind is worse.

Slave Send

Axiom Level: 12

Skill: *apportation/entity* 17

Backlash: 18

Difficulty: 9

Effect Value: 19

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: 2 (2.5 seconds)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

Manipulation: world laws

Slave send is a variable range gate spell usable only on slaves or others

who have formally submitted to the caster. It is indicative of Tharkoldu nature that they have two gate spells, one for the masters and one for those they rule. The gate opens at the caster's location and his chosen destination. The destination must be within the range of the spell. The caster must be seeing, or have seen, the destination. Television cameras or other technological imaging systems count as "seeing" for the purpose of this spell. If the caster is not currently seeing the location, the backlash and difficulty are increased by +3.

As the spell is cast, a rune draws itself in front of the caster, expanding to accommodate the size and number of all those being sent. An identical rune draws itself at the destination, accompanied by a soft hiss. Charac-

ters hear the hiss on *Perception* or *find* totals of 10 or greater. The rune is clearly visible to any character at the destination. The effect total of the spell is the maximum weight that can go through the gate. The slaves must step through the gate immediately upon completing the casting arriving in a brilliant flash of light and a thunderous "boom."

The range of the spell is dominated and linked to the cast time. This means the caster may increase the range value by increasing the cast time value, on a one-for-one basis. If the caster spends an hour casting the spell, the range is increased to 23 (40 kilometers).

Note: This spell has the same drawback as *pop* — and many more slaves have entered low-effect gates than masters.

Slave Tough

Axiom Level: 9 (17)

Skill: alteration/living forces 17

Backlash: 18

Difficulty: 14

Effect Value: 20

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch

Duration: 28 (four days)

Cast Time: 18 (one hour)

Manipulation: world laws

Slave tough is a **focused** spell which can only be cast on slaves or others who have formally submitted to the caster. The caster has the recipient mimic his own actions. These actions are pantomime acts of speed, stealth, strength or hardness. When the spell is cast, compare the effect total to the recipient's highest physical attribute. Read the result points on the Power Push Table. The spell has a result modifier of +5. The recipient's *Dexterity*, *Strength* and *Toughness* are each increased by the final result points.





Chapter Seven

Miracles of Faith



he ferocity of the War has focused mainstream Tharkoldu spiritual values into two opposed belief systems. The demonic religion is the Cult of the Dominant, which glorifies their instincts as predators who rule by force and fear. The Race's religions have become unified into the Way of the Race, which sees humanity's survival and eventual victory as divinely ordained.

Religions At War

For 3,000 years, the religions of demons and Race have been evolving in mutual opposition. Each species has acquired miracles that can overcome its foe, and at the same time, the spiritual energy of each species prevents the other from achieving spiritual supremacy.

Certain miracles are designated as War miracles. These miracles ignore the rules given on page 124 of the *Torg Rulebook* regarding miracles cast on members of other faiths. They are meant to be cast on members of the opposing religion. War miracles also ignore the condition modifiers on page 127 of the *Torg Rulebook*, since the ongoing struggle between the Tharkoldu brings the different factors of miracle into balance and in effect, cancels them out.

Invocations

The Way of the Race and the Cult of the Dominant are both capable of direct invocations of their divine principles, and both mythos contain legends of such events. The community rating and difficulty number for an invocation in Tharkold is 36. These legendary invocations are limited to events of divine vengeance or miraculous deliverance. The invocations are limited in scope, never covering an area larger than a city or larger in scale than a single battle. No

invocation is possible which alters the entire reality or environment of Tharkold in a positive way.

Miracles of the Cult of the Dominant

In addition to the miracles listed below, the Cult of the Dominant has access to the following miracles, identical to their Core Earth counterparts: *bless, cure disease, healing, refresh, ritual of purification.*

The *community rating* of a miracle is always increased by +3 for the Cult of the Dominant, unless all the participating community members are in the same pride. *Community ratings* are shown below with an asterisk (*) as a reminder that the rating given includes this +3 modifier.

Conceive

Spiritual Rating: 9

Community Rating: 10*

Difficulty: 19

Range: touch

Duration: One mating

Effect: Induces the demon breeding cycle

Conceive came into being during the centuries that magic declined. It triggers the breeding cycle between two Tharkoldu. If one Tharkoldu has already submitted to the other, the dominant Tharkoldu is the *focus* character and the submissive Tharkoldu provides *faith*. The modifiers due to the Law of Domination apply to the totals.

If neither demon is submissive to the other, then both generate *focus* totals, and the one who beats the difficulty by the highest margin becomes dominant. This is formal domination and the relationship continues after the mating. This will even override an existing relationship among demons.

For successful conception the *faith*



total must exceed the natural *Toughness* of both participants. Do not include adds from cyberware, magic, or miracles in evaluating the *Toughness*.

Enslavement

Spiritual Rating: 11

Community Rating: 15*

Difficulty: 12

Range: touch

Duration: Until the enslavement is broken

Effect: Enslaves target character to the demons

When used against a member of the Race, this is a War miracle. If used against non-Race humans, it does not get the special benefits of War miracles. If used against another demon, the miracle violates the tenets of the Cult and suffers a +15 difficulty modifier.

Enslavement forces the target to become totally obedient to the will of the *focus* character. This happens if the *faith* total exceeds the target's *faith*, or *Spirit* if the target has no *faith* adds.

The slave can only resist the orders of the master by generating a *Spirit* total of 20, and she is only allowed to make this check if given an order abhorrent to her. If the slave does successfully resist an order, she may try to throw off the miracle's effect completely, generating a *Spirit* total equal to or greater than her master's *faith*.

If unable to resist an order, the slave carries it out to the best of her ability, without reservation or hesitation.

Mark Prey

Spiritual Rating: 11

Community Rating: 9*

Difficulty: *reality* skill of target (or *Spirit* if character not *reality*-rated)

Range: see below

Duration: 1 day

Effect: increases target vulnerability to hunt by *focus* character

Mark prey requires a ritual. If used against any being except Tharkoldu, it is a War miracle. If used against a demon, it is not a War miracle, but does not violate the tenets of the Cult and so does not incur a penalty.

If the target is physically present, the *focus* character must touch him at the

climax of the ritual. However, the ritual may be performed in the target's absence, if the demon has a sample of her tissues: a drop of blood, a strand of hair, whatever. The sample must be fresh, taken from the target within the last 24 hours, and whether the miracle succeeds or not, the sample is consumed during the ritual and cannot be re-used.

The miracle is often invoked by demon assassins who have access to such a sample from their victim. It is also used in ritual hunts of humans by demons, with the marked prey given a head start before a demon goes after him. This is often performed in conjunction with the *ritual of power* (see below).

The *focus* character spiritually marks a victim. As long as the miracle is in effect, the demon receives a bonus modifier equal to its success levels in the following areas:

- *Perception* skills used to observe, find, or track the prey.
- Passive and active defenses against attacks by the prey.
- Resistance to interaction skills used by the prey.

If the miracle achieves *superior* or *spectacular* success, the prey is automatically *stymied* when in the demon's presence, unless he can generate a *reality* (or *Spirit*) total greater than the demon's *faith*. He may make this check once in any scene in which he encounters the demon. The check itself is subject to the *stymie*. If he overcomes the demon's *faith*, the *stymie* effect is cancelled for the rest of the miracle's duration.

Ritual of Power

Spiritual Rating: 5

Community Rating: 8*

Difficulty: 12

Range: voice

Duration: na

Effect: restores lost *faith*

Identical in result to the Core Earth Ritual of Hope, but grimmer in execution. The Ritual restores *faith* lost due to a failed miracle or spiritual damage. The miracle requires Tharkoldu to defeat an enemy in single combat and feed on him before it is complete. The combat need not be equal, of course, and even an armed demon facing a

naked human opponent would be fulfilling these terms.

Demons often combine this ritual with *mark prey* to mark their victim for the sacrificial combat.

Temptation

Spiritual Rating: 7

Community Rating: 16*

Difficulty: *Mind* or *willpower* of target

Range: voice

Duration: one day

Effect: makes target vulnerable to interactions

Not all battles are fought with lasers and cyberclaws. *Temptation* allows demons to overcome their victims with sheer *Charisma*. Used against the Race, this is a War miracle. It may be used against other demons without either penalty or benefit.

Temptation may be invoked against a given character only once in a single day. It automatically fails if the target has already been *tempted* during the day. The miracle targets *willpower*, or *Mind* if the target character does not have *willpower*.

If the success level is *good* or less, the miracle gives the *focus* character +5 bonus modifier to *charm* and *persuasion* attempts on the target character for duration of the miracle.

If the success level is *superior* the *focus* character gains a +7 bonus modifier.

A *spectacular* success gives the demon a chance to break any existing submission the target has made and forces him to formally submit to the demon immediately. The demon gains a +7 bonus modifier to persuade the character, and get an *enemy* result of the Charm/Persuasion column. If successful, the character submits to the demon. This submission lasts even after the duration of the miracle expires.

A character can resist *temptation* by clearing his mind (page 74 of the *Torg Rulebook*), generating a *Perception* total against his own *Mind*. If the result points are greater than the result points of the demon's *charm* or *persuasion*, the *charm* or *persuasion* is negated. The character gets the +3 bonus modifier for dealing with an enemy.





Miracles of the Way of the Race

In addition to the miracles listed below, the Way of the Race has access to miracles that are identical to these Core Earth counterparts: *bless, blessing vow, common ground, cure disease, healing, multiply food, refresh, ritual of hope, ritual of purification, soothe.*

Good of the Race

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: na

Effect: Judges the fitness of newborns

This tragic miracle came into being during the various times in the history of the Race when a community could not afford to support anyone who would not contribute to racial sur-

vival. It was, and on occasion still is, invoked to test infants whose fitness is in question. The miracle will instantly and painlessly kill a baby that is too sickly to grow to healthy adulthood.

Apparently weak infants who survive this test frequently turn out to be possibility-rated in later life.

Liberation

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: See below
Range: voice
Duration: na
Effect: Aids the Race in escaping slavery to demons

Liberation is a War miracle and requires a ritual, a rousing sermon preached by the *focus* character. The difficulty is the value of the number of slaves listening to the sermon, plus 5.

If *liberation* succeeds, the success level determines the scope of the miracle.

A *Minimal* or *Average* success releases slaves from submission to Tharkoldu. This means they are no longer subject to effects of the Law of Domination. Slaves under the *enslavement* miracle or fitted with SlaveChips are not affected.

A *Good* success has the above effect and also releases characters from *enslavement*.

A *Superior* or higher success has the above effects and also burns out SlaveChips with no harm to those wearing them.

Enslaved or chipped slaves who are in the group hearing the miracle may not use their *faith* to aid the *focus* character. Indeed, their compulsions force them to flee from the ritual unless physically restrained. Other slaves may attempt to aid the *focus* character, but under the Law of Domination, their average *faith* is lowered by 3, since they are opposing a being to whom they have submitted. Free members of the Way of the Race may aid the *focus* character at no penalty, as usual.



Uprising

Spiritual Rating: 9

Community Rating: 8

Difficulty: See below

Range: voice

Duration: 1 day

Effect: Add success levels to combat skills against demons and slave troops.

Uprising must be performed as a ritual, and like *liberation* involves a heartening sermon preached to free members of the Race. Slaves who are subject to the Law of Domination, under *enslavement*, or fitted with SlaveChips do not benefit from *uprising* and may not aid in the miracle.

The difficulty number is equal to the value of the number of slaves listening to the sermon, plus 10.

The *faith* total success levels are bonus modifiers for skills used in combat against demons or slave troops. Naturally this applies to attack skills, but also applies to active dodges or parries, and to interaction skills used against an opponent.

Will of the Race

Spiritual Rating: 15

Community Rating: 12

Difficulty: 10

Range: sight

Duration: 8

Effect: Strikes enemy with mass will of the Race in mental combat

Will of the Race is a War miracle that strikes a single enemy with a blast of psychic energy, the concentrated power of the Race Will. The damage is equal to the *faith* total. This is mental damage, and the target resists with his *Mind*.

If the miracle fails, however, the *focus* character may suffer spiritual damage herself. The target generates a *faith* total which is applied to the *focus* character as spiritual damage, resisted by her *Spirit*.

Using *will of the Race* against another member of the Race violates the tenets of the Way unless the target is acting in a manner dangerous to the survival of the Race.

Cybermiracles

Technology achieved mythic significance for the Race during the dark ages

that followed the Spasm. The technological wonders of the shattered civilization seemed like memories of a paradise lost. Ancient bits of technology were treated as sacred objects, and indeed, the preservation of such artifacts and of scientific texts helped hasten the Race's climb back from barbarism.

During the fall of magic, when the development of LifeCyber enabled them to survive, the Demons also formed a mystical perception of technology. Demons felt religious awe at the powers that allowed the contemptible humans to defeat them. Yet they also saw the salvation of their species as a sign that they were still the favored children of Omoo-Zhan.

Tharkoldu religion became linked to technology and both the Cult and the Way can perform cybermiracles.

Community Rating: Demons have the +3 modifier to community rating described above.

Cyber Ratings: Cybermiracles do not humanize the forces of technology, but rather are a surrender of humanity to the powers of mechanism. Thus, every cybermiracle has a cyber rating. This rating is in effect for the duration of the miracle and affect any cyber value totals required during that period to resist cyberpsychosis. If the miracle harms its target, the focus character receives the cyber rating. If the miracle is beneficial to its target, the target character receives the cyber rating. If a beneficial miracle's effects are permanent, then so is the cyber rating. It may **not** be reduced by the use of *psychology* skill or the *cyberharmony* miracle.

Species: Cybermiracles may have an orientation to one species or another. Some are neutral in this respect. If a character of another species that the one to which the miracle is oriented attempts to invoke a cybermiracle, she is automatically assumed to be stretching the tenets of her faith and suffers a +15 to the difficulty rating.

Animate Cables

Spiritual Rating: 14

Community Rating: 11

Difficulty: 17

Range: *faith* total

Duration: result points of miracle in rounds

Cyber Rating: +3

Species: Demon

Effect: animates cables and wires so they can kill organic life in range

The miracle targets one person. Any metal wires that the person is in contact with, or that are part of any machine he is in contact with, will come to life and attempt to strangle him. A telephone cord, the cables in a vehicle, even the wire hangers in a closet, can all be animated by this miracle.

The duration of the miracle is a number of rounds equal to the result points of the miracle. If the *focus* character received four result points from a *focus* total of 21, the cables would be animated for 4 rounds.

The wires all have the following statistics:

DEX 12

Maneuver 13, unarmed combat 13

STR 14

TOU 14

The maximum number of wires animated by the miracle is five. They will work in coordination if possible: for example, one wire might try to immobilize the character while another tries to strangle him.

The cables rip themselves free of their sockets and can crawl, snake-like, very fast, with a speed value of 9.

Any mechanism requiring the animated cables for its operation will stop working for the duration of the miracle. The cables return to their normal position and functioning after the miracle's duration ends, unless destroyed before that time. In that event, the mechanism itself remains out of action, which can be a bad thing if it happens to be a plane in flight, or something of that nature.

Attune Mechanism

Spiritual Rating: 11

Community Rating: 12

Difficulty: 15

Range: touch

Duration: na

Cyber Rating: +1

Species: Neutral

Effect: Repairs malfunctioning systems

Attune mechanism can only be performed as a short ritual, requiring one-half hour. It may be applied to any damaged or malfunctioning machine,



device, or cyberware implant.

If the system does not record damage using wounds, but simply works or doesn't, as in the case of cyberware, *attune mechanism* repairs the equipment on a success level of *good* or better.

If the machinery measures damage using wounds, as in the case of vehicles, then the machine's wound level is decreased by the success level of the miracle. Even "dead" machines can be repaired by this miracle, as long as they are more or less in one piece.

The same restrictions on miraculous healing apply to mechanisms as to living beings, as specified on page 127 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Curse Mechanism

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: 13
Difficulty: special
Range: sight
Duration: na
Cyber Rating: +2
Species: Neutral
Effect: damage machinery

The miracle attacks a targeted machine. The difficulty depends on the nature of the machinery.

If the machine has no operator, use the machine's *Toughness* rating. If it has no *Toughness* rating, or if the *Toughness* is less than eight, the difficulty is eight.

If the machine has an operator, the difficulty is the operator's *faith*, or her *Spirit* if she has no *faith* adds, or the *Toughness* of the machine, whichever is higher. Cyberware usually has no *Toughness*, so that the user's attribute or skill is always used as the difficulty number, though a piece of cyberware with armor, such as a cyberlimb, would include the armor adds in its *Toughness*.

If the machine is subject to normal damage, the miracle does damage equal to the *faith* total. The machine's resistance value is its *Toughness*. If it has no *Toughness* then its resistance value is eight. If the machine is operated by a possibility-rated character, or derives its power in some way from possibility energy, damage is checked on the possibility-rated column of the Combat Results Table (page 39, *Torg Rulebook*). Otherwise, use the Ord column.

Used against cyberware, the miracle causes an immediate check for systems failure, using the *faith* total of the

miracle as the total on the System Failures Table.

Cyberharmony

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15
Range: touch
Duration: na
Cyber Rating: +1 if it works (if it fails, see below)
Species: Race
Effect: As a prayer: terminate cyberpsychotic episode. As a ritual: reduce cyber value.

If used as a prayer, *cyberharmony* will terminate a cyberpsychotic episode if the *faith* total beats the target's cyber value.

Cyberharmony can be performed as a series of rituals, two-hours long, three times a day, for a week. The *focus* and *faith* totals are not generated until the final ritual is completed. Characters who are going to aid the *focus* character with their *faith* ratings must participate in all 21 rituals.

If the miracle is successful, the cyber rating of an implant selected by the *focus* character can be reduced by the success levels of the miracle, down to a minimum of +1.

However, if the miracle fails, the *focus* character and target must check for spiritual damage as if they were of different faiths. The cyber value of both characters is increased by any shock damage they take as a result (see *Torg Rulebook*, page 124).

Grid Wisdom

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 15
Difficulty: 12
Range: touch
Duration: one hour
Cyber Rating: +4
Species: Race
Effect: adds success levels of ritual to cyberdeck operation skill

Grid Wisdom is a ritual. The miracle enhances the target character's insight into computer architectures and operation. The character's adds in *cyberdeck operation* are increased by the success level of the miracle. If the target has no adds in the skill, the adds

from the miracle still apply and allow skilled use of the cyberdeck.

Killmachine

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 17
Range: voice
Duration: *faith* total result points in rounds
Cyber Rating: +5
Species: Demon
Effect: animates a machine which attacks living beings

This miracle allows the *focus* character to animate a single machine within the sound of her voice. She may direct the machine to attack any character it can "see," that is, anyone in a line-of sight with the machine.

The miracle does not affect cyberware implants, but can animate weapons or other devices held by a character.

The machine will have all its usual attributes, but if it lacks a physical attribute, then it uses the *faith* total of the miracle for that attribute. Machines that can move normally, such as vehicles, have their full speed value. Immobile devices can skitter along at a speed value of eight.

The gamemaster must decide what, if any, special attacks or damage bonuses a machine might get. A car would receive major damage adds if it could hit someone at full tilt. A lawn mower would get a *Strength* +3 or so for its blades, and even a weed-whacker would be good for a *Strength* +1. And as for animated chain saws...brrrr.

Televisions, engines, ovens, etc. can explode for damage of *Strength* +4 affecting an area with a radius of a 25 meters. Of course, they can only do this trick once.

Gun barrels can explode, doing their damage value +3 to the firer, refuse to fire at any target the *focus* character specifies.

If the miracle's success is *superior* then the device can use parts of itself as limbs, if desired, to pull victims into contact with a damaging component. This can make even the kitchen sink a nasty opponent, as it hauls victims headfirst into the blades of the dispose-all, or a stream of scalding water.



Machine Empathy

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 14
Range: touch
Duration: result points of miracle

in rounds

Cyber Rating: +5
Species: Neutral
Effect: gives understanding of machine

The miracle grants the *focus* character a deeper understanding of the machine examined. The character receives a +1 bonus modifier for every success level of the miracle. Thus, a *good* success grants a +3 bonus modifier. This bonus modifier may be applied when operating or repairing the machine.

Mechanization

Spiritual Rating: 16
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: *Spirit* or *faith* +6

Range: touch
Duration: five minutes
Cyber Rating: +5
Species: Demon
Effect: turns victim into a mechanical slave

Mechanization transforms the cursed character into a gleaming, metal robotic version of himself. His eyes become glowing lights, his skin smooth, chromed metal, his ears are radio receivers, and a Nervejack appears in the middle of his forehead.

He also becomes a mindless slave of the *focus* character. The *mechanized* character's attributes and skills remain the same, but *Strength* and *Toughness* are increased by +1 for every success level attained by the *faith* total of the miracle. Thus, a *good* success adds +3 to the two attributes.

The *focus* character must be able to speak to the mechanized slave in order to give him instructions. However, this can be done by radio instead of by audible voice.

The *mechanized* character is com-

pletely subordinate to his master for the duration of the miracle, and will hurt his friends and even himself if so commanded by the *focus* character.

If the *focus* character has a SlaveChip available and installs it in the *mechanized* character via the Nervejack in his forehead, the character does *not* transform back into his original form after five minutes, but remains *mechanized*. Until the SlaveChip is removed, the transformation remains in effect, though the character is now under the normal constraints of the chip and not the absolute obedience enforced by the miracle. If the *focus* character uses a SlaveChip on his victim, the cyber rating lasts until the SlaveChip is removed and the character returned to normal.

RefreshCy

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 12
Range: 10 meters
Duration: na



Cyber Rating: +1 for one hour

Species: Neutral

Effect: restores technomagical implant that failed due to mental damage

Similar to the Core Earth miracle (page 131, *Torg Rulebook*). However, *refreshCy* can only restore the powers of technomagical implants, not natural magical or arcane skills.

Souldeck

Spiritual Rating: 14

Community Rating: 12

Difficulty: 16

Range: touch

Duration: performance

Cyber Rating: +5

Species: Neutral

Effect: allows target to become a living cyberdeck

The target of the miracle is able to project her consciousness into a computer network as if using a cyberdeck. This works in the Tharkoldu Grid, the GodNet, or more primitive systems

such as Nippon Tech's 64-bit mainframes or even the primitive junk to be found in Core Earth. When accessing computer systems based on a *Tech* value lower than 26, the target's *cyberdeck operation* skill receives a +3 modifier.

Souldeck is a ritual. After 30 minutes to invoke the miracle, if it is successful, the ritual must continue for the duration of the target's run. If the ritual is interrupted for any reason, the target must immediately jack out. If the jacking out process is unsuccessful, the target's consciousness is lost in the computer network. The meat body suffers a wound for each hour the consciousness is lost, dying at the end of shortly after it receives a mortal wound.

Jacking out of the Grid is described in Chapter Eleven. If this miracle has been used to enter the GodNet, the character dies if any of her *cyberdeck operation* checks fail while she is trying to move out of the GodNet (see page 40, *The GodNet* supplement).

The souldecker divides the success

levels of the miracle as she wishes between a Response Rating and Stealth Rating. Response must be at least a +1. Thus, on an *average* success, the target could take Response+1 and Stealth+1, or a +2 in Response and a +0 in Stealth.

The souldecker's "processor rating" is equal to the power push value of the miracle's *faith* total. The target may "run" the equivalent of generic attack, defense, scan, shroud, evasion, or trace programs in any combination, up to the total "processor rating." For example, a souldecker with a "processor rating" of 5 could run attack+3, defense+1, and scan+1, or any other combination of program adds totalling 5 or less. The target may change these point allocations in any round, at a rate equal to her Response value. A character with Response +2 could change the allocation of 2 points of her "processor rating" in a round.

The miracle does not allow files to be downloaded from or uploaded to invaded systems. The souldecker can perform other system manipulations not involving copying or stealing files.



Chapter Eight

Characters and Creatures



This section contains descriptions and statistics for the characters who appeared in Chapter Three, "The Realm." It also describes some of the creatures of Tharkold.

The chapter is arranged in alphabetical order. Unlike a telephone book, the human characters are listed first-name first. You find the description of Mark Dyer under "Mark Dyer," not under "Dyer, Mark." Techno-demons, alphas, demon lords and other types of Tharkoldu are all described in the "Tharkoldu" entry. Individual Tharkoldu, such as Sterret, have their own entries.

Abbas Sombol

Prior to the invasion of Doctor Mobius, Abbas Sombol worked as an obscure lab technician in a pharmaceutical plant 25 kilometers south of Cairo. Abbas had studied electrical engineering at the University of Cairo, but all the members of his study group were expelled for a cheating scandal. Abbas had never cheated, and was sure the culprit was an exchange student named Sirhan Odemir. When the Nile Empire reality washed over the land, Abbas was put to work in the experiment pharmaceuticals division. In charge of the laboratory was Dr. Sirhan Odemir; Abbas knew the title of "Doctor" was a lie.

Abbas discovered they were developing a mind control drug. He decided to sabotage the experiment, a decision which turned Abbas into a Storm Knight. Working feverishly on weird science, Abbas soon transformed to the Nile reality, which suited him just fine. Abbas succeeded in al-

tering the formula of the drug so that it mind controlled only those of evil inclination. Dr. Mobius was not amused.

Sirhan Odemir fled to Los Angeles, ostensibly to work for Forever Films. Abbas followed, adopting the costumed identity of Street Hawk. While investigating Forever Films, he met Mark Dyer. The two teamed to capture Dr. Odemir before his plan to develop hypnotic-suggestive film could be realized.

Abbas and Mark founded Reality Solutions Ltd., an "investigative, trouble-shooting agency aimed at solving problems, no matter what reality they are from." They had a number of brushes with Kanawa-sponsored operations. Yoshiko Nakata hired Abbas and Mark to investigate the murders of Ichi couriers, and Abbas was the first to encounter a Tharkoldu. When their attempts to remove Tharkoldu stela failed, Abbas developed the plan that, with Yoshiko Nakata's help, allowed the heroes to neutralize the Apocularum. Tharkold was here, but for at least a while, it would be unable to expand.

Abbas would be very interested in sharing information with other Storm Knights. He is particularly keen to hear of news from the Nile Empire. Storm Knights can either seek Abbas out (Reality Solutions Ltd. is listed in the Yellow Pages), or they might just run across him in his Street Hawk identity after dark. Abbas might help the Storm Knights, but will not help aid them in any activity that puts Mark Dyer at risk without consulting Mark first. He normally extends the same loyalty to Kreya Keena-Three, but this loyalty can be superseded by dire circumstances.



Abbas Sombol**DEXTERITY 10**

Acrobatics 16, dodge 14, fire combat 11, long jumping 13, maneuver 14, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 13, stealth 14, swimming 12, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 11 (10)

Climbing 14, lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 15 (11)**PERCEPTION 10**

Evidence analysis 17, find 16, first aid 12, land vehicles 11, language 13, tracking 13, trick 13

MIND 8

Science 12, survival 12, test 12, willpower 13, weird science 15

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 10

SPIRIT 10 (9)

Faith (Islam) 16, intimidation 15, reality 15

Inclination: Good

Possibilities: 23

Powers: *super attribute*, twice. The first was added to his *Strength* and *Toughness*, the second to his *Spirit* and *Toughness*. The attributes in parentheses are his attributes without the addition of *super attribute*. Abbas has a

power setback which affects both of his super attribute powers. If he becomes *heavily wounded*, he loses his powers until healed to *wounded* or better. *First aid* will not give Abbas back his powers.

Equipment: His Street Hawk costume is effective as leather armor, giving him TOU+2, for an armor value of 17.

Aras-benHav

Aras-benHav is a great alpha Tharkoldu. Unlike most Tharkoldu, Aras-benHav enjoys the idea of gender, and now refers to itself as male. He takes a great deal of pride in his experimentation with the cutting edge of Tharkoldu art, the art of pain. Aras-benHav considers many of his Tharkoldu brethren to be crude boors who have little desire to understand the finer nuances of pain. Aras-benHav believes that "physical pain is only appropriate as a tool to gain access to more delicate mental anguish and rap-turous spiritual torment."

Aras-benHav runs Spoony Singh's Hollywood Wax Museum. He has

taken two alphas and nine technodemons with him to operate the museum. The rest of his pride lives in the Ichi Entertainment building.

Aras-benHav would love to add Storm Knights to his collection of wax figures. Adding a figure consists of removing the life force from the victim and placing it in the mystical wax, and then controlling the resulting mannequin. Aras-benHav has developed two magical processes to perform this action. The processes are like spells, except they are bound to the identity of the demon. He cannot teach them to anyone else, and there is no way for another person to learn this process, although spells that replicate the process could be designed.

The first part of the process is *meld to wax* — at the end of a forty-minute ritual, Aras-benHav generates an *apportation magic* total. Compare the total to the victim's greatest physical attribute. Read the result points on the Power Push column of the General and Push Results Table. The process has a result modifier of +7. If the final result points are equal to or greater than the *Spirit* or *faith* of the victim, the victim's life force is trapped in the mystic wax.

Example: Aras-benHav completes the ritual on a poor customer whose greatest physical attribute is his *Dexterity* of 9, and who has a *faith* of 10. The demon generates a total of 21, yielding 12 result points. On the Power Push column, that is worth +5. The final result points are 12 (5 plus the result modifier of 7). 12 is greater than the victim's *faith* of 10, so his life force is transferred into a wax figure.

Aras-benHav sustains a few of the soulless bodies, but most are given as gifts to other Tharkoldu.

Control wax golem is Aras-benHav's conjuration process. Generate a *conjuration magic* total, adding a +9 bonus modifier. Compare the total to the victim's (now the wax golem's) *willpower*. The result points are the value of time for which the victim is controlled, i.e. 18 result points means the victim is controlled for an hour.

Aras-benHav**DEXTERITY 15**

Dodge 19, energy weapons 19, fire



combat 18, unarmed combat 20, melee weapons 19, missile weapons 19, stealth 18, unarmed combat 20

STRENGTH 18

Lifting 21

TOUGHNESS 19(25)

PERCEPTION 16

Alteration magic 21, divination magic 20, find 18, first aid 17, land vehicles 18, tracking 20, trick 22

MIND 17

Apportation magic 23, artist (Tharkoldu pain aesthetic) 21, conjuration magic 25, medicine 19, test 20, willpower 23

CHARISMA 15

Charm 18, persuasion 18, taunt 19

SPIRIT 17

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 23, pain weapon 19, intimidation 20

Skill Notes: Aras-benHav has the arcane knowledges of *air* +2, *death* +2, *darkness* +5, *earthly* +3, *elemental* +4, *entity* +5, *fire* +3, *folk* +5, *inanimate forces* +5, *living forces* +7, *metal* +3, *plant* +2, and *water* +3. He has *meld to wax* (apportation) and *control wax golem* (conjuration) processes.

Possibilities: Six per Storm Knight, 15 minimum

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/20; alpha sense, value *Perception* total; demon luck 18; status armor +1; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/25; wings, speed value 10

Equipment: cyberware: Nanocord, interdermal plate, armor value TOU+6/25; both talons (enhance normal talons to damage value STR+5/23); cyberwings, +3 to push for flight and *lifting* while flying (cyber value 3); backlash buffer 2 (*Mind* or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber, 3-slot chipholder. Chips (and effective values): cybertech +2 (19), evidence analysis +2 (18), occulttech +3 (20). Cyber value 15.

Great alphas carry pain weapons, such as a pain baton (*pain weapon* +3/ damage value 23) or pain staff (*pain weapon* +5/ damage value 25)

Bloater

A bloater is a crawling, five-limbed creature with a span of roughly 70 centimeters, and weighing about 20

kilograms. The bloater's exoskeleton contains hundreds of chroma-spots, areas which change color to match the surrounding environment, making the creature extremely difficult to spot.

A bloater moves on four triple-jointed limbs, each of which ends in a serrated claw. A shorter, many-segmented stinger is located to the left-rear of the bloater. It climbs or scuttles with alarming speed (100 meters per round when *running*, 40 meters per round when *climbing*), although it cannot maintain these speeds for more than five rounds. After that, it slows to 60 meters per round *running*/ 25 meters *climbing*. It can also make bounding leaps of up to 25 meters.

Bloaters prefer to attack their victims by dropping down upon them, or leaping on top of them. A bloater attaches itself with its claws, making a Many-On-One attack with all four appendages. If the bloater scores a "K," "O," or *wound* result, it has attached itself to its victim. A Storm Knight may spend a Possibility to remove the damage, but the bloater will still be attached. Removing the bloater requires removing all four attached claws.

Once the bloater grasps its victim, it injects its target with poison by making an *unarmed combat* attack with its stinger. If the victim suffers any damage as a result of this attack, she has been injected with poison.

Once the poison has been introduced into the target's system, the bloater leaps clear, avoiding damage from its target's death throes. The bloater then follows the victim until she dies. A bloater will then eat what it can of its kill.

A bloater produces three doses of poison a day. Once it injects a victim, it will use any remaining poison only for self-defense. The poison kills portions of the victim's body; spots of flesh turn bluish-pale, an eye will dry up and sink back into the skull. As long as the poison is active, the character cannot heal the damage caused by the bloater poison; the damaged areas are actually dead flesh. Spells or miracles that resurrect or regenerate tissue would help in the short term.

The poison damages its victim on the round following its injection, and then once every six rounds until the

victim dies or overcomes the poison. Overcoming the poison requires a *Toughness* or a *medicine* total of 25.

Bloater

DEXTERITY 12

Acrobatics 16, dodge 14, long jumping 18, maneuver 14, stealth 20, swimming 12, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 12

Climbing 19, lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 12

Find 16, tracking 13, trick 13

MIND 8

Test 15, willpower 20

CHARISMA 8

Taunt (18)

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation (15)

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds, claws, damage value STR+3/15, stinger, damage value STR+6/18

Possibility Potential: some (35)

Natural Tools: claws, stinger, poison, damage value 17

Bochdog

Bochdogs are ferocious pack animals that stand nearly 1.6 meters at the shoulder and weigh nearly 450 kilograms. Most have black-grey fur, although a few sport streaks of red or brown. When in combat, their fur sparkles.

They hunt in packs made up of four to 12 animals each, all mated pairs. One pair always remains at the lair of the bochdogs to guard/nurture any pups in the pack, for pups are never taken hunting.

Bochdogs use *alteration magic/inanimate forces*, although the use is instinctive more than learned. Bochdogs cannot be taught spells. The magic gives them a high armor value (seen as the sparkling fur), and a form of lighting bolt attack. To use the lightning bolt, a male and a female bochdog must get their quarry in between them. The pair then make yipping noises which trigger the bolt. The dogs generate an *alteration magic* total to hit their target, using the Many-On-One table.

A pair of bochdogs can also generate a keening howl. This attack is a Many-On-One for the two dogs, generating an *alteration magic* total. The howl interferes with the workings of



electronics or cyberware. If the howl overcomes the *willpower* of the target, his electronics or cyberware stop working. Once the electronics are dead, they will remain so for as long as the dogs keep howling. Giving the items to another character has no effect.

If one of a pair of mated bochdogs is killed, the other will flee, but may return later to hunt down the killer of its mate. If a bochdog takes two or more wounds in an attack from a single character, it flops down and exposes its throat to that character. If the character does not kill the bochdog, neither it nor its mate will attack the character or the party the character is with again.

Bochdog

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, long jumping 10, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 19

Lifting 22

TOUGHNESS 18 (27)

PERCEPTION 5

Alteration magic 18, find 12, tracking 12, trick 7 (12)

MIND 4

Test (10)

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 6

Intimidation 15

Additional Skills: three at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/21; lightning damage value 22, range 60 meters (the bochdog pair must be within 60 meters of each other to cast); inanimate forces armor, value TOU+9/27

Cyberpapal Nuncio Eschlimann

Jean Malraux I assigned Claude Eschlimann to Los Angeles more to remove a rising star from the intrigues of Avignon than to place a reliable emissary in a hostile land. If Eschlimann failed against Kanawa-controlled interests in America, he was grist for the Holy Inquisition. If he succeeded, the damage done to Kanawa would offset any personal gains made by Eschlimann.

But Nuncio Eschlimann knew of Malraux's political calculus. The young cleric was determined to stay on the positive side of the ledger by discomfiting Nippon and get himself reassigned to Avignon as quickly as possible.

Strikingly handsome, with equally impressive oratory skills, Eschlimann expected to easily sway the heathen Los Angelenos. The locals, egged on by Kanawa-influenced media, had different ideas. Talk radio lines and newspaper columns filled with hostile reactions to the Cyberpapal presence.

The hostility quickly turned to mockery with the arrival of that "stunted faery-thing" from Aysle. Eschlimann saw his political career crumbling to ashes, and began studying the Malraux bible to learn the appropriate responses to the inevitable Inquisition questions.

But then Eschlimann discovered that the more criticism he suffered from the locals, the stronger his faith grew. Eschlimann became certain that there was a higher purpose behind his coming to Los Angeles. Tharkold's invasion made that purpose clear: to defend the City of Angels from the clutches of demons.

Eschlimann is firmly committed to defeating the demons. His fervent dispatches to Malraux have not convinced the Cyberpope of this, but bishops and Cardinals are beginning to take notice of the struggle. Some covert aid has been sent to the Cyberpapal legate. Eschlimann sponsors raids against the gangslaves, and he himself preaches to the residents of neighborhoods ravaged by Tharkoldu.

Eschlimann's commitment extends to helping the heathen, including those Storm Knights who are not known enemies of the Cyberpapacy. He offers shelter against the Tharkoldu, but he and his cyberpriests and cybernuns are too hard-pressed themselves to offer material aid beyond food and a bed, although spiritual protection is also offered. Eschlimann does try to convert non-believers to the Cyberpapal faith, stressing the demonic nature of Tharkoldu as proof of many of the Malraux bible's claims: the demonic nature of magic, the imminence of the Apocalypse, the power of Malraux's faith as the only true path

for combatting this evil. Eschlimann is disappointed when characters refuse to convert, but not daunted. He knows that in time they shall see the light.

Cyberpapal Nuncio Eschlimann

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 14, energy weapons 13, fire combat 12, melee weapons 12, stealth 14, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9 (16)

PERCEPTION 11

Cyberdeck operation 16, evidence analysis 16, find 14, first aid 13, land vehicles 12, language 15, scholar 13 (magic, called "demonic lore" to cyberpapal scholars), tracking 13, trick 14

MIND 12

Test 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 13

Charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 16

SPIRIT 17 (13 without blessing vow)

Faith (Cyberpapacy) 21, focus 20, intimidation 19, reality 19

Possibilities: 26

Equipment: Bishop's prayer II cyberdeck (response +4, *stealth* +3, processor 5, storage 10); GWI GodLight, damage value 24, ammo 50, range 3-10/25/40; Cyberware: Neuracal; EpihpaNeur; interdermal plate (head and body), value TOU+7/16; Trigon integral weapons unit, CSI SmartGun and CSIEyeKill MK.IV. The SmartGun and the EyeKill together give an *energy weapons* bonus modifier of +3; slicers, damage value STR+2/11. Cyber value 12.

Programs: *Onslaught* 4 (3), *scramble* 3 (3), *lock* 1 (2), *armor* 4 (3), *scan* 2 (2), *scan* 3 (3), *evade* 2 (2), *evade* 3 (3), *manipulate* 2 (2), *search* 2 (2), *copy* 2 (2), *store* 1 (1), *rebuild* 2 (3), *rebuild* 3 (4). When in the Grid Eschlimann, usually carries the italicized programs, although the others are available to him.

Darkfang

Darkfangs are shadowy creatures that appear at dusk and disappear a few minutes after dawn. They are living beings made of magical darkness, and prey on both flesh and spirit. Darkfangs prefer to attack sentient creatures, as the monsters apparently



get psychic nourishment from the pain and misery they cause, and thinking victims taste best.

Darkfangs can assume at least two different shapes. In their travel-shape, they resemble jet-black manta rays, only these manta are three meters long. In their attack shape, they look like a shark-toothed, lion-clawed ogre. When in manta-shape, darkfangs can fly. When in ogre-shape, they are limited to movement along the ground.

Darkfangs do not attack characters while in travel-shape, but they have been known to fly over a victim, transform while dropping atop him, and then attack. Changing from travel-to attack-shape is a simple action.

Darkfangs have several methods of attack. They can use their fangs and claws to rend their victims — these ignore normal or enchanted armor, save armor protected by *light* spells.

They may also use their *alteration magic* skill to alter shadows or other areas of darkness and cause them to bind and hold their victims. If a darkfang's *alteration magic* total equals or exceeds its victim's *willpower*, the victim is held fast in broad tethers of darkness. The tethers have a *Toughness* of 12, and must suffer three wounds before they will release their victims. The victim may struggle, generating a *Strength* total against the tether to damage it. The tethers will last for an hour if not broken.

Darkfangs may also conjure illusory members of their species from the darkness. None of the illusion's attributes or values may exceed that of a real darkfang, nor can they exceed the *conjunction magic* total that generated them. The illusions last an hour or until a victim generates a *willpower* or *Mind* total of 15.

If a darkfang makes a successful *unarmed combat* attack against a victim, it can inject the target with darkthought *venom*. The round following the injection, the venom does damage value 26 against the *faith* or *Spirit* of the victim. Read the result on the *intimidation* column of the Interaction Results Table. If the victim is *unskilled*, she loses all of her *faith* and *focus* adds (if any), in addition to being *unskilled*. If the victim is *stymied*, she experiences nightmare visions which prevent her from taking any action

until she generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total equal to greater than the effect value of the venom. If she is *setback* or worse, evil visions drive her to attack her allies. She continues to *attack* unless she generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total against the venom.

In all cases, the effects of darkthought venom end after one minute. Darkfangs have from three to five doses of darkthought venom apiece.

Darkfangs generate *divination magic* totals to track their victims. While similar to tracking, darkfangs are rarely affected by bad weather or other environmental factors that might hinder tracking.

Darkfangs have nightshroud armor. This armor works against all attack forms, including energy weapons. Nightshroud armor is vulnerable to magical attack when *light* spells are used.

Darkfangs are considered enemies to any religion which contain evil spirits in the mythos. The faithful may attempt *ward enemy* against darkfangs.

Darkfangs may travel alone, or in groups as large as eight. Possibility-rated darkfangs may know spells that have *death*, *darkness*, *living forces* or any kindred as their arcane knowledge.

Darkfang

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, flight 10, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 9, stealth 25

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 11 (26)

PERCEPTION 11

Alteration magic 18, divination magic 19, trick 15 (20)

MIND 13

Conjunction magic 19, test 15 (20), willpower 20

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 6

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 15

Additional Skills: one at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Natural Tools: shadowfangs, damage value STR+4/18; claws, damage value STR+3/17 — shadowfangs and claws are insubstantial until they contact flesh; ignore any armor adds the victim has, unless the armor is made of magical light; darkthought venom (ef-

fect value 26). The effects of the venom last for one minute (six rounds) or until dispelled nightshroud armor, value TOU+15/26; wings, speed value 12.

Direwing

A direwing is a flying monstrosity that is actually made up of ten eel-like creatures. The individual creatures are known as *tubucules*. Each creature starts its life identical to every other tubucule. They each retain their mouths and digestive tracts after joining to form the direwing, but organ specialization starts soon after joining. For example only three of the tubucules accelerate the development of the optic nerves to form eyes.

The tubucules join to form a knotted central mass. The central mass is further joined by veins, arteries, organ nodules and sensory organs that developed as the tubucules specialized to form the direwing. The mouths of all ten tubucules dangle below the central mass, while five tails emerge from the left dorsal and five tails from the right. Membranes are grown to form wings, and the hideous amalgam can fly at seemingly impossible speeds.

A direwing can make up to ten separate attacks against as many as four different victims in a round without being penalized for a One-on-Many attack. When a direwing attacks a victim with more than one bite, it does receive a Many-On-One bonus.

Each wound a direwing receives kills one tubucule. Four wounds kill four tubucules, and the direwing "dies" and cannot take any more action as a single entity. With a wet popping and cracking, the central knot unravels and falls apart, but the remaining tubucules are still alive. If four or more remain alive, they sporespray any dead tubucules. Sporespray carries DNA-coded instructions which reconstruct the dead tubucules. One tubucule can be revived each round. The tubucules take no action until seven tubucules are alive. They then reform the direwing. A tubucule may participate in a sporespray only once per day. A direwing could therefore sporespray at most twice in a day, and once is far more likely.



If three or fewer tubucles remain alive, they attempt to latch onto any freshly killed character. If no dead character exists, they coil and jump (up to 15 meters) at any live character, striking with their attaching bite. Their hope is to kill the character and attach themselves to the corpse for eleven days while incubating nine new tubucles. On the twelfth day a new direwing is formed.

Direwing

DEXTERITY 15

Dodge 17, flight 16, maneuver 18, unarmed combat 18

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 18

PERCEPTION 7

Find 14, trick 8 (12)

MIND 6

Test (20), willpower 20

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (15)

SPIRIT 4

Intimidation 10

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (60)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+3/15, ten bites. Victim's *Strength* total must exceed direwing *Strength* to remove bite. If four or more tubucles live after combat, they sporespray any dead tubucles. The sporespray restores one tubucle per round. Wings, speed value 14.

Ellerby Quaff

Ellerby Quaff spent over a century of his 324 years as a slave in House Vareth, where his training as a metallurgist made him useful. His natural skills as a humorous storyteller also made him popular, and he was made a jester in the court of Vareth. There he kept his magical abilities hidden as best as he could.

While amusing the dwarves of Vareth, he listened and learned of Vareth plans. Ellerby became a vital conduit of information to the dwarves resisting Vareth slavery. While he affably denies it, he helped design the *brittle walls* spell. This simple enchantment freed hundreds upon hundreds of dwarves during the Night of Tunnels.

Ellerby escaped when Dwyvan Vareth finally began to suspect his

favorite jester of treachery. Quaff made his way to Earth, where other dwarven refugees recommended him to Tolwyn of House Tancred. Quaff's quick wit, keen ears and prudent tongue soon landed him in diplomatic service. His mission in Los Angeles changed radically after the Tharkold invasion.

Ellerby is charged with the safety of Ayslish citizens in Los Angeles. He offers them refuge, and urges them to leave the realm as soon as possible. On any Tuesday when there are three or more Ayslish nationals wishing to leave Los Angeles, Ellerby orders an escort for them out of the city. The escort consists of two or more LAPD members and a half a dozen of Ellerby's staff.

Ellerby's hatred for slavery makes him a sympathetic ear for Storm Knights who oppose the Tharkoldu. He will sell non-enchanted Ayslish equipment for a reasonable fee (two-thirds normal price). He may even sell for less if convinced of the need. He uses his healing miracle on any who need and want it, and he will offer refuge in the Ayslish embassy to any Ayslish character who needs it. While he will not shelter Storm Knights from other cosms, he often hears of other "safe houses" which might take them in.

Quaff also sponsors missions against the Tharkoldu. His main objective is the freeing of slaves, so cybersurgery facilities (which install slavechips) are a primary target. He also encourages raids on gangs that prey upon the residents of the city. He offers lump sum payments from 2,500 trades (for scouting of a gang affiliated with Tharkoldu), to 10,000 trades for more difficult work (raiding a cybersurgery hospital, destroying the surgical facilities and returning with at least 100 slavechips), up to 50,000 trades for spectacularly difficult and dangerous work (obtaining seven vital pieces of the Apocularum now being repaired in two or three different areas within the demon-infested Ichi Entertainment building).

Ellerby Quaff

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 12, dodge 12 (13), fire combat 11, melee weapons 13 (15), missile weapons 13, stealth 14, un-

armed combat 14.

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 13, lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 11

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 17, evidence analysis 12, find 12, first aid 12 (13), language 14, scholar (mineralogy) 14, trick 13

MIND 12

Apportation magic 18, conjuration magic 17, science (metallurgy) 16, survival 14, test 16, willpower 15

CHARISMA 9

Charm 15 (16), persuasion 15 (16)

SPIRIT 10

Honor 15, faith (Minthod, major god of balance) 13 (15), intimidation 15, reality 15

Possibilities: 20

Arcane Knowledges: darkness +3, earth +6, elemental +5, enchanted +3, entity +4, fire +4, folk +6, inanimate forces +6, life +4, light +3, living forces +2, magic +4, metal +6, true knowledge +4. **Theory Knowledges:** cast time +3, control +5, duration +3, range +2, speed +2, state +3

Spells: Ellerby has displayed knowledge of the following spells: *altered fireball (improved)*, *brittle walls*, *bullet*, *cast lasher*, *create fear*, *detect folk evil*, *dispel magic*, *dust to water*, *enchant armor*, *enchant bow*, *flickering fire shield*, *folk repelspell*, *fool's gold*, *hide from magic*, *imprisonment*, *keen blade*, *light writing*, *multiple images*, *mystic shield*, *open lock*, *pathfinder*, *persuasion*, *precious metal plate*, *ritual of perception preparation*, *sense undead*, *silence*, *snail wit*, *spell snatcher*, *stealth walk*, *telepathy*.

Equipment: Kalin's chain mail (enchanted), value TOU+7/16; small shield (enchanted), value +6 to defensive skill, defensive melee value 19, Toughness 19; axe metallica (enchanted), a magical battleaxe forged from the scales of a Draconis Metallica, damage value STR+8/17, +3 bonus modifier against any target armored in +5 bonus modifier metal; jester's staff (enchanted), +5 bonus to charm attempts

Honor Abilities: healing miracle, *Inspiration* to one other character once per act. +1 bonus modifier to *melee weapon* damage. All skill values in parentheses include Ellerby's *honor* bonus.



Flenser

Flensers were named by those who found their first victims. All that remains after a flenser attack is the victim's skin, nails, teeth and hair. The skin is largely whole, with several small slits along the side of the torso. The hair and nails stay attached to the skin, the teeth found scattered near the facial skin.

In their original form, flensers are spindly limbed humanoids with sleek, undulating torsos and triangular heads. Their skin is milky white, veined with purple and amber. Their hands end in amazingly sharp needle-claws. Their eyes are sunk into their head, dull black pits that belie their intelligence. Flensers are almost never seen in their original form. They take the forms and identities of their victims.

When a flenser kills a victim, nanotech machines fire into action, accelerated by alteration magic. The flenser's old body is consumed as fuel, while the liquid-matrixed intelligence of the flenser injects itself into the new victim. The victim's DNA is mapped as everything but the skin, nails, hair and teeth are altered and joined to the intelligence of the flenser.

The liquid mix oozes out of the small slits nanomachines make in the victim's skin. The ooze first travels the entire surface of the victim's skin, scanning for distinguishing marks or decoration not part of the victim's genetic code. This ooze can then recreate itself in the victim's likeness, or in the likeness of any previous victim the flenser has assimilated.

Assimilating a victim takes 100 minutes. Converting from one assimilated form to another requires one round and an *alteration magic* total of 20. A flenser can have a maximum of between 60 and 150 forms assimilated. No research has yet suggested a reason for the differences in these maximums, which varies from flenser to flenser. Once a flenser reaches its maximum number of forms, it must generate an *alteration magic* total of 18 to erase one of the forms. If it fails, the flenser spontaneously and uncontrollably mutates from one form to another, often combining features from several forms.

When a flenser assimilates a form,

it gains skills and memories from the victim. For skill assimilation, the flenser generates an *alteration magic* total; this total is the maximum value for any assimilated skill. If the victim's skill value was less than this total, use the victim's skill value. To absorb the victim's memories the flenser generates a *divination magic* total against the victim's *willpower* or *faith*, whichever is greater. Record the general success, i.e. *Good*, that the flenser receives. This is the level of success a character's *trick* or *charm* attempt needs to reveal a noticeable flaw in the flenser's copy of the victim's memory. This assumes the *tricking* or *charming* character knows an intimate detail about the victim; well-known bits of background are not enough to make the creature slip up.

Flensers are magical, nanotechnological creatures. Flensers have always worked alone. They are categorized as *entities* in the Ayslish division of Kindred. They are considered the enemy by any religion that has the concept of evil spirits. *Ward enemy* works against flensers. They require a *Magical* axiom of 10 and a *Technological* axiom of 26 to function without contradiction. The flenser is a technohorror created by the Tharkoldu as a weapon against the Race. The Tharkoldu lost control of their flensers shortly after they were placed in the field, and now the creatures hunt human and demon with equal glee.

Flenser

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 18, maneuver 18, unarmed combat 20

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 13

Alteration magic 22, divination magic 22, find 16, trick 18 (25)

MIND 11

Survival 17, test 15(20), willpower 20

CHARISMA 10

Taunt (15)

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 23, intimidation 12

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (9)

Natural Tools: needle claws, damage value STR+8/19

Forcefoot

A forcefoot is a 2.7 meter tall humanoid with a grey hide described by Los Angelenos as "three inches of steel wool." Their heads have no mouths; they speak through small membrane-covered cavities in their skulls. Forcefoots are primitive creatures attracted to large technological installations, such as factories or laboratories. They are usually solitary, although mated pairs or family groups have been reported.

A forcefoot exists by directly ingesting inanimate forces, which the creature then converts into the living forces that keep it alive. A forcefoot seen feeding near a generator or power cable sparkles and glows as the inanimate forces are magically routed, first to light, then to living forces.

Forcefoots are not violent by nature, but they have been hunted ruthlessly by Tharkoldu, and only slightly less vehemently by the Race, for their interference in important technological facilities. Surviving forcefoots aggressively defend themselves, although they can be reasoned with by someone who takes the time to understand their ways of communication. Neither the Race nor the Tharkoldu have ever bothered. Forcefoot language is considered an alien language, difficulty 22 to understand.

Forcefoots have the following magical abilities that help them survive:

Forcefoot: The creature stomps its foot and generates an *alteration magic* total. Compare the total to the *willpower* of any character within 25 meters. Read the result points as damage. This volume-effect attack ignores all forms of armor which do not explicitly protect the wearer from magical attacks. The damage is mental damage, although targets feel the sensation of being squashed.

Sensor screen: The forcefoot generates an *alteration magic* total, with a +6 bonus modifier. The total is the difficulty of seeing, sensing or otherwise detecting the forcefoot. The sensor screen is effective against any detection which uses (or senses) *light* or any inanimate force. This includes eyesight, thermal sight, electronic eyes, radar, but would not include magical detection aimed at living forces or en-



chanted beings. This ability lasts as long as the forcefoot wishes, but it can only generate a total once per hour. A forcefoot who generates a poor total senses her vulnerability and attempts to go into hiding.

Soundbristles: The forcefoot generates an *alteration magic* total. A total of 10 or greater indicates success. The forcefoot's skin vibrates and hums, creating a sonic force field that increases the forcefoot's armor value by +9. This ability cannot be used when the forcefoot is using the sensorscreen. Soundbristles last as long as the forcefoot wishes. She can attempt soundbristles every round, but that counts as her action.

System Shut-Down: The forcefoot must be able to touch the equipment she wishes to shut down. The forcefoot generates an *alteration magic* total, with a +10 bonus modifier. Compare the total to the effect value of the equipment; if no effect value is given, use the *willpower* of any operator. The result points are the number of rounds the equipment will not function.

Forcefoot

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, long jumping 12, melee weapons 11, running 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 17

TOUGHNESS 14 (23)

PERCEPTION 9

Alteration magic 19, find 14, first aid, language 12, tracking 12, trick 12

MIND 8

Test 13, willpower 16

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 11

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Natural Tools: forcefoot (*alteration magic* total is damage value); sensor screen (*alteration magic* total, +6 bonus modifier); soundbristles, value TOU+9/23, *alteration magic* total 10 to cast); system shut down (*alteration magic* total, +10 bonus modifier)

Gangslaves

Sterret and his minions worked hard at recruiting street gangs to their

cause. Tharkoldu currently have nearly 11,000 gangslaves. Perhaps another 15,000 gang members are affiliated with Tharkoldu, but have not been fitted with slavechips or other cyberware. Gangslaves are the most common sign of Tharkoldu influence in Los Angeles. Residents are far more likely to be harassed or attacked by gangslaves than by techno-demons.

"CyFlyers" are gang members selected for their spiritual strength and loaded to capacity with cyberware. CyFlyers are the most trusted of all gangslaves, as techno-demons find humans fitted to the limit with cyberware more acceptable than others of the monkey-kind. There are about 1,000 CyFlyers.

"Heavy bangers" carry the big weapons for a gang. They are chosen for their size and their weapon skills. They are given minimal cyberware. Even Tharkoldu believe cyberpsychosis and plasma guns to be a dangerous combination. There are about 1,000 heavy bangers.

Standard gang members are exactly that. They are loaded with a tolerable level of cyberware. By Tharkoldu standards these slaves are lightly armed and armored. Demons would rather risk losing a few hundred slaves than create a large armed force as a potential threat in the event of a rebellion. What one monkey does, a hundred soon imitate. There are about 9,000 standard gangslaves.

CyFlyer

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 13, energy weapons 13, fire combat 14, melee weapons 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 11

TOUGHNESS 10 (19)

PERCEPTION 8

Find 11, land vehicles 9, tracking 11, trick 10 (15)

MIND 9

Test 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, taunt 11

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 12, intimidation 12

Additional Skills: three at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (30)

Equipment: Cyberware: Nanocord;

eye-package — Darksight, Killseeker (+1 bonus modifier to ranged attacks, +2 when using integral laser weapon); nanodoc; chipholder-3; interdermal plate, value TOU+5/15; exodermal armor, (+4/armor value 19); slashers, damage value STR+4/14; hand weapon mount for Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50, range 3-50/100/200. Cyber value 18.

Chipholder contains a slavechip (fused into place). Tharkoldu give CyFlyers other chips only for specific missions.

Heavy Banger

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 13, energy weapons 15, fire combat 15 (17), maneuver 13, missile weapons 12(14), unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 11 (16)

PERCEPTION 8

Find 10, land vehicles 9, tracking 10, trick 10 (12)

MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, taunt 11

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 10, intimidation 12

Additional Skills: two at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Equipment: Cyberware: Nanocord; darksight; slave chip, surgically implanted; Cyber value: 5. Kap/5 armor, value TOU+5/16; Pe-Ain chaingun, damage value 24, ammo 12, range 3-40/200/800 (the weapon fires smart ammo, +2 to the firer's *fire combat* value, noted in parentheses); three ammo belt; eight smart 30mm aerogrenades, +2 to *missile weapons*, noted in parentheses, damage value 22, range 3-10/60/10

Alternatively a heavy banger might be carrying a Thav-6/ Nu plasma gun, damage value 30, ammo 20, range 5-50/300/500, and no other weapons.

Standard Gang Member

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, energy weapons 9, fire combat 10, melee weapons 9, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9 (12)



PERCEPTION 8

Find 10, land vehicles 9, tracking 10, trick 9 (12)

MIND 9

Test 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, taunt 11

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 10, intimidation 10

Additional Skills: one at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (60)

Equipment: Cyberware: Nanocord; slavechip (surgically implanted);

One of the following: cybercam, danger scan (+3 find to hidden dangers), darksight

One of the following: cybercestus, damage value STR+2/11 or talons damage value STR+2/11

Cyber value: 5 to 7, depending on gear chosen.

9/Gam automatic pistol, damage value 15, ammo 9, range 3-10/20/30 or 11/Alph automatic pistol, damage value 16, ammo 21, range 3-10/30/50

Trusted slaves are armed with Thav-9 SMG, damage value 19, ammo 24, range 3-15/40/150 (damage value 19, ammo 24, ranges 3-15/ 40/ 150)

Kap/ 3 armor, value TOU+3/12

Ghuls

Ghuls are animated corpses created by Tharkoldu nanotechnology. The Demons developed Relictin-V, a nanomachine virus, during researches that attempted to duplicate the gospog process.

Relictin-V generates a neuroconductive sheath which suffuses muscle, bone and connective tissues, even when the subject has been dead for some time. A ghul can be generated from a fresh corpse or from a skeleton that is barely holding together. As long as the corpse retains some semblance of structure, the nanomachines can establish a colony. Dead bodies can be exposed, singly or en masse, to Relictin-V. Once infected, they will become animated as ghuls in one hour.

Ghuls are ravenous killing machines, driven by a hideous hunger for the tissues of the living.

Infection: An entire area can be infected with Relictin-V, animating all the corpses in it. Mass infection has no



effect on living beings. One dose of Relictin-V can infect two square meters.

Spraying the nanovirus in an aerosol dispersion or simply introducing it into the ground water of a corpse-rich environment, such as a graveyard or battlefield, will convert any corpses present into ghuls. Living beings exposed to mass infection are not affected.

The Free Nations require that the dead be cremated, banning other forms of funeral by law, to prevent Demons from turning their own dead against them. A Tharkoldu counter-tactic has been to kill batches of slaves, infect the corpses, and dump them into Free Nation territories.

Relictin-V has low persistence, and colonies that have not invaded dead tissue break down into harmless configurations in one hour. However, anyone who dies inside the infected area during that hour will certainly be infected.

Miracles can cure Relictin-V infection, but the difficulty number for the nanoviral disease is 25.

Relictin-V and Axioms: Relictin-V is a purely technological phenomenon

and possible only under an axiom of 26. If the user disconnects, the Relictin-V decays into harmless, inert organics and cannot activate ghuls. However, once Relictin-V activates a ghul, there is no further interaction between living and unliving. The ghul is not subject to the Everlaws and can exist, without contradiction, in any realm.

Ghul Hunger: The Relictin-V interacts with the DNA of the animated corpse in unpredictable ways. The ghuls require fresh tissues from their former species to maintain the Relictin-V nerve sheathe. When a ghul is created, roll the action die and consult the Ghul Hunger Table to see what form of tissue it requires. The creature's sole motivation is to hunt and kill its own, former species, then to gorge on still-warm tissues from the bodies.

A feeding lasts a ghul for a number of hours equal to the measure of the *Toughness* of the victim. For example, eating a human of *Toughness* 8 sustains a single ghul for 40 hours. Divide the measure equally among the diners if multiple ghuls devour a single victim. However, if a brain-eater, an eye-eater, and a flesh-eater consume a



single victim, they all get the full measure of his *Toughness*. Waste not, want not.

During this period, ghuls are, in fact, at their most dangerous, since they are quite rational and will devote their cunning to trapping more victims. They may use their interaction skills in this state, to interact with others. They still defend against interactions with their parenthetical value. Thus, a rational ghul can attempt to *trick* others with a skill of 12, but resists being *tricked* with a 25.

Once a feeding wears off, the ghul becomes an irrational, ravening monster, hunting new food in a frenzy of hunger. In this state it cannot use interaction skills, only defend against them with their parenthetical value.

If a ghul does not feed within 24 hours after entering hunger-frenzy, it will sink into a coma-like state until living prey comes within three meters, whereupon it will revive and immediately attack. Race records refer to ghuls which have apparently survived for years in this dormant state.

Ghul Hunger Table

Die Roll	Effect
1-6	Brains
7-9	Eyes
10-14	Blood
15-17	Muscle
18-19	Bones and marrow
20	<i>vril</i> *

* The ghul can only feed on *vril* energy from possibility-rated beings, but victims can be of any species. The ghul must kill its victim and then drain the possibilities from the corpse. This leaves the corpse a shrunken, wizened, mummy, about 50 centimeters long. The features of the dead victim are still recognizable.

These ghuls can also feed on *vril* batteries, which converts the battery into worthless, fused scrap.

Ghul

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 13, stealth 9, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 15, lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 1

Find (living beings) 12, tracking (living beings) 12, trick 12(25)

MIND 1

Test 15(25)

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (25)

SPIRIT 5

Intimidation 15(25)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+1/14

Equipment: Any attached cyberware continues to function and ghuls can be outfitted with cyberware when they are created.

Gospog

Gospog are not as frequently used by Tharkoldu as they are by their counterparts in Orrorsh or even the Nile Empire. This is a matter of ecology, not a matter of taste. Tharkoldu are predators who consume many enemy dead. Even where the whole corpse is not eaten, enough parts are taken as trophies or delicacies to make gospog fields inefficient. Only a strong demon leader can bend the will of so many subordinates as to allow the planting of a gospog field. The field under Anaheim Stadium is a testament to Sterret's commanding presence.

The Law of Domination affects the gospog. A problem with gospog is that they are not automatically obedient to Tharkoldu. A demon must defeat a gospog and get it to submit, just as they would any other sentient creature. Gospog from later plantings can automatically command gospog from earlier plantings. Tharkoldu dominate gospog of second plantings or later, and command them to keep lesser plantings in line. The problem with this approach is that fourth- and fifth-planting gospog are quite tough. Should the fifth-planting gospog mature, Sterret shall have to personally defeat the creature. There is no politically acceptable alternative, and not

many other Tharkoldu stand a chance against the fifth planting.

An odd side effect of the Law of Domination is, starting with the second planting, each planting shares one special ability with the planting that precedes it, and one special ability with the planting that follows it. Later-planting gospog have better versions of the ability than the planting that preceded it. The special ability descriptions are listed in boldface below.

Second Planting

Second-planting gospog are short, no more than 1.5 meters tall. They have squat, powerful legs that end in clawed feet. Their arms, while well-muscled by human standards, look puny on the gospog's barrel chest. The torso, head, and legs are covered with black, iridescent scales that protect the creature from physical attacks.

Fear Mist is often released by second-planting gospog during the first round of a conflict. This mist is successfully released on an *alteration magic* total of 13. This mist has an effect value of 10, and fills a volume 15 meters in diameter. This mist appears as a wispy-green fog. The mist has no effect on a character's ability to see.

Characters within a cloud of *fear mist* feel a strong chill. They would prefer to be anywhere else other than within sight of the gospog that generated the cloud. In order to take any action against the gospog, the victim must generate a *willpower* total equal to or greater than the mist's effect value. This *willpower* total must be generated during the same round the victim acts against the gospog. Unless a character gets more than one action in the round, such as with a *haste* or *flurry*, she must take at least two actions. The actions are subject to a One-On-Many penalty.

Once affected by the mist, a character suffers the effects even when outside the cloud.

Weaktouch is an insidious enchantment. The gospog targets one of the victim's physical attributes. Generate an *alteration magic* total for the gospog. Compare the total to the chosen attribute, and read the result on the Power Push table. Reduce the target's attribute value, and any associated skills, by the final result. This weak-



ness lasts for an hour. *Weaktouch* is particularly nasty because gosgog have a genetically encoded synonymous knowledge for "folk." Second-planting gosgog may use *weaktouch* twice on the same victim. Gosgog usually target the same attribute, which resists at its new, weakened value.

Second Planting

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 13, energy weapons 12, fire combat 12, long jumping 20, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 11

Lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 11 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Alteration magic 18, find 12, tracking 12, trick 15

MIND 8

test 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 7

Taunt (20)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 11, intimidation 12(20)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: claws, damage value STR+5/16; scales, armor value TOU+6/17; fear mist; *weaktouch*; jumping, speed value 10, maximum distance for single jump without push, 25 meters

Third Planting

Third-planting gosgog average 2.1 meters in height. Thin, gray arms and legs have layers of a spiked, green chitinous covering. The covering serves as armor, and the spikes can do damage in unarmed combat. The bulbous head has two pairs of eyes. The top pair of eyes look human, while the bottom pair are larger, and lensed like a snake's. The flesh on its hands ends before the tapering bone does. These bony tips are sharp.

A gosgog can inject a bonevirus whenever it scores damage on a target with its hands in unarmed combat. Even if the victim uses a Possibility to cancel the damage, the bonevirus will still be injected.

Generate and record an *alteration magic* total for the gosgog to determine the effect value of the affliction. *Bonevirus* is a magical nanovirus that changes the victim's skeletal structure.

Hundreds of barbed bone-spurs quickly grow, entwining themselves with the victim's muscle tissue. The bone spurs grow in place within one minute. The victim may not notice the bone-spurs, except for aching around the joints.

Once in place, the bonevirus can cause severe problems. On a *setback*, the victim must make a *willpower* roll equal to or greater than the *alteration magic* total of the gosgog. If the *willpower* action is unsuccessful, the character cannot move because of the excruciating pain. He will remain paralyzed until he makes a successful *willpower* check.

If his *willpower* total is successful, the character's next physical action (walking, arms gesturing, aiming and firing, whatever) causes a *wound* as the bone-spurs tear muscle. Note that a *setback* from interaction can cause this effect as well. The character could startle at an *intimidation*, clench up on a *taunt*.

Bonevirus fades after 24 hours. The *medicine* difficulty of healing a bonevirus is 22.

Gos-cythe is a ghostly curved blade nearly 1.5 meters long, mounted on an equally ephemeral shaft projected from the arm of the gosgog. The blade ignores all normal armor. Only armor which is designed to thwart living forces magic has any effect.

The *gos-cythe* has a damage value of 17. The gosgog generates a *conjuration magic* total to see if it hits with the weapon.

Weaktouch is stronger in third-planting gosgog. The gosgog targets one of the victim's physical attributes. Generate an *alteration magic* total for the gosgog. Compare the total to the chosen attribute, and read the result on the Power Push table. Reduce the target's attribute value, and any associated skills, by the final result. This weakness lasts for an hour.

Third-planting gosgog may use *weaktouch* three times on the same victim. They could target the same attribute three times. The second and third times the attribute resists at its new, weakened value.

Third Planting

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 15, energy weapons 12,

stealth 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 11

Lifting 16

TOUGHNESS 12 (17)

PERCEPTION 9

Alteration magic 20, find 12, tracking 15, trick 16

MIND 8

test 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 7

Taunt (20)

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 13, intimidation 12(20)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: bone touch, damage value STR+3/14; chitinous covering, armor value TOU+5/17; chitin spikes, damage value STR+4/15; bonevirus; *gos-cythe*, damage value 17; *weaktouch*

Fourth Planting

Fourth-planting gosgog resemble Frankenstein's monster, with a few differences. The creature's patchwork flesh is held together by thousands of staples, most smaller than a paper staple, but some longer than your hand. The face is as much overlapping metal lines as it is flesh.

Fourth-planting gosgog vary from 1.8 to 2.1 meters in height. Most wear clothes taken from the victims buried in the gosgog field. In the center of its chest is a mass of corrupted, festering flesh.

Fatigue Field requires generating an *alteration magic* total. Compare the total to the highest *Toughness* of any non-entity character within 25 meters, read the result on the Power Push table. When an affected character suffers shock damage for any reason, increase the shock damage by the amount of the Power Push.

Gos-cythe is a ghostly curved blade nearly 1.5 meters long, mounted on an equally ephemeral shaft projected from the arm of the gosgog. This blade has jagged, brittle looking teeth. The blade ignores all normal armor. Only armor which is designed to thwart living forces magic has any effect.

Fourth-planting *gos-cythe* have a damage value of 20. If a *wound* is scored, the jagged teeth break off in the wound. These ghostly fragments add +10 to the difficulty of healing this, or any



other, of the victim's wounds. This effect lasts for four days, or until dispelled.

The gospog generates a *conjunction magic* total to see if it hits with the weapon. Record this total if a wound is scored; the total becomes the difficulty for dispelling the "jagged-teeth" effect.

MemNet is a mental attack which can snare thoughts and memories from the victim. When the MemNet is cast, it appears from the hands of the gospog as a red-neon light shaped like a barbed-wire net. A successful cast wraps the net around the victim's head. The gospog gives the net a snap-pull, and the MemNet drags through the target's head with a horrible scraping sound; the victim's hair stands on end and brilliant red sparks flash from her scalp. MemNet has a range of 10 meters.

The gospog generates an *apportation magic* total. Compare the total to the victim's *Mind* or *willpower*. Read the results on the "Success" column of the General and Push Results Table. On a *Minimal* success, the gospog grabs a surface memory of a recent event, a memory of no particular importance. The gospog can sense and learn the memory, which then slips back into the victim. The victim knows which memory was grabbed.

On an *Average* success, a surface memory is grabbed, but is not returned to the victim. She cannot know what memory was stolen because she no longer has the memory.

On a *Good* result, the MemNet grabs three memories or pieces of knowledge of interest to the gospog (or Tharkoldu). Possible memories include a plan, a recollection of an attack against Tharkoldu, a vulnerability, a location of a hideout or character. The memories should be knowledge the Storm Knight does not wish an enemy to know. The memories will eventually slip from the MemNet an hour later and returns to the victim (see below).

A *Superior* result grabs the same knowledge as a *Good* result, but the victim loses the knowledge. A *Spectacular* result grabs everything that makes up the Storm Knight's identity. The victim suffers from complete amnesia dating back to her moment of

crisis. Her memories of her life prior to becoming a Storm Knight are untouched.

Memories grabbed by a MemNet return after one week, the duration of the enchantment. A MemNet can only grab and hold memories from one attack. This memory, or these memories, fill the net. The gospog may discard a memory in order to fish for something better, but they never discard a *Superior* or *Spectacular* result.

A MemNet may be used to cause *mental damage* rather than grab a memory. The *apportation magic* total acts as both the to-hit total and the damage total. The gospog may use either an empty or a full MemNet to cause damage.

SkillRip is a magical attack which can steal a victim's skill. For the duration of the effect, the gospog gains the skill and the victim loses the skill.

When *SkillRip* is cast, pustules on the gospog's chest explode. Two dark talons burst from the gospog's chest, trailing gossamer wires of light. The talons strike the target's chest, passing through any armor to anchor in the victim's heart. An agonizing chill sweeps over the character and the *SkillRip* is reeled back into the gospog's chest with a whining sound. The victim takes three shock points from the attack, but suffers no other physical damage.

The gospog generates an *apportation magic* total. The total must equal or exceed the target's *dodge*. Compare the total to the skill value to be stolen. Read the result on the "Success" column of the General and Push Results Table. An *Average* success or better can steal any physical skill. A *Good* result or better can steal any *Perception* or *Mind*-related skill; this includes any spells the victim knows that may be cast with the stolen magic skill. A *Superior* result or better can steal any *Charisma* or *Spirit*-related skill, save the *reality* skill. A *Spectacular* result can steal two skills from any attribute, save *reality*.

A gospog may hold and use the ripped skill at its full value. *SkillRip* lasts for an hour, and then the skill returns to the victim. A gospog may only *SkillRip* one skill at a time unless he achieves a *Spectacular* result. The gospog may choose to target another

skill. As soon as the second skill is ripped, the first skill instantly returns to the first victim.

Fourth Planting DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 15, energy weapons 12, stealth 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 12

Lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 16 (19)

PERCEPTION 9

Alteration magic 19, find 12, tracking 12, trick 15

MIND 11

Apportation magic 20, conjunction magic 20, test 15, willpower 18

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, Taunt 13 (25)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 18, intimidation 15 (20)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: staples, armor value TOU+3/19; fatigue field (*alteration magic*); gos-cythe, damage value 20; MemNet (*apportation magic*, damage total is equal to *apportation magic* total); SkillRip (*apportation magic*)

Fifth Planting

At a distance, gospog of the fifth planting might be confused for Tharkoldu. Its winged-and-taloned silhouette does look similar, but when it draws close, all confusion ends. Fifth-planting gospog are made from braided strips of flesh, skin and bone, assembled into a mockery of Tharkoldu form. These strips often ripple and move in way unrelated to the gospog's basic movement, as if some of them were trying to break free from the abomination of which they have become a part.

The gospog has no eyes, but the sockets have all of the necessary nerve endings and muscles visible. These twitch and move as if controlling eyes, and the gospog is perfectly capable of seeing through those sockets by some magical means.

Armor of Evil reduces the damage a gospog takes from characters which have not bested it in a contest of faith. Armor of evil allows the gospog to remove up to four wounds, a "K" and an "O" and five shock points of damage from any blow done to it.



To engage in a contest of faith the challenging character generates a *faith* total. If the *faith* total exceeds the gopog's *faith* value, the armor of evil is defeated only for the contesting character's attacks. If the *faith* total equals the gopog's *faith* value, neither faith dominates, and the armor remains in effect. The contest may continue during a later round. If the gopog's value is greater than the total, the gopog dominates. The character may not attempt another contest of faith until 24 hours have passed. The gopog may initiate the contest of faith. Compare the gopog's *faith* total to the character's *faith* value; otherwise the procedure is the same as above.

BagBody allows the fifth-planting gopog to possess a character's body. The gopog's eye-sockets flash and glow bright blue. The eyes of its victim also flash, initially glowing a dull blue. The glow in the victim's eyes grows in intensity and the light in the gopog's sockets fade. As the glow fades, so does the gopog's body, until it disappears entirely as its spirit possesses the target.

BagBody takes one round to accomplish. The gopog must see its victim, but does not have to meet his gaze. The gopog could be staring at the back of the victim's head and **BagBody** would still be effective. **BagBody** has a range of 60 meters.

To accomplish this, the gopog generates a *conjunction magic* total. Compare the total to the victim's greatest physical attribute. Read the result points on the Power Push Table. To this number add +11, the result modifier. If the final result points equal or exceed the victim's *Spirit* or *faith*, his body is bagged. Record the *conjunction magic* total.

Example: A fifth-planting gopog attempts **BagBody** on Mark Dyer. Mark's greatest physical attribute is his Dexterity of 10. The gopog generates a *conjunction magic* total of 19. Nine result points on the Power Push Table yields +4. The gopog's final result points are 15 (4+11), which exceeds Mark's *faith* of 13. Mark is bagged.

The gopog uses the physical attributes and skills of the character it bagged. It uses its own mental and

spiritual attributes and skills. All physical damage is done to the victim's body, while mental and spiritual damage is suffered by the gopog. The victim's mental and spiritual skills are suppressed, but still present in his own body.

The victim may try to dislodge the gopog's presence by generating a *Spirit* or *faith* total. If this total equal or exceeds the *conjunction* total that bagged him, the gopog is ejected. The victim may play any cards in his hand or pool, but may not draw any new cards until the gopog leaves or is ejected.

BagBody sends the gopog's original body into a dimensional pocket, where it remains until the gopog's mental and spiritual faculties no longer possess another body. The gopog may choose to **BagBody** another victim while in a host body. It may choose to enter its own body, a simple action. It may be ejected from the victim, in which case it returns to its own body. The gopog's body instantly reappears whenever its spirit returns to it.

Haster is an automatic ability, much like a *haste* card. The gopog gets one additional action in a round. This action may come before Storm Knight actions when they have the initiative, but cannot take precedence over *haste* cards played by Knights. **Haster** moves the gopog's body faster than it is meant to go. Often the gopog exudes an odor of overripe, or even burning, flesh, as a result.

Hellgaze can completely destroy a character's life force, his *Spirit*. Twin slivers of flame jet from the gopog's eyes, flying with uncanny accuracy toward the victim's eyes. Only armor, or other protection, that is effective against *death* magic can impede the flame. Once the target is struck, his eyes become geysers of flame. Tongues of fire erupt from his eyes, often reaching lengths 50 centimeters or more.

A character hit by **hellgaze** is blinded while under its effects. **Hellgaze** is extremely painful, but does no physical damage. A character killed by **hellgaze** is permanently dead. There is no life force to recall to the body, for it has been consumed.

Hellgaze has a range of 40 meters. The gopog must see its victim, but does not have to meet his gaze. As

long as the gopog is looking at the character, **hellgaze** can be effective.

The gopog generates a *conjunction magic* total. If the total equals or exceeds the victim's *Mind* or *will-power*, he is struck by the **hellgaze**. Record the *conjunction magic* total.

A spiritual battle now begins. Avoiding destruction from the **hellgaze** is a use of Dramatic Skill Resolution. All four steps are necessary. The target uses his *faith* or *Spirit* skill, generating totals against a difficulty of 12. Once all four steps have been completed, the fires extinguish and the victim's sight returns. Once he has conquered the **hellgaze**, he may not be targeted for this attack again for 24 hours.

Each round of the Dramatic Skill Resolution, use the *conjunction magic* total generated by the gopog as the damage value of the **hellgaze** attack. The damage is spiritual, and is resisted with either the victim's *faith* or *Spirit*. Remember that when the victim has suffered cumulative damage of a *heavy wound*, and at least one wound is spiritual in nature, he loses his *faith* and *focus* skills and must undergo a ritual of hope to regain them (see page 125 of the *Torg Rulebook*).

SkillRip is a magical attack which can steal a victim's skill. Fifth planting **SkillRip** is more powerful than that of the fourth planting. For the duration of the effect, the gopog gains the skill and the victim loses the skill. When **SkillRip** is cast, a gaping hole opens in the gopog's chest with a sickening "crack." Three dark talons fly from the gopog's chest. The talons spin on the way to their target, trailing a fiery triple-helix of red, green and blue.

The talons strike the target character's chest, passing through any armor to anchor in the victim's heart. Piercing cold stabs the character and the **SkillRip** is whirled back into the gopog's chest. The victim takes *Wnd* K3 from the attack.

The gopog generates an *apportation magic* total. The total must equal or exceed the target's *dodge*. Compare the total to skill value to be stolen. Read the result on the "Success" column of the General and Push Results Table. Any success steals any physical skill. An *Average* result or better can steal any *Perception* or *Mind* skill; this in-



cludes any spells the victim knows that may be cast with the stolen magic skill.

A *good* result or better can steal any *Charisma* or *Spirit*-related skill, excluding the *reality* skill. A *Superior* result can steal up to two skills from any attribute, and a *Spectacular* result can steal up to three.

A *gospog* may hold and use the ripped skill at its full value. *SkillRip* lasts for an hour, and then the skill returns to the victim. The *gospog* may only *SkillRip* one skill at a time, unless he achieves a *Superior* or *Spectacular* success. The *gospog* may choose to target another skill. As soon as the second skill is ripped, the first skill instantly returns to the first victim.

Fifth Planting

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 15, energy weapons 12, flight 18, maneuver 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 13

Lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 19

PERCEPTION 11

Find 16, tracking 12, trick 15

MIND 12

Apportation magic 22, conjuration magic 21, test 15, willpower 18

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, Persuasion 12, Taunt 15 (25)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 22, intimidation 20

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: talons, damage value STR+4/17; armor of evil (absorbs up to 4Wnd KO 5 damage); BagBody (*conjuration magic*); haster (extra action per round); hellgaze (*conjuration magic*); SkillRip (*apportation magic*)

Jake Nori

The host of the popular gameshow *LA Challenge* has a tremendously charismatic presence that conceals the fact that he has less compassion than the average pit viper. Some of his co-workers, particularly the writers of the show, believe that Nori is a worthless, egotistical jerk, but no one dares confront the man.

Nori presents the image of a man

with a good heart who is trying to make a living in a ruthless business. Nori has persuaded most of his co-workers to accept this view of him; more importantly the media and his audience truly believe Jake Nori is a good man.

Nori would like nothing better than to get Storm Knights onto *LA Challenge*. The ratings would be fantastic, and the boardrooms of Ichi Entertainment would be thrilled when the Storm Knights finally died. Nori has assistants combing newspapers, CNN, local reporting, all for information that could lead them to a Storm Knight, or a Storm Knight group, willing to appear on *LA Challenge*.

The producers will offer each Storm Knight a series of five possible prizes: \$5, 000, \$10, 000, \$25,000, \$100,000, and \$1 million. After completing the first challenge, a Storm Knight may agree to accept the \$5,000 dollar prize and quit, or return for the next challenge. If she succeeds at the second challenge, she wins the \$10,000 prize. Again she may risk the prize for a further challenge. If she succeeds at five challenges, she wins \$1 million.

Nori is a Japanese-American seduced by the wealth of the Kanawa Corporation. He agreed to arrange and execute the kidnapping of his sister's two children for the sake of sympathetic media coverage, and transcended when he did so.

Jake Nori is in his early thirties, and looks fitter than he is. He is almost never alone, surrounded by an entourage of assistants, groupies, bodyguards, sycophants and business advisers. He jovially complains about always being in the spotlight, but hates to be alone. Jake Nori is addicted to the adulation he receives and the power he gets from that adulation.

Jake Nori

DEXTERITY 9

Acrobatics 14, dodge 12, fire combat 10, running 11, stealth 12, swimming 11,

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

Disguise 16, find 11, first aid 10, land vehicles 10, language 15, trick

MIND 11

Test 15, willpower 19

CHARISMA 13

Charm 19, persuasion 21, taunt 22

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 14

Possibilities: 14

Equipment: Jake Nori rarely carries a weapon, but when he does it's a ZIIP77z, damage value 16, ammo 12, ranges 3-10/25/40. His impeccably tailored clothing features shirts woven from Irimesh fibers, armor value TOU+2/10, and his suits are also of Irimesh, armor value (TOU+3/11), for a combined TOU+5/13

Jackwraith

A jackwraith is the spirit and intelligence of a human decker killed in the Grid. These spirits suffer horribly from Tharkoldu magic in the Grid, and seek to end their pain. They escape, or are sometimes released, to the real world to inflict pain upon as many victims as they can. When they inflict pain upon a victim, the jackwraith is given a reprieve from the pain it feels. If the jackwraith inflicts enough pain, its reprieve can be extended or the spirit may be allowed to experience a few pleasures its body once enjoyed.

Jackwraiths have no physical form. Unless they use their *conjuration magic* to create an illusory form, they cannot be seen, touched, or otherwise felt by the physical senses. They cannot be damaged by any attack that does physical damage. Even physical damage which is magical in nature, such as an *altered fireball* or an enchanted weapon, does no damage to a jackwraith. Jackwraiths do suffer mental and spiritual damage.

A jackwraith can *create form* to give itself an illusory physical presence. This form must be humanoid and can be no larger than twice human dimensions. The illusion of Tharkoldu may be created. The jackwraith generates a *conjuration magic* total against a difficulty number of 10. The result points are the creature's *Dexterity*, *Strength* and *Toughness*. The form lasts for an hour. The jackwraith may create a new form before his old form expires. The illusory form can be disbelieved on a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 15.

When in an illusory form, it moves



at a speed value of 10 running, or a speed value of 12 if the form has wings. When traveling without a form, the jackwraith can move at a speed equal to its *apportation magic* value. This way a jackwraith can travel at a speed of nearly 1,500 kmh.

A jackwraith has *fear probe*. Fear probes uses *divination magic* to search a character's mind for his fears, or else implants suggestions of fear in its target. The jackwraith generates a *divination magic* total. Compare the total to the victim's *Mind* or *willpower*. Read the results on the "Success" column of the General and Push Results Table.

The jackwraith receives a bonus modifier for fear attacks based on the degree of success. Each level of success is worth a +1 bonus modifier, so a *Minimal* success is worth +1, and *Superior* success is worth +4. This bonus lasts for 24 hours, or until the jackwraith is destroyed, whichever comes first.

A jackwraith has three fear attacks. The first is *frostouch*. The jackwraith generates an *alteration magic* total. Compare the total to the target's *dodge* to see if the attack hits. Then compare the total to the target's armor value. Read the result points on the Combat Results Table. A successful *frostouch* creates a white swirl of ice around the target, no more than two or three inches from the victim. At the end of the round, the ice suddenly condenses on the target into an etched pattern reminiscent of a integrated circuit. The freezing cold damages the victim (damage value is equal to the *alteration magic* total).

The second attack is *mindjumble*. The jackwraith generates a *conjunction magic* total. Record the total. The attack fills the victim's mind with fearful images from his own past or from the deranged mind of the jackwraith. The victim is *setback*, and remains *setback*, until he generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total that equals or exceeds the jackwraith's *conjunction magic* total.

Soulscream enhances the jackwraith's *intimidation* skill for a spiritual attack. The jackwraith generates a *intimidation* total. Compare the total to the *Spirit* or *faith* of the target character. The result points are read on the Combat Result Table and the *intimidate* column of the Interaction Results

Table, i.e. nine result points gives a Storm Knight "Wnd K 3" and *stymies* him.

Jackwraiths are considered enemy entities by any faith with the concept of evil spirits. Characters with such a faith may use *ward enemy* against jackwraiths.

Jackwraith

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 15, energy weapons 12, flight 18, maneuver 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 13

Lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 19

PERCEPTION 11

Alteration magic 22, divination magic 20, find 16, tracking 12, trick 15

MIND 12

Apportation magic 18, conjuration magic 21, test 15, willpower 18

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 15 (25)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 19, intimidation 18

Additional Skills: one at +1 adds

Possibility Potential: some (30)

Natural Tools: fear probe (*divination magic*); frostouch (*alteration magic*); mindjumble (*conjunction magic*); soulscream (*intimidation*)

Kreya Keena-Three

Kreya Keena-Three was a soldier in the Sim Wars on Kadandra. After a series of lackluster actions under lackluster commanders, she volunteered for duty as a stela rat. Stela rats penetrated Tharkoldu territory looking for stela and removing them. The work was dangerous, particularly at the end of the war when the Tharkold had so few stela to defend. Most dig teams never found a stela or were eliminated before they could be removed.

Keena made it through two digs, one short of becoming a three-buster, Kadandra's equivalent of an air ace. On the second dig, she suffered a bad case of cyberpsychosis and attacked and eliminated a techno-demon, an alpha, and her superior officer. She was arrested and scheduled for "surgical surgery" when the war ended.

When Kadandran intelligence learned of new Tharkold attempts to invade Core Earth, they decided to send someone to help. Without Dr. Hachi Mara-Two's help, the replacements for her gate technology proved unreliable. Kadandra needed to send someone potentially useful, but someone who Kadandra wouldn't miss. Keena again volunteered, and was approved.

Once she arrived in Los Angeles, she sought out Mark Dyer, whose picture she had seen on the cover of a magazine at a corner newsstand. She, Mark and Abbas Sombol fought Tharkoldu and their gangslaves, who were protecting a stela site. Keena was the first Storm Knight to discover that Tharkoldu stela could now teleport. She and Mark Dyer broke into the Ichi Entertainment building, eventually damaging the Apocularum and preventing the Tharkold realm from expanding to its originally planned size.

Keena is brash, with little patience for complainers. She listens to reason from characters she respects, and the more she respects a person the longer she listens. For most folks, this means they had better make their point very quickly. Keena's deep, slow-burning hatred for all Tharkoldu prompts her to occasional rash actions. Keena admires Abbas Sombol's courage and physical toughness. Keena considers Mark Dyer a whiner with barely enough talent and guts to be tolerable. Keena would consider working with other Storm Knights if they were operating against the Tharkoldu. She does not take orders well, ignoring those she feels have botched earlier efforts or who have failed to take their fair share of risks.

Kreya Keena-Three

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, energy weapons 17 (18), fire combat 16 (17), maneuver 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 17 (18)

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10 (15 armor value)

PERCEPTION 8

Air vehicles 10, find 11, first aid 10, land vehicles 10, language 10, scholar (Tharkoldu Tactics) 16, tracking 11, trick 15

MIND 8



Cybertech 11, science 10, streetwise 13, survival 10, test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

SPIRIT 13

Intimidation 16, reality 17

Possibilities: 26

Equipment: Cyberware: Nanocord; visual nerve socket; she has the following visual modules: darksight; EMvue; Killseeker (+1 to ranged attacks, +2 when using integral laser weapon); Cyberarm, damage value STR+3/13; cyberhand damage value STR+2/12, +1 to all *Dexterity*-related skills when using this right hand (the parenthetical *Dexterity* skill values reflect use of her cyberhand); slashers, damage value STR+4/14; hand weapon mount for Res-14 laser, damage value 25, ammo 50, range 3-150/100/200; cyberleg, damage value STR+3/13. Cyber value: 16 (including one point from enraged cyberpsychosis result).

Kap/5 synthileather jacket, armor value TOU+5/15; Scavscan (searches for materials which are within the device's 60-meter range. Scavscan can search for up to 75 materials as long as the nano-profile of each material is loaded into the scavscan. In autosearch mode, the scavscan uses its *find* value of 13 to locate materials. In interpretive mode, the scavscan gives the user a +5 bonus modifier to generating a *science* total to locate materials. Record mode picks up any EM signals within a 10 meter radius. Each minute recorded takes the space equivalent to one material slot, so the scavscan could record 20 minutes and have room for 55 material profiles) carecrawler, (this spider-like machine is a nanomedical robot. It repairs injuries through nanotech processes. The carecrawler has *medicine* 19. The carecrawler takes two hours on a *wounded* character, four hours with one that is *heavily wounded*, and six hours with a *mortally wounded* character. The carecrawler has drugs

and patch-swimmers which can stop the bleeding in any *mortally wounded* character. Generate a *first aid* total from a *first aid* skill value 19).

LAPD

The Los Angeles Police Department has been under heavy fire for nearly two years, almost becoming extinct during the gang wars in the first four months of the Possibility Wars. Nippon Tech support shifted the balance of power to the police, but the Tharkoldu again put the police on the brink of extermination. Secret Hachiman arms caches have been delivered to the LAPD to give them a fighting chance.

The LAPD maintains a strong presence in City Hall. The building is a few blocks away from the Ichi Entertainment building, so it is regularly put under siege by gangslaves and their Tharkoldu masters. No fewer than 100 policeman guard City Hall.

The LAPD's attitude toward Storm



Knights breaks down into three general reactions. Roughly 50 percent of the force welcomes anyone who is fighting on their side. Some of these policemen are even fans of Storm Knights with well-known reputations. These officers offer aid and advice to the Storm Knights, and might even arrange for some official "backup" for their plans.

Another 40 percent resent Storm Knight interference. This resentment is based upon what these patrolmen see as enlightened self-interest. Storm Knights come and go, and while they do some good, who do Tharkoldu and gangslaves attack in retaliation when the Storm Knights take off? The LAPD. These officers will soften their attitude if the Storm Knights base themselves in LA. If Storm Knights are willing to take the full-time consequences of their actions against the Tharkoldu, the officers will welcome them on board.

The final 10% react xenophobically to Storm Knights who are not human in appearance. Nile Empire Tough Heroes, okay; edeinos warriors, elves, or cyber wireheads, no way. These officers give the time of day to non-human or wired-humans only on a direct order. These officers cannot be relied on to help the Storm Knights in any way.

LAPD Patrolman

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, fire combat 12, missile weapons 10, running 10, stealth 12, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (15)

PERCEPTION 9

Evidence analysis 10, find 12, first aid 11, land vehicles 11, trick 11

MIND 9

Test 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10 (15)

SPIRIT 9

Faith (some Core Earth religion) 11, intimidation 11

Possibility Potential: some (50)

Equipment: A35 assault rifle, damage value 22, ammo 25, ranges 3-50/250/ 500; three clips; billy club flashlight, damage value STR+3/11; four GF-9 improved grenades, damage value 22, burst radius 1-2/5/10; Kyoto Police RKD, armor value TOUT+7/15

Loon

The Loon's natural form is a knobby mock-orange body, resting atop three bristly legs, with double-jointed ankles ending in stubby-toed feet. The loon has two arms, which are too short to touch its hips. Its mouth and nasal passage are nearly identical, stacked one above the other and set directly into its body. It has three eyes, a large yellow eye which gives it the best image, and two smaller black-and-white eyes set far apart on either side of the yellow eye. These are used solely to help the yellow eye judge distance and depth. The loon makes a gurgling, whooping sound when it is frightened, which is most of the time.

Loons have powerful *divination* and *conjunction magic* that they use instinctively for their self-defense, combining the two to create *fearform* illusions. When a loon is scared by something, it creates an illusory image of itself. It generates a *conjunction magic* total to duplicate the form, attributes and abilities of creatures which have previously scared the loon. The *conjunction magic* total is the maximum value for any of the form's attributes, skills or other abilities. It takes one round to create a *fearform*. Unless characters surprise a loon, it will have generated a *fearform* before they encounter it. Dispelling the illusory form requires a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 25.

Unless the *fearform* is dispelled, all damage is done to the *fearform* and not the loon. This includes any mental and spiritual damage. If the *fearform* takes four wounds it is destroyed; if the blow that killed the *fearform* raises the cumulative damage to more than four wounds, any excess is done to the loon itself. A possibility-rated loon may not remove damage from a *fearform* by expending Possibilities.

Loons use their *divination magic* to gain information needed to create such a form. When encountering a fearsome creature, the loon takes a round to make a *fearform* reading. The target creature must be in direct sight of the loon. Video images, reflections, or other indirect images do not count. Generate a *divination magic* total and compare it to the creature's *Spirit*. Read the result points on the "Success" col-

umn of the General and Push Results Table. On a *Minimal* success, only the target's attributes may be used as a model for a *fearform*. On an *Average* success, the skills are also added to the *fearform*.

On a *Good* success, any spells or powers are added to the *fearform*. On a *Superior* or *Spectacular* success, any equipment, cyberware, even magical items, are added to the *fearform*. A loon cannot recreate a destroyed *fearform* without using *fearform* reading to once again gain information about the creature.

Loons can consider almost any creature they meet to be fearsome. Any character who succeeded in damaging a loon's *fearform* would certainly qualify. Loons rarely attack first. While they are intelligent enough to understand the value of a preemptive strike with their *fearform*, they would prefer not to voluntarily engage in anything so frightening or dangerous as combat. This reluctance to attack is often a character's only clue that they may be dealing with a loon rather than the creature presented in the *fearform*.

Loon

DEXTERITY 7

Dodge 10, maneuver 15, unarmed combat 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 9

Divination magic 26, find 14, trick 15

MIND 12

Conjunction magic 26, test (20), willpower 20

CHARISMA 8

Taunt (18)

SPIRIT 6

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Natural Tools: *Fearform* reading (*divination magic* 26) and illusion (*conjunction magic* 26)

Mark Dyer

Mark Dyer joined the Army to be all he could be, and to help America kick butt. Less than a year after he joined the service, he was a passenger in a jeep accident. The hospital screwed up, and the X-rays showing badly damaged knees were not Mark's. But the military is the military, and Mark was



discharged before he could straighten out the mess.

He started attending night school in Los Angeles, hoping for a degree in communications, while working through a series of jobs. He kept himself in shape, purchased an Uzi "on the side," and toyed with the idea of becoming a mercenary. The Possibility Wars gave Mark the patriotic cause he wanted. He became a Storm Knight in his second raid into the Living Land. He became a media celebrity on his fourth. On his fifteenth raid, a Possibility-rated optant caught Mark in an invoked reality storm.

Mark's mind nearly snapped with the transformation. Seeing life and the world as a Jakatt saw it was not easy for Mark, who was used to seeing life through advertising jingles, sloganeering and 10-second sound bites. His mind recoiled from the harsh spiritual reality of the Living Land. The optant, Senek-Myi, helped Mark through this difficult time. Mark came to value Senek-Myi's views, developing a more balanced outlook of the different realities. The evil of the High Lords was not necessarily reflected by their realities.

After several weeks in the Living Land, Mark went on a "holy quest" to Core Earth, to see his old world through his new eyes. He felt a Jakatt's horror at living among so many dead things. He also felt some of the good things, saw people, watched images and heard ideas that stirred pride, even though he could no longer understand much of what he experienced. Mark made a decision to wander the borders between the Living Land and Core Earth, risking the dangers of reality storms for the chance to be transformed into what he had once been. In the thunderous rage of weather that preceded the "Miracle of California," Mark succeeded.

Mark's retransformation from the reality of the Living Land awakened latent psionic powers. He emerged from the deep mists with a belief in the need for balance, which closely parallels the Akashan philosophy of Zinatt. He may use Zinatt powers, but not Aka or Coar psionic powers. See the *Space Gods* sourcebook for details on psychic powers.

Mark Dyer returned to Los Angeles. He vowed to oppose the High Lords, but not every denizen from a different reality. Mark met Abbas Sombol and founded Reality Solutions Ltd. Kreya Keena-Three sought him out, and the three of them teamed up to oppose Tharkold. In the hours following the invasion, Mark and Keena managed to penetrate the Ichi Entertainment building. Mark's psychic powers and intuition about different realities was crucial in sabotaging the Apocularum.

Mark can still be found at Reality Solutions Ltd. His frequent media appearances make him an easy man to find. While he runs Reality Solutions as a business, his sets his fees according to the worthiness of the client, as well as their ability to pay. Mark's basic attitude toward other characters is he will do all right by you if you do all right by him. Mark is loyal to Abbas, and Mark would like to be loyal to Keena, but her manner and her approach make him wary.

Mark Dyer

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 16, fire combat 18, heavy weapons 13, running 18, stealth 12, swimming 11, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 9

climbing 12

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

Air vehicles 11, direction sense 12, find 11, first aid 10, land vehicles 14, language 11, psionic manipulation 13, trick 13

MIND 8

Psionic resistance 12, survival 13, willpower 11

CHARISMA 11

Charm 15, persuasion 15, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

faith (Unitarian) 13, reality 12

Possibilities: 20

Powers: psionic defense (+1 add): *psychic screen*; psychic senses (+2 adds): *life sense*, *psi detection*; Zinatt: *reality probe*

Equipment: Uzi, damage value 17, ammo 17, range 3-15/ 40/ 100; His *fire combat* is 19 when using an Uzi (see page 58 of the *Torg Rulebook*). He sometimes wears a leather jacket as armor, value TOU+2/10, but Mark firmly

believes the best defense is just not being where the bad guy hits.

Necros

Necros are small flying animals that resemble a cross between a vulture and an armadillo. They usually gather in flocks of six to twenty. They are carrion, consuming the remains of animals and people killed by other predators or dangers. They differ from other carrion in that they help future meals meet their demise, without ever directly attacking them.

Necros are intelligent and cunning creatures. If characters are wandering through gang-held territories, necros screech and wheel around gang hang-outs, leading gang members back to the characters. They awaken sleeping predators when prey enters their territories. They cluster at one branch of an intersection, knowing that people's normal aversion to necros might prompt them to take a different, more dangerous branch. Necros are clever enough to reverse this procedure every once in a while, clustering around the safest path.

Once a necro has seen a character, it may use its *divination magic* to track the character. Generate a *divination magic* total. If the total equals or exceeds the target's *Mind* or *willpower* value, the necro can sense the target. The maximum range for this ability is 100 meters. Necros particularly enjoy revealing characters who believe themselves to be hidden.

Necro

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 18, flight 18, maneuver 18, stealth unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7 (11)

PERCEPTION 9

Divination magic 13, find 15, trick 10 (15)

MIND 6

Survival 14, test (10), willpower 9

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (12)

SPIRIT 6

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: wings, speed value 11; beak, damage value STR+3/10; claws, damage value STR+2/9; hide, armor value TOU+4/11



Quon

Quons are scorpion-shaped self-aware hunting machines. These machines were the first to use a "quick axion" nervous/sensory impulse system; the creature's name is a contraction of "quick axion." Quons also have liquid metal "blood," which their repair modules make use of to rapidly replace any damaged parts.

The quick axion system gives the quon a second chance at any failed *Dexterity-* or *Perception*-based action. Other than the attribute restrictions, the ability is identical to the *second chance* card. The quon rolls again only if the first action fails.

The liquid metal blood and repair systems allow the creature to generate a *repair* total from a repair value of 26. Compare the total to the quon's *Toughness*, and read the result points on the Combat Results Table. The quon repairs that much damage; remove the damage from the total amount the quon has taken so far. The repair action may be performed as part of a multi-action, the quon making the repair its primary action.

Quon are armed with pincers and a segmented coring-tail. The coring-tail has a hollow drill bit made from industrial diamond. The bit revolves at better than 3,500 RPM. When it strikes a victim, the coring-tail removes a chunk, a "core sample," which is sucked in to the tail's nanotech "digestive track" to be broken down into materials useful to the quon.

Quon

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 13, maneuver 13, running 15, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 17 (26)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 15, trick 10 (15)

MIND 6

test (15), willpower 9

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (18)

SPIRIT 6

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: pincers, damage value STR+5/19; coring-tail, damage value STR+8/22; interwoven metal-composite armor, value TOU+9/26. Running speed 10.



Race Slave Specialist

Tharkoldu brought many slave specialists to Los Angeles. They left behind the Janissaries and other military slaves, bringing with them the support personnel needed for Tharkoldu infrastructure. These slaves are used to implant cyberware into gangslaves, repair synthecyclers, continue genetic experiments, modify or construct occulttech hardware, or any of a number of support functions for which demons feel monkey-talents are appropriate.

Several specialists are spies for the Free Nations. While unlikely to directly support Storm Knight operations, they are eager to indirectly trade intelligence information on Tharkoldu activities.

Typical Race Slave

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, prestidigitation 11, running 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 10



Find 13, trick 11 (15)

MIND 10

test 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10 (15)

SPIRIT 8

Skill Notes: Race slaves are specialists with +7 adds in one of the following skills: *apportation magic*, *alteration magic*, *conjuration magic*, *cybertech*, *divination magic*, *occultech*, *medicine*, *science*. Some may also have +1 adds in up to five skills.

Possibility Potential: some (75)

Equipment: slave collars or slave chips. All other equipment issued on an "as needed" basis by Tharkoldu.

Shrilleech

A shrilleech is an entity about the size of a human thumb. Non-corporeal and normally invisible, the shrilleech can be seen by magical sight or through any other means that makes the spirit of a creature invisible. It appears as an irregular shape patterned with shifting multi-colored lines, the patterns shifting with a rhythm similar to human breathing. A shrilleech draws sustenance from its host, doing very minor spiritual damage. The shrilleech inflicts one shock point upon its victim, while continually drawing from the victim's life force. The shock point cannot be healed until the shrilleech is removed, nor will the Knight even be aware he has suffered damage. Only mental and spiritual damage affect a shrilleech.

While the damage it causes is minimal, the other effect of a shrilleech is more detrimental. The shrilleech emits a magical keening which is audible only to other entities. The range is 40 meters. Entities, such as Tharkoldu, hear the shrilleech on a *Perception* or *find* total of 6 or more.

A shrilleech leaves no physical mark upon the host character. The gamemaster should record the number of shock points a character suffers from one or more shrilleeches. When a character is healed, let the player remove all shock damage from his character sheet. Until a shrilleech is detected, the character does not know she is not in the best of health.

A shrilleech may be detected by a spell designed to discover entities, or

when the character generates a *faith* total equal to or greater than 20, the *faith* value of the shrilleech. The character might be casting a miracle with *faith*; on a total of 20 or better she discovers the leech.

When not attached to a host, shrilleeches fly through the use of *apportation magic*. They find hosts through their *find* or *divination magic* skill. A shrilleech may *find* quarry which is 25 meters or less away, while *divination magic* can spot victims up to 100 meters away.

Shrilleech

DEXTERITY 0

STRENGTH 0

TOUGHNESS 0

PERCEPTION 11

Divination magic 13, find 16, trick (30)

MIND 9

Apportation magic 12, test (30), willpower 9

CHARISMA 9

Taunt (30)

SPIRIT 14

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 20, intimidation (20)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: shrill (entities hear it on *find* total of 6 or more); immune to physical attacks; inflicts one shock point upon victim

Skats

Skats are gleaming mechanical predators that resemble small rocket-powered pterodactyls. Skats have amazing eyesight, and their eyes change from amber to red when they hunt their quarry. Skats usually hunt in flights of two or four. They are quick, extremely maneuverable, but not tough enough to go talon-to-toe with the things that wander Tharkold. Their tactics reflect their relative vulnerability.

Skats often soften up opponents by flying low overhead, in formation, at Mach 1.4. The resulting sonic boom proves equally shattering to windows and characters. When making a sonic boom, a skat uses its speed value (19) as its *dodge* value. Record the damage total for the sonic boom. The boom deafens all characters within its blast radius. To hear any sound (other than

the severe ringing in her ears), a character must generate a *Perception* total equal to or greater than the damage total of the sonic boom. The deafness lasts for 10 rounds, or until the character makes her *Perception* total, whichever comes first.

The skats then break into two groups for strafing runs. A strafing skat uses its *strafing dodge* value to avoid return fire. It shoots at targets with no penalty; its targeting algorithms compensate for its great speed. After a strafing attack, a skat must spend a round getting back into a position for another attack. Skats break into two groups in order to apply continuous pressure to their prey. Skats may not make sonic boom runs and strafing attacks in the same round.

Lore says skats can be tricked by wounded characters into landing to begin feasting a bit early. If the character is not at least wounded, the skat's senses pick up the deception. If the character is hurt, a successful *trick* that *stymies* the skats gets them to land to investigate. A *setback* gets them to land and *stymies* the skats, while a *player's call* gets them to land and hands them a *setback*.

Skats

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, energy weapons 16, flight 17, maneuver 17, stealth 15, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 6(15)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 25, trick 10 (15)

MIND 9

Survival 12, test (15)

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (20)

SPIRIT 6

Intimidation (25)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: strafe dodge 26; sonic boom, damage value 18, blast radius 10/25/40; internal laser, damage value 22, ranges 3-25/60/250; talons, damage value STR+3/11; interwoven metal-composite armor, value TOU+9/15. Speed value 19

Spinners

Spinners look like short-bearded dwarves whose eyes have been cov-



ered by cobwebs. Their fingers are tapered, nearly twice as long as normal dwarf fingers. The fingers end in spinnerets which can shoot strands of web up to 60 meters. Spinners use their missile weapons skill to hit targets with their webs. Once victims are firmly enshrouded, the spinners egg each other on until a few of them gather the courage to beat the victim to death with their clubs.

Each sticky strand of web has a *Toughness* of 8. Its flexibility and stretch give it an *unarmed combat* skill of 6, only for the purposes of resisting attacks. Once a strand has suffered three wounds, it snaps. If a character is wrapped in more than one web strand, use the One-on-Many chart to adjudicate the victim's efforts to break free.

Spinners are low on the predatory food chain, and seek safety in numbers. They travel in bands of twenty to forty, living marginal lives on the edge of Tharkoldu territory. Spinners have a language and a rudimentary tribal society, but neither the Race nor Tharkoldu consider spinners to be useful even as slaves. Tharkoldu find the creatures particularly abhorrent.

Spinners

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 10, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9 (13)

PERCEPTION 9

Find 12, trick 12

MIND 9

Survival 12, test 13

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 16

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Natural Tools: spinnerets, *Toughness* 8, *unarmed combat* 6; club, damage value STR+3/11; cobbled chain-leather-plate armor, value TOU+4/13

Sterret, Demon Prince of Blades

Sterret is a proud demon prince who dominates, directly or indirectly, nearly one million Tharkoldu. Its name comes from its favorite method of hunting, using talons and blades as its kill-



ing weapons. When instincts overtake it, Sterret still hunts "full wing, full claw," an atavistic throwback to Tharkoldu warfare more than a millennium old.

Sterret faced a difficult decision when Jezrael became High Lord. Sterret had formally submitted to Kranod. Kranod had proven ineffective during the invasion of Kadandra and Earth, but to be replaced by monkey-kind? Sterret knew that Jezrael's rise was another on a long list of successful monkey-tricks. As distasteful

as submitting to a human was, Sterret decided that serving a human was the best way to discover how monkey-kind thinks. And, after all, Sterret knew its service would not last forever.

Sterret is so far the only demon prince to formally submit to Jezrael. As Kranod had fallen, Jezrael will fall. Once Sterret thoroughly understands Jezrael's lessons, the Race and its Earth cousins can be defeated.

In Los Angeles, Sterret focuses on the destruction of Kanawa assets and personnel. Since its confrontation with



Kreya Keena-Three, Sterret has minions scouring the city for additional signs of Kadandran involvement. Sterret trusts its submissives to tend to increasing the level of horror and pain in Los Angeles. Sterret has a personal score to settle with Keena and Mark Dyer, but Sterret cannot spare the time for personal vengeance until the invasion succeeds.

To secure the realm, the Apocularum must be repaired or another one built. Sterret has occulttechs, mages and scientists working around the clock repairing the fused hulk atop the Ichi Entertainment building. Sterret takes a personal interest in the progress and security of the Apocularum project. It splits its time between the Ichi Entertainment building and its "residence" in Bellflower.

As part of its lessons, Sterret spends a considerable time in the *monkey form* and *monkey mimic* illusions. The demon prince sometimes wanders Los Angeles, observing human behavior, sampling human customs and foods, listening to conversation, trying to better understand its ancient enemy. The more Sterret comes to understand, the more determined it is to defeat the hideous monkey-kind.

Sterret

DEXTERITY 17

Dodge 20, energy weapons 19, fire combat 19, flight 22 (25), melee weapons 22 (25 defense), missile weapons 21, stealth 22, unarmed combat 22 (25)

STRENGTH 19

Lifting 22

TOUGHNESS 24(30)

PERCEPTION 21

Alteration magic 25, divination magic 26, find 26, first aid 23, land vehicles 23, tracking 26, trick 26

MIND 24

Apportation magic 29, conjuration magic 30, test 31, willpower 25

CHARISMA 17

Charm 18, persuasion 18, taunt 20

SPIRIT 22

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 27, intimidation 27, pain weapon 24, reality 30

Skill Notes: Sterret has the following arcane knowledges: *air* +3, *death* +3, *darkness* +5, *entity* +8, *fire* +3, *folk* +7, *inanimate forces* +5 and *living*

forces +7.

Possibilities: 15 per Storm Knight, minimum 50

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/21; alpha sense (*Perception* total); combat dominance 25; death chance 25; demon luck 25; evil ward *faith* defense; status armor +5; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/26. Swift flight, speed value 11

Equipment: cyberware: Nanocord; Nervejack; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); interdermal plate, value TOU+6/30; shock buffer (first 10 shock points); both talons, enhance normal talons to STR+5/24; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying, cyber value 3); backlash buffer 2 (Mind or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber; 5-slot chipholder. Chips: Language (English as base language) +3, Language (Japanese as base language) +3, Occulttech +3, two SpellChips. Cyber value 25.

Sterret rarely carries a pain weapon outside of his stronghold. In his stronghold he has a pain staff, *pain weapon* +5/29

Swarmrats

Mutant rats, omnivorous, predatory, with a hive-mind intelligence that makes them very dangerous, swarmrats are a dangerous predator in the ruins and urban areas of Tharkold. While individual rats rarely exceed 35 centimeters in length, they are vicious and unbelievably strong for animals their size.

The size of a Swarm is determined by generating a bonus and adding +5 to get a value. Roll again on 10 and 20. The measure of that value is the number of Swarmrats in the Swarm. A result of less than 5 is read as a 5. Thus, the smallest Swarm contains 10 Swarmrats, while the large swarms can contain 250 or more Swarmrats. There are rumors that certain Dead Land ruins are home to superswarms of thousands of Swarmrats.

Swarmrats operate in "cells" of 10. Certain aspects of the Swarm are based on the individual attributes of the creatures within it. Other aspects treat entire cells as individual entities. The mentality of the Swarm depends on

the total number of cells it contains.

Individual Attributes: *Dexterity* and *Strength* are individual attributes. All Swarmrats have the same scores, and a single Swarmrat will have the same effective *Strength* as a whole cell for purposes of combat.

If a cell were to combine its actions for purposes of a *Strength*-related feat (gnawing through a cable, for example) this would involve the usual rules for combining efforts, though because of their semi-telepathic union, the coordination number for Swarmrats is at a -2 modifier.

There are unsubstantiated stories of intelligent Swarm-minds using cooperating cells and individual Swarmrats to operate controls, build traps, even drive vehicles.

Cell Attributes: *Toughness* is a cell attribute. An individual Swarmrat has a *Toughness* of only 1. However, a cell's *Toughness* is equal to the number of Swarmrats in it, up to 10. A Swarm's *Toughness* is **not** equal to the number of rats in the Swarm. Rather, each individual cell is treated as an individual target for purposes of doing damage. Fighting a Swarm of three cells would be handled as if in combat with three individual opponents.

Swarm Attributes: Swarmrat mental attributes depend on the overall size of their Swarm. All the Swarmrats and cells in the Swarm have the same scores, based on the size of the Swarm.

There is a critical mass factor with Swarm mentality. A Swarm of fewer than 10 cells is only semi-intelligent, and all mental skill adds given in parentheses are for defense only.

At 10 cells and above, the Swarm develops a higher intelligence, using all mental skills actively as well as defensively. For example, a Swarm with 12 cells has a *Perception* of 12, and a *trick* of 15. The Swarm could devise a trick for its prey, luring it into a trap or dangerous ground. Similarly, an intelligent Swarm can use skills like *maneuver* the way a skilled human opponent might.

Intelligent Swarms are also capable of limited communication. They can even be persuaded to a degree, though *charm* has no effect on them.

Swarm Combat: A target can be attacked by only up to two cells at a time. Each cell gets a Many-On-One



advantage when it attacks, based on the number of Swarmrats in it.

Attacks on a cell with weapons capable of autofire, or area effect, or widely-distributed damage (like a shotgun blast, sweep of an energy weapon, or lightning bolt) do not face a One-On-Many situation. Single shots, edged melee weapons, or *unarmed combat* do face a One-On-Many penalty against Swarmrats.

Each wound or shock point done to a cell kills or incapacitates one Swarmrat in the cell. Swarmrats have an individual *Toughness* of only 1 point, but a cell's *Toughness* is equal to the number of Swarmrats still in it.

Timing is important. If Storm Knights can cut down the number of Swarmrats in the cell before the cell attacks in a round, this reduces the Many-On-One bonus for the cell. If the cell has initiative, too bad.

At the end of the round, cells with less than 10 Swarmrats in them retreat, scampering together to form new cells of 10 each. Any Swarmrats left over die of psychic shock, cut out of the hive mind.

Swarmrats

DEXTERITY 8

Climbing 12, dodge 9, maneuver 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 1 (per S' rat in cell)

PERCEPTION Value of Swarm size + 2

Find +5, trick (+3), tracking +5

MIND Value of Swarm size

Willpower (+1)

CHARISMA Value of Swarm size - 2

Taunt (+5)

SPIRIT Value of Swarm size

Intimidate +4

Possibility potential: none

Natural Tools: teeth, damage

STR+3/12

Synthecyclers

Synthecyclers roam Los Angeles, extracting raw materials from natural deposits, or mineral-rich sources as seawater. 'Cyclers can also recycle wastes, damaged items, and existing items or structures. The synthecyclers then return to Ichi Entertainment or other Tharkoldu strongholds where

the raw materials are given to MakerMods for processing into finished equipment. UltraCAD uses four basic groups of raw materials:

Hydrocarbon: Extracted from crude oil, coal deposits, or by recycling almost any organic waste;

Biochemical: Extracted from topsoil, vegetation, swamp mud, or organic wastes, characters or creatures;

Ceramic: Extracted from rock, sand, soil, or clay, or from recycled urban constructions (concrete, asphalt, cement, glass, etc.);

Metal: Extracted from ore beds or from recycled metal waste (junkyards, building sites, etc.), slow moving vehicles or structures, weapons held a little too loosely;

Synthecyclers usually only pose an indirect danger to characters, but biochemical 'Cyclers occasionally hunt prey, and ceramic and metal synthecyclers can consume a headquarters or vehicle. Synthecyclers are armed and programmed to defend themselves, and sensor arrays keep them aware of their surroundings. The arrays have auditory, infrared, magnetic field, radar, seismic, and visual sensors. This variety allows the synthecycler to sense and search its surroundings in any kind of environment. If one sensor is jammed or useless, the gain and processor-interpretation of the other sensors can be increased to compensate.

Synthecyclers come in both tracked and hover versions. A synthecycler may attempt to run over a character. An overrun uses the synthecycler's *land vehicles* skill to hit. The reclaimer (a synthecycler's "mouth") is located at the front of the creature. The reclaimer's "lips" are a weave of ceramic, metal and synthetic fibers that can expand to fit around the object being reclaimed, the same way a python dislocates its jaw to swallow a large prey.

While difficult, synthecyclers may be *tricked* or *tested*. They cannot be *taunted* or *intimidated*, *charmed* or *persuaded*. Their limited personality does not allow those interactions.

Synthecyclers are built in four sizes, based on the size of the MakerMod for which they gather raw materials. Small synthecyclers are about the size of a small riding mower. They are armed

with six pulse-laser tubes, one tube on each side of the synthecycler. The power circuitry can only power one of the lasers at a time, so no more than one laser can fire each round. The lasers can fire at anything more than three meters away from the synthecycler. They fire in a 45-degree arc, and so cannot necessarily hit any target within three meters. A synthecycler cannot fire at a character within three meters who makes a successful *maneuver* against the synthecycler.

Medium synthecyclers are two meters long by two meters tall, 125 centimeters wide. They look like an inverted trash dumpster, accompanied by the same sort of interesting smells. Medium synthecyclers are armed with more powerful pulse-lasers than the small 'Cyclers, with the same firing arc. Medium 'Cyclers have power circuitry that energize two lasers each round. Each laser has a capacitor that allows it to hold one round of fire. When first encountered, medium synthecyclers usually have all six lasers charged.

Large synthecyclers are six meters by six meters by four meters. They resemble the tanks used in World War One. Each facing has a duo-laser turret. The turrets are retractable for passage through tight spaces. The duo-lasers have 360 firing arc along their plane, and can elevate up to 90 degrees. The laser can fire at any target in line of sight of the turret. Large synthecyclers also have a static plasma field generator to ward off close assault. The field extends out in all directions up to six meters from the edge of the 'Cycler. Anyone or anything caught in the field takes damage. The power for the field is drawn from the synthecycler's main engine, so the 'Cycler put no power into movement when generating a plasma field. That is no problem for a tracked synthecycler, but it can make things interesting for a hover model.

Industrial synthecyclers are 30 meters by 30 meters by 15 meters. They are mobile, windowless, armored, five-story factories. They belch byproducts into the air, and occasionally leave a trail of toxic sludge. They are armed with four plasma field blasters on each facing, and they have suf-



ficient power to fire all of them at once. They are usually infested with three or four flights of skats, and they can be home to a forcefoot family. When they are sent into hostile territory, industrial synthcyclers are important enough to be guarded by gangslaves and other Tharkoldu forces. There are no industrial-scale 'Cyclers on Earth yet. Building one has a lower position on Sterret's priority list than many other projects. It should be four or five months before the first industrial scale machine roars out of the ruins of Ichi Entertainment.

Small Synthcycler

DEXTERITY 9

Energy weapons 17

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11(19)

PERCEPTION 10

Find 17, land vehicles 11, trick (25)

MIND 10

Survival 12, UltraCAD 12, test (30)

CHARISMA 0

SPIRIT 0

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: pulse-lasers, damage value 24, range 3-25/100/150; overrun attack, damage value 14; Integral Chod/8 armor, value TOU+8/19; sensor array (auditory, infrared, magnetic field, radar, seismic, and visual sensors. Use find value for any of these forms); Tracked, speed value 10; hover, speed value 12

Medium Synthcycler

DEXTERITY 9

Energy weapons 18

STRENGTH 19

TOUGHNESS 14(22)

PERCEPTION 11

Find 18, land vehicles 12, trick (25)

MIND 11

Survival 13, UltraCAD 13, test (30)

CHARISMA 0

SPIRIT 0

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: pulse-lasers, damage value 24, range 3-25/100/150; overrun attack, damage value 23; Integral Chod/8 armor, value TOU+8/22; sen-

sor array (auditory, infrared, magnetic field, radar, seismic, and visual sensors. Use find value for any of these forms). Tracked, speed value 11; hover, speed value 13

Large Synthcycler

DEXTERITY 9

Energy weapons 19

STRENGTH 22

TOUGHNESS 14(22)

PERCEPTION 12

Find 19, land vehicles 14, trick (25)

MIND 12

Survival 14, UltraCAD 14, test (30)

CHARISMA 0

SPIRIT 0

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: duo-lasers, damage value 28, ranges 3-60/150/400; overrun attack, damage value 27; plasma field generator, damage value 23; 175mm composite armor, value TOU+10/22; sensor array (auditory, infrared, magnetic field, radar, seismic, and visual sensors. Use find value for any of these forms). Tracked, speed



value 12; hover, speed value 14

Industrial Synthecycler

DEXTERITY 9

Energy weapons 19

STRENGTH 42

TOUGHNESS 31(41)

PERCEPTION 13

Find 20, land vehicles 15, trick (25)

MIND 13

Survival 15, UltraCAD 15, test (30)

CHARISMA 0

SPIRIT 0

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: plasma field blasters, damage value 38, range 20-300/500/1,500; 1250mm composite armor, value TOU+10/41; sensor array (auditory, infrared, magnetic field, radar, seismic, and visual sensors. Use *find* value for any of these forms). Tracked, speed value 7 hover, speed value 9

Terri Bender

"If you are interested in justice, you have to be interested in power."

Terri Bender rose from an obscure bureaucrat to become mayor of Los Angeles because no one else wanted the job. Bender refused to run out on her city, and held as much of LA together as she could during the early weeks of the Possibility Wars. At first, starvation and gangs were the worst problems. When Kanawa investments gave the megacorps reason to help solve LA's problems, Terri Bender was among the few to find fault with Kanawa. Several brushes with Yoshiko Nakata, and one assassination attempt later, Bender began to build an alliance to counter-balance the moves by Kanawa.

Most of the alliance building had to be done behind closed doors and off-record. This loose and obscure network was galvanized into action by Tharkold's invasion. Mayor Bender works her connections tirelessly in efforts to harass the Tharkoldu. She is eager to add Storm Knights to the resources for the city, wielding what influence she has to cut a deal with heroes.

Mayor Bender now lives at City Hall, the symbol of Los Angeleno resistance to the invasion. Rarely a night goes by without a Tharkoldu-spon-

sored attack, although the demons have yet to make an all-out effort. Mayor Bender takes walking tours of besieged neighborhoods, tangible and personal reassurance to the residents. The Law of Domination may be subtly influencing public perception of Mayor Bender, for more and more citizens are becoming fiercely loyal to her, and supportive of her policies. Should Mayor Bender be killed, many Los Angelenos' will to resist shall be shattered.

Terri Bender

DEXTERITY 8/9

Dodge 10, fire combat 11,

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9/10

Evidence analysis 10, find 11, first aid 10, land vehicles 10, language 10, trick 12

MIND 8

Artist (Illustration) 9, survival 9, test 12, willpower 14

CHARISMA 10/11

Charm 13, persuasion 18, taunt 15

SPIRIT 10/12

Faith 17, intimidation 14

Skill Notes: Ms. Bender's attributes will increase when she becomes a Storm Knight. The values after the slash are her values once she is a Storm Knight. Increase her skills based on those attributes by increase in the attributes. Her *reality* skill will start at 14.

Possibility Potential: some (7)

Equipment: holstered Hachiman "Big Thunder" pistol, damage value 19, ammo 6, range 3-10/30/50; complete Irimesh suits, armor value TOU+4/12, when touring dangerous neighborhoods she also wears a helmet for an armor value 13). Save when she wants privacy, the mayor is always accompanied by two LAPD officers.

Tharkoldu

Powerful, winged nightmares whose lifeblood intertwines with magic, they are creatures living under a code of domination and an aesthetic of pain barely comprehensible even to the dark side of humanity. They are

entities whose existence is at odds with the natural world. No wonder Tharkoldu are also known as demons. No human knows whether Tharkoldu originated in hell, but there is no question Tharkoldu want to mold the world to their hellish vision.

The demons of Tharkold are a savage race. Their society is loosely held together through the Law of Domination. While Tharkoldu loathe the Race, demon technological and social progress is spurred by their competition and contact with humans. The demons may not have even survived without adapting a few monkey-tricks. Their evil thrives with humanity to prey upon.

The Law of Domination affects the forms of demons. The world law rewards those who gain dominance over others. Tharkoldu frame and features often change to accommodate their new abilities, and to mark their new status. There are five ranks of demons. In ascending order these are: techno-demon, alpha, great alpha, demon lord, and demon prince. Each rank has special abilities, and higher ranks have all the special abilities of the ranks beneath. In the descriptions below the ability is defined with the first creature that manifests the ability. For example, all Tharkoldu can use wing strike. The ability is defined under the techno-demon description, but each demon's statistics include the *wing strike* ability of that particular demon.

Tharkoldu are fierce and cruel entities. They enjoy inflicting pain on their adversaries. The form of this pain often varies with the rank of the creature. Techno-demons and lower Tharkoldu most often think of direct physical pain upon an opponent, inflicting emotional pain as a by-product of their physical domination. Alphas and great alphas have broader visions of pain, enjoying emotional or spiritual pain almost as much a physical pain. Their version of toying with prey can last weeks, and need not directly involve the victim. A great alpha may target victims through their friends, family, neighbors and workplaces. Demon lords and princes can conceive of the aesthetic of pain inflicted on an entire city or region; they enjoy constructing a hell from the local resources. Los Angeles provides



them with everything they need.

Techno-demon

Techno-demons are the basic type of demon. Even though the *Magic* axiom has risen to the point where demons can survive without cyberware or technomagic, there are few demons who forego the advantages technology offers. There are no Tharkoldu on Earth who do not have some type of implant.

Techno-demons vary in height from 1.8 to 2.1 meters. Their wingspan is 50 percent greater than their height, to a maximum of 3.35 meters. They are well-muscled, but their slender appearance belies their great weight, which averages 150 kilograms. Their skin is tough, and their circulatory system has a natural damage control that contributes to Toughness unusual for the size of the techno-demons. Their skin is most often gray, or gray-green, but red streaks or a general red coloration is occasionally seen.

Techno-demons have an air-to-ground attack called *wing strike*. A techno-demon spots a victim, quietly climbs a few meters, and then power dives into its victim. The demon uses its unarmed combat skill to hit the victim. The damage value of *wing strike* is STR+7.

Tharkoldu have natural night sight. Their eyes can amplify ambient light from five to 50,000 times, automatically selecting the level of amplification that is best for visibility. Their eyes have a photo-sensitive opaquing agent covering their pupils. In the case of a sudden change in light intensity, the demon's pupils automatically darken. This natural defense gives Tharkoldu a +5 value modifier when defending against flash attacks.

Techno-demons are the most common Tharkoldu decker in The Grid. They run more efficient versions of programs run in the Cyberpapacy. Tharkoldu experience has reduced the size of all programs by one. See *The GodNet* supplement for a description of how the programs function.

Techno-demon

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 14, energy weapons 14, fire combat 12, flight 15 (18), melee

weapons 12 (15 defense), missile weapons 12, stealth 11, unarmed combat 15 (18)

STRENGTH 16

Lifting 18

TOUGHNESS 16 (21)

PERCEPTION 10

Alteration magic 13, divination magic 13, find 14 (17), first aid 11, land vehicles 12, tracking 14, trick 12

MIND 11

Apportation magic 14, conjuration magic 14, test 15, willpower 15

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 16, intimidation 16

Skill Notes: Most techno-demons have the arcane knowledges *folk* +3, *entity* +3, *inanimate forces* +2, and *living forces* +2. Some have additional arcane knowledges, but only magical specialists have adds greater than +3.

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Natural Tools: bite, damage value STR+2/18; talons non-cybered limb, damage value STR+3/19; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage STR+7/23; wings, speed value 10.

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; windsniffer (+3 to *Perception* or *find* skills using smell, as noted above); balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); interdermal plate, armor value TDU+5/21; talon, enhance normal talons to STR+5/21; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3); life cyber; 3-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 16.

If operating on a military patrol, as opposed to a "pav hunt," techno-demons are typically armed with Res-14/ Alph lasers, damage value 25, range 3-150/ 400/ 2,000. If heavy resistance is expected, or the Tharkoldu are planning on an assault, the techno-demons carry heavier weapons.

Tharkoldu Decker

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 15, energy weapons 14, flight 14, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 14

Lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 14 (19)

PERCEPTION 13

Alteration magic 16, cyberdeck operation 17, divination magic 16, find 16, first aid 12, tracking 15, trick 15

MIND 13

Apportation magic 16, conjuration magic 16, test 16, willpower 17

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 17, intimidation 15

Skill Notes: Most Tharkoldu deckers have the arcane knowledges *entity* +3, *folk* +2, *inanimate forces* +4 and *living forces* +4. Some have additional arcane knowledges at +1 or +2 adds.

Possibility Potential: some (35)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/16; talon, non-cybered limb, damage value STR+3/17; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/21; wings, speed value 10

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; Nervejack; interdermal plate, armor value TDU+5/19; life cyber; 5-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 11.

Cyberdeck (response +4, stealth +1, processor 6, storage 12) Programs: Onslaught 4, mindwipe 3, armor 4, scan 3, shroud 3, trace 3, search 3, copy 2, alter 2, store 2.

Alpha

Alphas are demons who have dominated and control at least one other demon. They may control dozens of slaves, but prestige comes from the number of demons who have formally submitted to the alpha. Alphas usually control from 12 to 30 demons. Alphas are a little taller than techno-demons, ranging from two to 2.3 meters tall. Alphas look quite a bit more massive than lowly Tharkoldu, weighing in at roughly 250 kilos, but their wingspan is no larger than that of a techno-demon. Alphas often develop physical traits that make them easily distinguishable from techno-demons, and from each other. Spiky growths down the spine, tusks, extra-long talons, more triangular faces, milky eyes, ridges of bone along the forearm; all of these are possible, alone or in combination.





Alpha sense is an innate, mystical ability all alphas have to determine whether or not one of their submissives is lying to it, withholding information, or otherwise deceiving the alpha when speaking to it. The alpha generates a *Perception* total. Compare the total to the submissive's *Spirit* or *faith* value. Read the result points on the "Success" column of the General and Push Results Table. On a *Minimal* or *Average* success, the alpha suspects something is wrong with his submissive's story, but has no information on what that might be. On a *Good* success the alpha knows whether the submissive is lying or withholding information, and which parts of its servants statements are deceptive. On a *Superior* success, the alpha automatically grabs the truth from the mind of the servant, getting the full true information, at least as the servant knows the truth. A *Spectacular* success allows the alpha to grab the truth and understand its full context: why the servant was deceiving it, and whether or not there are others involved in the deception as well.

Alphas rarely wander far from their pridehold without gangslaves or techno-demons as bodyguards. Such a bodyguard always has at least one techno-demon, and up to half the number of demons the alpha dominates. Additional gangslaves are taken, usually two or three for each demon accompanying the alpha.

Rogues are alphas who have rejected their dominant role, wanting no part in controlling a pride. A few release their submissives, most kill them. Most rogues are created seconds after the Tharkoldu becomes an alpha. Some part of the rogue's mind cannot tolerate the thought of commanding, or taking commands from, another being. Rogues are considered unstable and dangerous even by other Tharkoldu. There has only been one story in all Tharkoldu history of a rogue later submitting to a master. All other rogues have led solitary lives until they were slain or, rarely, died from natural causes. Because they have rejected their role under the Law of Domination, rogues do not have *alpha sense*.

Alpha

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 15, energy weapons 15, fire combat 14, flight 16(19), melee weapons 16 (19 defense), missile weapons 15, stealth 15, unarmed combat 16 (19)

STRENGTH 17

Lifting 20

TOUGHNESS 17(23)

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 16, find 15, first aid 13, land vehicles 14, tracking 16, trick 14

MIND 13

Apportation magic 17, conjuration magic 17, test 17, willpower 18

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 13, taunt 15

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 18, pain weapon 16, intimidation 18

Skill Notes: Most alphas have the arcane knowledges *folk* +4, *entity* +4, *inanimate forces* +4 and *living forces* +4. Some have additional arcane knowledges a +1, +2, or +3 adds.

Possibility Potential: some (30)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/19; talons, non-cybered limb, damage value STR+3/20; alpha sense (*Perception* total), wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/24; wings, speed value 10

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); interdermal plate, armor value TOU+6/23; talon, enhance normal talon to damage value STR+5/22; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3), backlash buffer 2 (*Mind* or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber; 3-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 16.

Alphas are often armed with pain weapons, such as a pain baton or whip, *pain weapon*+3/ damage value 19

Rogue

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 19, energy weapons 15, fire combat 14, flight 16 (19), melee weapons 15 (18 defense), missile weapons 16, stealth 17, unarmed combat 18 (21)

STRENGTH 17

Lifting 20

TOUGHNESS 17(23)

PERCEPTION 12

Alteration magic 15, divination magic 15, find 14, first aid 13, land vehicles 14, tracking 18, trick 18

MIND 13

Apportation magic 16, conjuration magic 16, test 18, willpower 20

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 13, taunt 18

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 17, pain weapon 18, intimidation 20

Skill Notes: Most rogues have the arcane knowledges *death* +2, *darkness* +3, *entity* +4, *folk* +4, *inanimate forces* +4, and *living forces* +4. Some have additional arcane knowledges a +1, +2, or +3 adds.

Possibility Potential: some (20)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/19; talons, non-cybered limb, damage value STR+3/20; wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/24; wings, speed value 10

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); nanodoc (*medicine* 19); voice mimic; interdermal plate, armor value TOU+6/23; talons, enhance normal talons to damage value STR+5/22; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3); life cyber; 3-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 18.

Rogues usually have a pain baton or whip, *pain weapon*+3/ damage value 21. They carry whatever they can steal off other characters, from M-16s to plasma guns.

Great Alpha

Great alphas are demons who have dominated and control at least one alpha. Their prestige comes from the number of alphas who have formally submitted to them. Great alphas usually control from 15 to 25 alphas. Great alphas are almost the same size as an alpha. Their height varies from two to 2.4 meters, and they weigh an average of 275 kilos. Their wingspan can reach up to 4.25 meters. The wing mem-



branes are lighter weight than in alphas and techno-demons, and usually contain iridescent pigments. Great alphas vary more in color than alphas and techno-demons; reds, purples, yellows, streaks of gold or silver, tiger-stripping are possible. Some have sky camouflage patterns on the "front," and ground camouflage patterns along the "back."

Great alphas occasionally work alone on missions for their superiors. Great alphas are considered clever enough to avoid obvious traps and entanglements that could jeopardize their mission. If a great alpha is not on a mission for a superior, it usually has a bodyguard of four to six alphas and 30 to fifty techno-demons. Gangslaves can accompany the great alpha, depending on the alpha's belief in the need for additional firepower, and the great alpha's appetite.

Demon luck molds ambient possibility energy to allow the demon to roll two dice on any action. The demon chooses either roll to generate its bonus. On a roll again, the demon again gets to roll two dice, choosing one. All great alphas have *demon luck*, whether or not they are possibility-rated. A character may disable a Tharkoldu's *demon luck* by generating a *reality* total equal to or greater than the demon's *demon luck* value. Read the result points on the Power Push column of the General and Push Results Table. The final result points are the number of rounds for which the *demon luck* is disabled, i.e. seven result points would disable *demon luck* for three rounds.

Status armor magically increases the maximum value for a demon's armor. The adds of *status armor* increase the maximum value, not the armor value itself. *Status armor* is useful for demons with high *Toughness* for whom most armor is useless. Great alphas have *status armor* +1, demon lords have *status armor* or +2 or +3, while demon princes have *status armor* of +4 or +5.

Example: A demon lord with *Toughness* 21 has *interdermal plate* (TOU+6) with a maximum value of 25. Without *status armor*, the demon's armor value is 25, the maxi-

mum value of *interdermal plate*. The demon lord has *status armor* +3, enough to raise the maximum value to 28. His actual armor value is 27 (TOU 21 +6 for *interdermal plate*).

Great Alpha

DEXTERITY 14

Dodge 18, energy weapons 18, fire combat 18, flight 19(22), melee weapons 18 (21 defense), missile weapons 17, stealth 17, unarmed combat 18 (21)

STRENGTH 18

Lifting 21

TOUGHNESS 19(25)

PERCEPTION 15

Alteration magic 19, divination magic 19, find 18, first aid 16, land vehicles 17, tracking 20, trick 18

MIND 16

Apportation magic 20, conjuration magic 20, test 20, willpower 21

CHARISMA 14

Persuasion 16, taunt 18

SPIRIT 16

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 22, pain weapon 20, intimidation 21

Skill Notes: Most great alphas have the arcane knowledges *death* +3, *darkness* +3, *entity* +5, *folk* +5, *inanimate forces* +5, and *living forces* +5. Some have additional arcane knowledges a +1, +2, or +3 adds.

Possibility Potential: some (13)

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/20; *alpha sense* (Perception total); *demon luck* 18; *status armor* +1; *wing strike*, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/25; wings, speed value 10

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); *interdermal plate*, armor value TOU+6/25; both talons, enhance normal talons to damage value STR+5/23; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3), backlash buffer 2 (Mind or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber; 3-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 17.

Great alphas carry pain weapons, such as a pain baton *pain weapon* +3/ damage value 23, or pain staff, *pain weapon* +5/ damage value 25.

Demon Lord

Demon lords are demons who have dominated and control at least one great alpha. They compete fiercely with other demon lords for the honor and power that comes from dominating great alphas. This competition provides continual friction between demon lords as they seek to enhance their status and diminish the status of others. Demon lords control from as few as two great alphas to as many as 45.

Demon lords vary greatly in appearance, as they are powerful enough to modify their bodies to suit their whims. The only constraint is size, where prudent demon lords choose a form smaller than that of the prince they serve. Many demon lords look more human than lower demon orders, perhaps because "humanic" appearance is unsettling to other demons. No matter how human a form a demon lord chooses, the demon lord keeps his wings. The wings may be disguised by illusion or hidden by other magic. A demon lord with human appearance always has at least one feature that is non-human or supernatural in origin. The feature can be subtle or obvious: forked tongue, metallic fingernails, lidless eyes, a reflection wreathed in flames, a voice too high or too soft for the size of the throat, animal hair growing on its forearms, an inability to hear music, elongated toes or webbed feet. There are hundreds of variations, and demon lords are proud to have their own "signature" features that distinguish them from other lords.

A handful of demon lords adapt an appearance that is neither Tharkoldu nor human, drawing features from one or more animals to create their bodies. These lords choose whatever size they find appealing, for they rarely serve any demon prince. They are considered dangerous by Tharkoldu standards, demon lords who have more in common with rogues than proper Tharkoldu.

Demon lords do "slum" to hunt monkey kind with less than a full retinue, but even then they travel with at least one great alpha and six or seven



alphas. The full retinue includes two or three great alphas, 40 to 60 alphas, several hundred techno-demons and thousands of slaves. Moving a retinue is a task that daunts the limited Tharkoldu patience, so most demon lords stay close to their strongholds.

Combat dominance pours spiritual power into the Law of Domination so a demon can crush possibility-rated opponents. The demon generates a combat dominance total. Compare the total to the *reality* skill of the target character. The result points are the number of rounds for which the dominance lasts. The target character now takes damage on the "ords" column of the Combat Results Table, until the dominance wears off.

Swift flight is a simple apportionment effect that increases the demon's *flight* speed value by +1. *Swift flight* is always in effect.

Witch sight is mystic sense derived from *divination magic*. *Witch sight* allows a demon to spot illusions, spells, or other uses of magic which hide a character, or conceal the character's true nature. The Tharkoldu generates a *witch sight* total. Compare the total to the disbelief number of an illusion; if the *witch sight* total equals or exceeds the disbelief number, the demon has the **option** of dispelling the illusion. *Witch sight* may be substituted for other skills or attributes when resisting concealment spells or illusions. A character must generate a *Perception* total equal to or greater than the effect value of *invisibility* in order to see the invisible character; Tharkoldu could use *witch sight* rather than *Perception*.

Demon Lord

DEXTERITY 15

Dodge 19, energy weapons 19, fire combat 19, flight 20(23), melee weapons 19 (22 defense), missile weapons 18, stealth 18, unarmed combat 19 (22)

STRENGTH 19

Lifting 22

TOUGHNESS 20(26)

PERCEPTION 18

Alteration magic 23, divination magic 23, find 22, first aid 19, land vehicles 19, tracking 21, trick 21

MIND 19

Apportionment magic 24, conjuration magic 24, test 24, willpower 25

CHARISMA 15

Persuasion 17, taunt 19

SPIRIT 18

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 25, pain weapon 23, intimidation 24

Skill Notes: Demon lords generally have the arcane knowledges *death* +4 *darkness* +6, *entity* +6, *folk* +6, *inanimate forces* +6, and *living forces* +6. Some have additional arcane knowledges a +2, +3, or +4 adds.

Possibility Potential: all

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/21; *alpha sense* (*Perception* total); *combat dominance* 21; *demon luck* 21; *status armor* +2; *wing strike*, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/26; *swift flight*, speed value 11.

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); cybershroud; interdermal plate, armor value TOU+6/25; shock buffer (first 10 shock points); both talons, enhance normal talons to damage value STR+5/23; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3); backlash buffer 2 (Mind or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber; 3-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 24.

Demon lords usually have great alphas carry their pain weapons. If operating alone, they almost always carry a pain baton, *pain weapon* +3/damage value 23, or pain staff, *pain weapon* +5/damage value 25

Demon Prince

Demon princes must dominate and control at least one demon lord to earn their title. They control from 10 to 25 demon lords. The competition between demon princes is less fierce than the competition among the lesser ranks. Part of the difference is explained by Tharkoldu distaste for extensive organization. Assimilating another demon prince's submissives and holdings is more a task for monkey-kind accountants than a project worthy of Tharkoldu attention. Demon princes are also the most involved in the war against the Race, a fight which holds the attention of most of their fiercer instincts. Other Tharkoldu think of humanity as food or possible slaves. Demon princes sense that humanity is

an implacable enemy. Monkey-kind is prey, but a prey that is too dangerous to be allowed to exist outside of Tharkoldu domination.

Demon princes, like demon lords, can create almost any form of their choosing. When they become princes, the Law of Ferocity molds possibility energy to give the Tharkoldu a regal form. The form is regal by Tharkoldu standards, not that of humans. Demon princes range in height from 2.3 to 2.75 meters tall. Their weight and coloration vary wildly. While they often retain a humanoid form, they usually have ornamental costumes, cyberware or surgical decorations to enhance their appearance. "Enhance" means appeal to the Tharkoldu aesthetic of pain, enhancements balanced humans regard as horrific or evil.

The demon princes spend most of their time in citadels or strongholds orchestrating the war against the Race, or ruling their contentious horde. Ruling successfully means subduing a number of their natural demonic instincts. Occasionally their instincts demand satiation. Then demon princes hunt, and they are arrogant enough to hunt alone. For specific missions they may order dozens or hundreds of other Tharkoldu to accompany them, but if they are hunting for the joy of hunting and pain, they hunt alone. During the hunts demon princes unleash all the savagery they have repressed, taking otherwise unthinkable risks. They most often hunt in no-man's lands still contested between Tharkold and the Race, but sometimes they prowl the enemy's areas of refuge. Sometimes they penetrate the enemy's strongholds. Sometimes they challenge the enemy's champions. The hunt ends when the demon prince satisfies its demonic instincts. From the point of view of the victims, a demon prince's hunt is a period of random, savage acts that begin and end inexplicably.

Death chance gives a demon prince a chance to avoid death by appeasing the Law of Ferocity. Whenever a demon prince accumulates a mortal wound or is killed, it is given a limited second life. The demon is restored to perfect health in one round by the power of *death chance*, except that the demon shows cosmetic effects of the death blow. *Death chance* is powerful



enough to resurrect the body from atomized remains. Generate a *death chance* total; the demon may expend Possibilities on the roll (and Storm Knights may cancel Possibilities spent). The total is the value of the time the demon's second life lasts. During this time the prince must kill the character who dealt it the death blow. If the Tharkoldu kills the character, its life force absorbs the life force of the victim, and the demon prince's life is fully restored. Should someone else kill the character, or the character dies through accident or other means, the demon prince can satisfy the life force requirement by killing any character.

If the demon prince is killed while under the affect of a *death chance*, it is again resurrected in perfect health in one round. The demon does not generate another *death chance* total. The original clock is still ticking. If the character survives the duration of the *death chance*, the demon prince truly dies.

Example: A demon prince is killed in a savage fight. It generates a *death chance* total of 26. The demon is restored to perfect health at the end of the round it generated the total. It has 40 hours to find and kill the character who dealt it the death blow. If the character survives the next 40 hours, the demon prince dies a final death.

Evil ward uses the demon prince's faith as a defense. *Evil ward* may be used against all non-entities. The Tharkoldu generates a *faith* total. Record the total and compare it to the enemy's faith value (*Spirit* if the target has no *faith*). The result points are added to the attribute that is resisting any attack from the target character; *Toughness* for physical attacks, *Mind* for mental attacks, and *Spirit* for spiritual attacks. The ward remains in place until the target character generates a *faith* total equal to or greater than the *evil ward* total, or until the demon prince chooses to drop the ward. When a demon prince is protected by *evil ward* it may not attack or order others to attack. It may heal itself, move, or perform other non-aggressive actions. To cause harm to another, directly or indirectly, the demon prince must drop the ward.



Demon Prince

DEXTERITY 16

Dodge 20, energy weapons 20, fire combat 20, flight 21(24), melee weapons 20 (23 defense), missile weapons 19, stealth 19, unarmed combat 20 (23)

STRENGTH 19

Lifting 22

TOUGHNESS 24(29)

PERCEPTION 22

Alteration magic 26, divination magic 26, find 26, first aid 23, land

vehicles 23, tracking 26, trick 26

MIND 23

Apportation magic 29, conjuration magic 29, test 31, willpower 25

CHARISMA 16

Persuasion 18, taunt 20

SPIRIT 22

Faith (Tharkoldu Evil) 27, pain weapon 25, intimidation 27

Skill Notes: Demon princes generally have the same arcane knowledges as demon lords: *death* +4 *darkness* +6, *entity* +6, *folk* +6,



inanimate forces +6 and living forces +6. Some have additional arcane knowledges a +2, +3, or +4 adds.

Possibility Potential: all

Natural Tools: teeth, damage value STR+2/21; *alpha sense* (Perception total); *combat dominance* 25, *death chance* 25, *demon luck* 25, *evil ward* (faith defense), status armor +4, wing strike, *unarmed combat* to hit, damage value STR+7/26; swift flight, speed value 11.

Equipment: Typical cyberware: Nanocord; balance-wires (+3 to skills using agility, noted in parentheses above); cybershroud; interdermal plate, armor value TOU+6/29; shock buffer (first 10 shock points); both talons, enhance normal talons to damage value STR+5/24; cyberwings (+3 to push for *flight*, lifting while flying (cyber value 3); backlash buffer 2 (Mind or magic skill total +2 for purposes of backlash); life cyber; 5-slot chipholder. Cyber value: 25.

Demon princes usually have servants carry their pain weapons. If they want to carry a pain weapon, it is a pain staff, *pain weapon* +5/ damage value 30.

Yoshiko Nakata

Yoshiko Nakata may not be her real name, and she has no interest in clarifying the situation for anyone. Intelligence sources have confirmed that she began her career as a computer security analyst for Miti Data Corporation, a credit-reference company in the Sebat Megaplex on Marketplace. The company was ruined in corporate wars with Misaki Computers, one of the Triad. Many of Miti Data Corporation employees were wiped out financially, becoming burakumin. Yoshiko joined the Shiki. Her computer skills were a welcome addition to the Shiki's efforts against the megacorps. She concentrated on efforts against Misaki Computers, cost-

ing them a 250 billion yen in a two-year campaign. Most of the losses were in electronically held funds rather than in real property. Yoshiko helped herself to a small fraction of those funds. Yoshiko invested most of her loot; the remainder purchased the identity of Yoshiko Nakata that is now found in every databank on employee histories.

According to those records, Yoshiko began as a computer security analyst for Soto Investments, left for a promotion as "field manager" for Omi Electronics. Yoshiko was indeed working as a "field manager" when she came to Earth, performing "on-site installation of work stations and security consultation" for offices in Marseilles, France and the Soviet Union. She was part of Nippon Tech's effort to thwart Tharkold's first invasion of Earth.

As a result of her work in the Soviet Union, she accepted a job with Ichi Entertainment's Executive of Special Operations for their North American division. She helped plan the war against Los Angeles gangs, engaged in vital business espionage against American firms, had political opposition groups infiltrated, and maneuvered the media into a stance sympathetic to Kanawa efforts.

Then Ichi couriers were murdered. Yoshiko Nakata suspected Tharkold's action, but withheld this information from her superiors. She devised a "reconnaissance in force" of Tharkold operations, hiring Abbas Sombol and Mark Dyer for this purpose. With the invasion imminent, she armed the LAPD from secret caches spread out throughout the city, and secreted herself in a specially prepared bunker. Her skills in computer science were vital in support of Mark Dyer and Keena's efforts to destroy the Apocularum.

Yoshiko continues to operate from her bunker. Only an employee, Genichi Nishio, and Abbas Sombol know the

location of the bunker. She often contacts Storm Knights anonymously with information. She also offers Nippon equipment and financial resources to back Storm Knight operations, if the Storm Knights would only do her this favor first. Yoshiko is tough at the negotiating table, and more than one character has walked away a little puzzled as to why he has just agreed to her deal.

Yoshiko Nakata

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 15, energy weapons 11, fire combat 15, lock picking 12, maneuver 13, prestidigitation 12, stealth 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8 (13)

PERCEPTION 10

Air vehicles 11, disguise 12, evidence analysis 13, find 12, first aid 12, land vehicles 12, language 14, scholar (Kanawa Corporation) 14, tracking 12, trick 15

MIND 11

Business 15, computer science 19, survival 15, test 14, willpower 18

CHARISMA 12

Charm 16, persuasion 20, taunt 18

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 14, reality 17

Possibilities: 25

Equipment: While Yoshiko Nakata has access to almost anything Nippon Tech manufactures, she rarely bulks out with equipment, preferring an efficient plan to a stuffed backpack. If possible she will always carry the following: business suits lined with double-woven Irimesh, armor value TOU+5/13; a ZIIP77z, damage value 16, ammo 12, range 3-10/25/40; four clips spare ammo in slots in suit jacket; Misaki XESli Laptop, Misaki's top of the line laptop, which Yoshiko vastly upgraded to 1.2 gigabytes of memory, 16 gigabytes of storage. Runs with the experimental RISC22X processor, running about 25 times as fast as the RISC15.



Chapter Nine

Cyberware



Cybertechnology is part of everyday life in Tharkold. Demons are ardent in their hunger for more and better enhancements. As for the Race, they have developed cyberware in a desperate attempt to fight off their implacable enemy. This chapter provides rules covering cyberware, its installation and use, and what can go wrong.

Tharkold vs. the Cyberpapacy

Much of the information in this chapter is similar to what you will find in Chapter 10 of *The Cyberpapacy* sourcebook. In many ways, cyber is cyber. Cyberware from one realm can be used, at some increased risk, by characters from the other.

Tharkold is a "mature" Tech 26 civilization. It has been dealing with this technology for centuries. While the advent of the High Lord of Tharkold, with its own agenda, slowed the cosm's headlong technological advancement, the Tharkoldu have had ample time to refine cybertechnology and assimilate it into their culture.

As you encounter different rules and limits on cyberware in this chapter, please note that they do not supersede Cyberpapacy rules. Cyberpapacy rules govern cyberware from that realm, while these rules apply to cyberware from Tharkold.

Cultural norms for cyberware differ between the two realms as well. Most straight citizens in CyberFrance make extensive use of NeuraSkin to conceal cyberware. The cyberfans decorate it with gaudy chrome and paint jobs. Kadandran and Cyberpapal cyberware is usually machined and sculpted to be aesthetically pleasing in appearance. Cybermuscles, even on prosthetics, are smoothed and rounded to approximate human ideals of beauty. Tharkoldu cyber is brutally functional in appearance. Ma-

chined to the fine tolerance required for its function, yes, but with not a moment wasted trying to make it look organic. Finishes are starkly functional metallic or plastic sheaths designed to protect circuits, not please the eye.

One important Tharkoldu exception are demon lords and princes. These Tharkoldu make extensive use of artificial skin grafts, not to hide their cyberware, but to keep their appearance changing in startling and frightening ways. HighSkin grafts and sculpturing are only permitted for demon lords and princes. Rumor states that the ruler of Helfei, Kolos Teschla, also uses HighSkin.

Availability on Tharkold

Tharkold has countless small cyberlabs, combining the quality control of the Cyberpapacy's best factories with the craftsmanship of the most individualistic technofreak. Components are manufactured by the UltraCAD process.

Many Tharkold natives have the skills and equipment to manufacture their own cyberware and Tharkoldu demand keeps them busy. Free Race are often equipped with cyberware by their governments. Tharkoldu may acquire implants from their pride, or allied prides.

Slaves of Tharkoldu are sometimes equipped with cyberware by their masters. Most commonly modified are warriors, scientists, or other skilled servants.

Availability in the Realm

Cyberware is harder to acquire in Los Angeles. While the technology for producing cyberware exists, Tharkoldu designs are often more sophisticated than their Cyberpapal counterparts, and some have been modified through technomagic. Efforts to reproduce them have not been totally successful. All cyberware made locally suffers from system failure



more often than Tharkoldu manufactured parts. The system failure number is one higher for local cyberware. This could change if enough SyntheCyclers and MakerMods of the right type are stolen.

The other common source of cyberware is theft. The prices listed on the charts at the end of this chapter are for stolen Tharkoldu cyberware obtained on the black market. Local cyberware can be had for about 90% of the price of stolen cyberware. Stolen cyberware may be sold to black market dealers for about 25% of the list price.

Jaz

Jaz is derived from a Kadandran innovation. Tharkold natives automatically have Nanocord installed. Jaz would work for Tharkold cyberware. As an Apotheduct with Jaz has the same cyber rating as Nanocord, there is not much incentive for Tharkold characters to use Jaz.

Surgery and Recovery

Cyberware installation requires surgery, followed by a period of recovery. *Medicine* skill is used to perform the operation. Each cybersystem has an assigned difficulty number. The surgeon must generate a *medicine* total against that difficulty number. Each cybersystem is also rated for the level of wound that the surgery inflicts.

For example, implanting Tendon Augmentation has a difficulty of 10 and leaves the patient with a *heavy wound*.

Surgical wounds heal like any other damage and all the rules governing healing apply. In addition, the level of the surgeon's success can affect the recovery of the patient (see below).

A character cannot spend Possibilities to reduce surgical damage, though a Possibility-rated surgeon could spend possibilities to improve her *medicine* total.

Nanotechnology: Tharkoldu cybertech makes extensive use of nanotechnology. Microscopic, programmed nanomachines allow profound body alterations with less invasive surgical procedures. The difficulty rating of the surgery and the cyber ratings of implants are usually

lower than equivalent values in the Cyberpapacy.

If installing Tharkoldu cyberware using Cyberpapal medical technology, increase the difficulty of the surgery by +3. If installing Cyberpapal implants using Tharkoldu medical technology, reduce the difficulty of the surgery by -3.

Level of Success

Abysmal failure: Difficulty of operation at least 10 greater than *medicine* total. The operation fails and the cyberware is not installed. Patient suffers a one level increase in wounds. For example, a *wound* becomes a *heavy wound*. In an operation that would normally do a *mortal wound*, the patient dies on the table. It requires an immediate *medicine* check at difficulty 20 to resuscitate her.

Even if the patient is not killed outright, it requires a *medicine* or *first aid* check at difficulty 12 to avoid death from surgical shock (don't make this check if the patient has already been resuscitated).

All recovery checks from surgical damage suffer a -5 bonus modifier.

Failure: The operation is a failure and the cyberware is not installed. Character takes normal wounds damage for the operation. Recovery checks from surgical damage suffer a -5 bonus modifier.

Minimal success: The cyberware is poorly installed and counts as a "faulty system" (see "System Failure" below).

Recovery checks from surgical damage are at -5 bonus modifier.

Average success: The cyber system is properly installed. Recovery checks suffer a -3 bonus modifier.

Good success: The cyber system is properly installed and recovery checks from surgical damage are not modified.

Superior success: As a *good* success but recovery checks get a +3 bonus modifier.

Spectacular success: The cyberware is fitted perfectly and never suffers system failure (see below). Recovery checks from surgical damage get a +5 bonus modifier.

Occultech and Surgery

When implanting cyberware in Tharkoldu or when installing a Technomagical implant in any character, *occultech* must be combined with

surgery or the operation won't take.

An *occultech* must make an *occultech* check against the same difficulty as the surgery. If the *occultech* level of success is different from the *medicine* level of success:

- the wound level and recovery modifiers are handled according to the *medicine* level of success.
- if either the *occultech* or *medicine* checks fail, then the cyberware is not installed. However, if both succeed, use the *occultech* result to determine how effective the implant is.

For example, a Tharkoldu undergoes surgery to have a cyberarm attached. The *medicine* success level is *Good*, but the *occultech* level is *Minimal*. The demon heals according to the rules for a *Good* success, but the implant is a faulty system, and may malfunction on a die roll of 1 or 2.

Upgrading cyberware

When upgrading or replacing an existing cybersystem, if the existing system can be reached relatively easily then the surgeon gains a +3 bonus modifier for her *medicine* total. This bonus never applies to organ transplants or brain surgery, to modifications involving major reconstruction of the skeletal system, or to whole body modifications.

Vat Jobs

The latest breakthrough in Tharkoldu cybertech is the surgical reconstruction pod, more commonly called the "Vat." This apparatus combines the most advanced microsurgical technology with extremely efficient nanomachines. The surgical difficulty number of an operation performed in a Vat is reduced by three. The patient is kept in stasis inside the Vat during his entire recovery period, and the nanotech program regulating his recovery does not allow daily *medicine* checks to improve his chances of making a recovery check.

Vats cannot install Cyberpapal cyberware. The patterning programs inside the Vat, an *occultech* process, are not compatible with Cyberpapal 'ware.

A patient can be placed in a Vat to recover from non-surgical damage.



When he is placed in the Vat and the nanomachinery program is activated, a *medicine* check can be made using the Medicine Chart on page 56 of the *Torg Rulebook*. If it succeeds, the bonus it would give a recovering character is applied to all the character's recovery rolls while he is in the Vat.

A Vat may be programmed to release its patient at the end of a specific time. It may also be programmed to release a patient once a particular wound status is obtained. The two methods may be combined. Programming the Vat takes one minute, and is no more complicated than programming a VCR.

Example: A mortally wounded Tharkoldu could be placed in a Vat, and the Vat programmed to "Release the patient after one week, or as soon as its status is a single wound, whichever comes first."

If the Vat program is interrupted before the character is completely recovered, the effect is disastrous. Treat this as an *abysmal failure* in surgery. If the character was placed in the vat to recover from non-surgical wounds, use his original wound level as the basis of the increased damage.

Systems Failures

Whenever a character uses a skill or attribute enhanced by cyberware, or uses a cybernetic device, and rolls a 1 on the action die, the cybersystem may malfunction.

The gamemaster generates a bonus and compares it to the Systems Failure Table. The gamemaster rolls again on a 10 or 20. Note: this table differs from the one for Cyberpapal technology. Use this table if the malfunctioning system is of Tharkoldu manufacture, whether the character wearing it is from Tharkold or not.

Faulty Systems: Faulty systems risk malfunction on a die roll of 1 or 2. Faulty systems are:

- systems that were badly made. This is extremely rare in Tharkold. In Los Angeles "Bootleg" cybertech is not quite as good as other cyberware, and does count as a faulty system.
- systems that were poorly installed

(see "Surgery and Recovery," above).

- salvaged cyberware that is installed in a new user without modification using *cybertech*.

Note in "Basics," below, that Tharkoldu characters using Race or Cyberpapal implants face even higher chances of malfunction. Cyberware damaged by systems failure can also face increased chances for subsequent failures.

Possibilities and Systems Failure: A possibility-rated character can always spend a possibility if the die roll indicates possible systems failure. If he spends the possibility, roll the action die again. Systems failure only occurs if this second die roll is a 1. This possibility is used solely to avoid a systems failure, and does not count as a roll *again*, acting like a *second chance* instead.

Cyberpsychosis

As a living being loads on progressively more cyberware, it leads to psychological instability, an inherent problem to the cybertech phenomenon.

Every item of cyberware has a basic cyber rating. This measures the alienating effect it has on living psyches. Each time a character has a new system implanted, note the cyber rating on the character sheet. Add the new rating to the character's total cyber value, and record that in the cyber value in the skill box on the character sheet.

Cyberware's effects on the human psyche are partly innate, and partly cultural. Cyberpsychosis in Tharkold is similar to its counterpart in the Cyberpapacy, but manifests differently. Demons are less vulnerable to cyberpsychosis than humans. This is reflected in the "Tharkold Cyberpsychosis Table" in this chapter. This table should be used when determining the effects of cyberpsychosis on a character in Tharkold reality, regardless of whether the cyberware is Tharkoldu or not. For characters from other realms, the gamemaster may use the Human column of the Cyberpsychosis Table here.

Occurrence: A cyberpsychotic episode can occur any time a character with a cyber value greater than zero suffers a *setback* result. This can result

from a *maneuver*, *intimidate*, or other interaction, or it may appear on the conflict line of a drama card.

The gamemaster generates a cyber value total: the character's cyber value plus a bonus against the character's *Spirit* (or *cyberpsyche* for cyborgs). The result points are read on the Cyberpsychosis Table. Note that negative values are meaningful on this table, and may cause the character to actually reduce his cyber value.

Cyber value totals generated against Tharkoldu have a -3 bonus modifier.

Syndromes: Certain forms of cyberpsychosis can trigger a psychotic syndrome, that is, a specific form of insanity. These can last a few seconds or involve massive breakdowns lasting indefinitely.

To select a syndrome, roll the action die and consult the Syndrome Table. Note that humans and Tharkoldu consult different columns of the Syndrome Table.

When a cyberpsychotic character rolls on the Syndrome Table, record the Syndrome he gets. Thereafter, whenever that character suffers a psychotic episode as a result of cyberpsychosis, the same syndrome is used.

A character can get rid of this specific syndrome if he undergoes therapy using *psychology* skill and reduces his cyber value by at least one point. The next time he suffers a psychotic episode, a new, randomly selected syndrome will afflict him.

Resisting Cyberpsychosis: A player may declare that her character is actively resisting cyberpsychosis. She must declare this before the gamemaster rolls the die for the cyberpsychosis check. This is handled under the rules for an active defense, so that the character must not have already used her action for the round. This action counts as a defense, should "Defend" be an approved action. She generates a *Spirit* total with a minimum bonus of +1, and this is the difficulty number for the gamemaster's cyberpsychosis check. Cyborgs use *cyberpsyche* to actively resist cyberpsychosis.

Reducing Cyber Value: A character may reduce his cyber value by having cyberware removed surgically. Removing a system with a cyber rating of +2 would reduce the total cyber



value by 2. *Psychology* skill can reduce cyber value through therapy. Particularly successful resistance to cyberpsychosis can strengthen mental equilibrium and reduce cyber value. Lastly, the miracle of *cyberharmony* can reduce cyber value and ameliorate cyberpsychosis.

The minimum cyber rating for any implant or system is one point. Demon cyberware in a human system has a minimum cyber rating equal to its base rating (see below for more information regarding this situation).

Maximum Cyber Value: A character with a cyber value that is at least 10 points higher than her *Spirit* (*cyberpsyche* for cyborgs) is in danger of permanent insanity - that is, she will become a gamemaster character. At the end of any adventure in which:

1) a Storm Knight ends up with a cyber value greater than her *Spirit* +10, and ...

2) the character suffered cyberpsychosis while in Tharkold ...

the gamemaster is advised to roll a cyberpsychosis check. If the check succeeds, the character suffers a complete breakdown. If she does not immediately reduce her cyber value, usually by spending possibilities to raise her *Spirit* (or *cyberpsyche*), or else having some cyberware removed, *she goes insane and becomes a gamemaster character at the next onset of cyberpsychosis.*

Cyberware Implants

Cyberware implants are technological or technomagical systems that are implanted into the body. They can enhance the senses, improve abilities and skills, provide the wearer with electronic systems, weapons, even magical powers.

Implants made for one species are rarely useful to the other, and indeed, can be downright dangerous.

Demon implants must be made and installed using *occulttech* as well as *cybertech* skill, in order to mesh effectively with the magical components of Tharkoldu metabolism. Human cyberware must be modified using *occulttech* or it will not respond to de-



mon nerve impulses. Most Tharkoldu don't bother with human cyberware. Human cyberware implanted into Tharkoldu checks for a systems failure whenever the action die roll is 1-4.

The Race learned early that Tharkoldu implants were best left alone. The magical energies of demon implants are inimical to the human psyche and even to the human spirit.

For humans and other non-enchanted beings, the initial cyber rating of demon implants is increased by +2.

In addition, the cyber rating of the implant can never be reduced by more than two points. That is, the lowest cyber rating it can have for a human wearer is its basic rating.

Example: Kwang kills a demon and salvages a *CyberVisual* implant from its corpse. Foolishly, she has the trophy implanted. Its basic cyber rating is a +3. For Kwang, it has a rating of +6, and that figure is added to her total cyber value.

Kwang can never reduce the cyber rat-



ing for this implant below +3, its basic rating, whether she uses psychology or cyberharmony to lower it.

For elves and giants, or other enchanted characters who require *Magic* axiom 9 to live, the initial cyber rating of Tharkoldu cyberware is increased by +1. The cyber rating of the implant cannot be reduced by more than one point. The lowest cyber rating it can have is its basic rating.

Only Tharkoldu may implant Tharkoldu cyberware at its basic rating. Tharkoldu may reduce the cyber rating of an implant below its basic rating, to a minimum of one.

Power Sources: Tharkoldu cyberware is extremely energy efficient. Unless otherwise specified, cyber systems operate on juice from energy-scavenging nanomachines that pick up power from sunlight, thermocouple taps on waste body heat, etc.

Units that require external power use a cybernetic power cell as described in Chapter 10 under "Power Cells and Generators." The descriptions of all such implants will tell you how long they can operate before the power cell must be recharged or replaced.

Vril batteries are highly prized as power sources for Tharkoldu implants. A *Vril* power cell can drive an implant indefinitely without recharging.

Basics

HighSkin is artificial skin and rigiform shapers to alter the appearance of high ranking Tharkoldu. HighSkin is rarely seen in the Race.

Most cyberware requires a neural conductor. In the Cyberpapacy, the neural conductors are NeuraCal and Jaz. Jaz is not part of Tharkoldu cybertech, and instead of NeuraCal, the neural conductor is ...

Nanocord: This nanotech system is installed by a treatment that needs to be taken only once and which causes permanent changes in the central nervous system.

The user is injected with a series of programmed nanomachines that modify the conductivity of nerve tissue, allowing direct mental control of implants.

Nanocord implantation requires

one week of treatment, for several hours a day. During this week, the character has a *wound* and cannot heal the *wound* until the treatment stops. If treatment stops before the week is complete, the Nanocord machines do not stabilize and the installation fails. It must be started over again from scratch.

Throughout this chapter, when we talk about a "neural conductor", we mean NeuraCal, Nanocord, or Jaz. Jaz works the same for characters from either realm, but there are differences between Nanocord and NeuraCal.

Nanocord vs. NeuraCal: Characters equipped with Nanocord can use implants designed for NeuraCal and vice-versa. Tharkoldu can get Cyberpapal implants and cyberfans equipped with NeuraCal can use Tharkoldu cyber.

However, when using an implant designed for a different interface, increase the chance of systems failure by +1. Thus, even a perfectly installed system may fail on a roll of 1, a typical cybersystem may fail on a roll of 1 or 2, while a faulty system may fail on a roll of 1 to 3.

Nervejacks: A Nervejack is a socket embedded in the character's body and connected to his central nervous system. It allows him to plug into cybernetically controlled equipment and interface with it by thought.

Jacked characters can use cyberterminals or cyberdecks to directly access computers. They can use cybercontrol units installed in vehicles, weapons systems, UltraCAD modules, security systems, battle armor and other equipment. They can plug into external sensors and storage systems.

A Nervejack can input or output data. A character might plug into a computer and download a datafile to a display or recorder implant, or download program code into an implant to change its function, or dump data from an implant into an external device of some kind.

Nervejacks may be installed anywhere in the body. Jacks implanted anywhere below the wearer's neck require a neural conductor. Jacks installed on or above the neck are connected directly to the brain or brainstem and don't need a conductor.

CyberSenses

CyberSense implants enhance the user's existing senses or provide entirely new senses. A character can either have her natural sensors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue/mouth, skin) modified, or she can purchase a CyberSense implant package.

Bonuses from Tharkold implants are cumulative. If a character had both Sharpsight and Hidehunter, she would receive a +5 to her *find* skill (+3 for the Sharpsight, plus +2 for the Hidehunter).

Natural Implants: A character can have no more than **three** enhancements made directly to a natural sensor. These are called **natural implants**. Natural implants can be made almost invisible to the naked eye, though a cybernetic detection device such as a Modspotter can reveal their presence. A close visual inspection, from within a 50 cm, generating a *cybertech* or *medicine* total of eight or more also spots natural implants.

Natural implants do not require a neural conductor. Natural implants add their full cyber rating to the character's total cyber value.

Each eye socket and each ear counts as a natural sensor. The remaining three senses: taste, smell, and touch, each count as a single natural sensor.

Thus, a character can have up to six natural CyberVisual enhancements, six CyberAuditory enhancements, and three each CyberOlfactory, CyberGustatory, and CyberTactile implants.

CyberSense Packages: A CyberSense package replaces the natural sensor. CyberSense packages are obviously artificial. A character may have up to **four** enhancements placed in a single package.

CyberSense packages always require a neural conductor. Each enhancement in a CyberSense package has its cyber rating reduced by 1, with a minimum cyber rating of 1 pre enhancement.

Modular Implants: CyberVisual and CyberAuditory packages can be implanted permanently, replacing the natural sensor. However, they may also be modular. Modular packages may be removed at will and replaced with other packages of the same type but with different enhancements. Modular en-



hancements require a Nerve Socket, which replaces the natural sensor.

Nerve Sockets have a cyber rating of +2. However, the cyber ratings of the modular units apply only as long as they are plugged into the socket. So characters can reduce their cyber value when they are not using a particular package of enhancements.

Example: Akiko has three natural implants in her left eye: *Farsight*, *Darksight*, and *Sharpsight*. She has had her right eye replaced by a *CyberVisual Nerve Plug* and has several modular packages in her bag of tricks. Her nightfighting configuration contains *Heathunter*, *Dangerscan*, and *Killseeker*. Her "burglar-buddy" mod has a *Microsight*, *Modspotter*, *EMVue*, and *Eyestealer*.

CyberVisual Systems

CyberVisual implants are wired directly to the optic nerve. Modular devices can be used, which connect to a CyberVisual Nerve Socket.

Cybercam: This digital video camera can record anything the wearer sees. It has a 20 block integral memory or can be directed to a *DatChip* plugged into a *ChipHolder*. Images stored in integral memory can be downloaded to external storage via a *Nervejack*.

The Cybercam can make still photos or video recordings. Both formats produce high-resolution images, and can be studied for visual information using *Perception* skills as if the actual scene were being observed.

Images can be processed through any other visual enhancements the character has as they are being recorded. They can be run through an imaging enhancement program after being stored. This allows almost any visual enhancement to be brought to bear on a recorded image, including enlargements (up to X25), thermographics, pattern analysis, etc.

See the entry on *DatChips* (below) for information on chip storage capacity.

Dangerscan: Feeds visual data to a high-speed nanoprocessor array that analyzes the environment for possible threats. The user gets a +3 *find* bonus modifier for detecting ambushes, surprise attacks, booby traps, concealed

weapons and other hidden dangers.

Darksight: Increases ambient light to approximately the intensity of daylight allowing the user to see normally, even by starlight. It is useless in complete darkness.

EMVue: Sensitive to the electromagnetic frequencies used in electronic devices and electrical circuitry. It confers a +3 value to *Perception* and *Mind* skills used to find, repair, or manipulate such systems, including cyberware, security systems, power sources, energy weapons, and other powered equipment.

Eyestealer: Stores hundreds of retinal ID patterns in its memory and can mimic any of them. The Eyestealer has a laser scanner that can record new patterns from living subjects or subjects that have been dead for three minutes or less. It is necessary to maintain direct eye contact with a subject for 10 seconds, at a distance of 10 cm or less, in order to record his retinal pattern.

Farsight: Magnifies objects viewed at a distance by up to X50. Adds +3 to *find* skill when the object or scene being viewed has details that would otherwise be invisible to normal vision at that distance.

A *Farsight* reduces ranged attack bonus number modifiers due to distance by 1 point. Thus, at *Medium* range, the modifier becomes -2. At *Long* range, the modifier becomes -4.

Glarestopper: Steps down intense ambient illumination to the level of daylight. The character's vision is not affected by flashes, glare, or blinding lights.

Heathunter: Converts infra-red light into the visible range. It gives a +3 bonus to *find* skill in a poorly lit environment, and to *tracking* skill in all circumstances. Unless the environment is very hot or very cold it allows vision even in complete darkness. It can be jammed by open flame or other very active heat source (over 100 degrees Centigrade) in the user's line of sight.

Hidehunter: Enhances discrimination of patterns and color gradations, allowing the user to spot camouflage or concealed items and enemies. In well-lit conditions, the user gets a +2 to *find* skill. *Heathunter* or *Darksight* are needed for the *Hidehunter* to work in poorly lit conditions.

Killseeker: An active laser target

acquisition unit. The *Killseeker* interfaces with any "smart" weapon or cybercontrolled vehicle weapon system to give a +2 bonus modifier to ranged attack skills. A *Killseeker* gives a +1 bonus modifier to ranged attacks that do not use smart weapons.

Microsight: Allows microscopic vision, magnifying the object viewed anywhere from X25 to X10,000. Objects must be viewed from a range of 25 cm or less.

Magnified vision (X25 or so) adds +3 to *find* totals when examining anything which has details or information not visible to the naked eye (fingerprints, microdots, etc.).

Full microscopic vision adds +2 to skills involving examination or manipulation on the micro level, such as:

- surgical procedures
- *cybertech* or other skill involving miniature or microminiature circuits
- *medicine* or *evidence analysis* tasks involving the examination of blood samples, fabric threads, hairs, etc.

Modspotter: All cyberware emits an electromagnetic aura, and using a *Modspotter*, a character can detect the presence of implants just by looking at someone.

The *Modspotter* has a *find* value of 20 for detecting cyberware and unless the cyberware being viewed is shielded or protected by an *EM Shroud*, its resistance value is 0, so that detection is automatic.

Sharpsight: Adds +2 to any *Perception* skill use that depends on sight, such as *evidence analysis*, *find*, and *tracking*.

TextLED: Reads out text or numeric data across the user's visual field. The user can zoom in on the text field at will, shrink it, turn it on and off. Any readout data from a computer or other device can be displayed on the *TextLED*.

Third Eye: A nanotech synthetic "eye" that can be installed anywhere on the body. The Third Eye is a cluster of photo-receptive nanomachines and synthetic nerve cables, protected by a densiplast lens and a shutter, mimicking the human eyelid.

Typical locations are the back of the head or neck, a hand, or the forehead. A character may only have one Third Eye active at one time. Any more



vision otherwise impaired. It grants a +3 to all *find* totals to locate objects that would be visible to normal sight in daylight. It cannot read print, or distinguish texture and color.

When a character uses Sonar, his location is automatically known to anyone in the area with any form of high-frequency sonic detection gear, including a Hi-Freq Soundcatcher or Sonar.

Sonar operates off of a power cell and needs recharging about every three months.

Soundcatcher: Adds +2 to *Perception* skills gathering data from sound in the normal frequency range of human and demon hearing.

Hi-Freq or Lo-Freq Soundcatchers are also available, which add +2 to *Perception* skills in high or low sonic frequencies, respectively. A Hi-Freq operates on sounds above the normal limit of human hearing (over 20,000 cycles/second). A Low-Freq operates on sounds at the lower limits of human hearing and below (30 cycles/second to about 5 cycles/second).

Soundtrap: A directional sampler that locks on to specific sonic patterns and filters out extraneous noise. This would allow the user to listen in on one specific conversation in a room full of people talking. Soundtrap requires a line of sight to the targets. Soundtrap can only pick up noises within four feet (120 centimeters) of its focus point. It locks onto sounds emitted around the focus point. The user can selectively screen out any unwanted noises.

Truthhear: This is a voice stress analysis unit that can measure stress patterns in a speaker's voice and can attempt to verify whether she is telling the truth. The user can generate a *Mind* +3 total against the speaker's *Mind* or *Charisma* (whichever is higher) to detect a lie.

Truthhear also can offset the effects of verbal manipulations, revealing the speaker's actual nervousness, intention to deceive, etc. It raises the user's resistance value against verbal *trick*, *charm*, or *persuasion* by +3. If the speaker is telling what she believes to be true, then the user's resistance to *trick*, *charm* or *persuasion* is reduced by three.

Gustatory Systems

Gustatory (taste-oriented) systems, can be implanted in the mouth and tongue, or external units can be implanted elsewhere on the body. This can be useful for systems like a Poison Snooper, since it allows food and drink to be sampled without actually having to put suspect materials in the mouth.

Poison Snooper: The implant can detect drugs and poisons, giving +3 to *Perception* for that purpose.

Tattletaster: A sophisticated taste enhancer augmented by a chemical analyzer and built-in expert system that can identify the components in anything you can taste. Adds +3 to *Perception* for purposes of taste.

Olfactory Systems

These can be installed in the actual nose and nasal passages, or built into a unit implanted elsewhere in the body. Units planted elsewhere can sample smells without actually having to breathe in the character's environment.

Oxyplugs: Self-contained oxygen capsules which seal off nasal passages and provide air for 10 minutes. Capsules can be recharged in 30 minutes by built-in compressors.

Purifier: A gas-permeable membrane which will pass oxygen but filters out dust, smoke, smog, and some of the heavier gases. It does *not* provide oxygen, but removes foreign compounds from the oxygen available in the local atmosphere.

Toxsniffer: Detects toxins in the atmosphere and triggers a warning sensation to alert the user. Even the fastest acting gas will trigger the sniffer before the poison can take effect.

Windhunter: Allows a +3 to *tracking* skill in any environment where tracking by scent is at all possible.

Windsniffer: Adds +3 to *Perception* for skill use depending on the sense of smell.

Tactile Systems

Tactile implants are usually installed in the hands since they enhance manipulation skills. A

CyberTactile package can be installed in a prosthetic hand or arm.

Circuitspy: Allows the wearer to detect and trace electrical circuits and read their voltage, amperage, etc. when touching an object that contains such circuits. Circuitry within 10 cm of the implant is detected.

Microtouch: +3 to *Perception* or *Mind* skills involving manipulation on microscopic level: surgery, cybertech or other electronics work, etc.

Touchbooster: +3 to *Dexterity* or *Perception* skill use involving manipulation or sensitivity of touch.

Touchmike: Acts as a microphone picking up vibrations in walls, windows, or other thin barriers, allowing the user to listen in on conversations in adjoining rooms. Inputs can be routed through any Auditory implants the user has, enhancing the signals.

Physical Enhancement Systems

Physical enhancements augment bodily functions and capabilities. They may involve strengthening muscle fibers, altering the "firing rate" of nerve impulses, or otherwise augment the body's responses.

Metasensory Systems

These cyberware systems grant senses to the users that have no analogue in the normal five senses.

Balancewires: Improve whole-body coordination and spatial awareness. Give a +2 bonus modifier to *acrobatics*, *beast riding*, *climbing*, *dodge*, *flight*, *maneuver*, and defensive uses of *melee weapons* and *unarmed combat*. A power cell requires monthly recharging.

Biostat: Monitors vital signs, metabolism, blood chemistry, and other medical data. Readouts can be shown on external displays, routed to the user's LED Readout implant, or retrieved via his Nervejack. *First aid* or *medicine* totals on behalf of the user are at a +3 bonus.

Cybershroud: An electronic countermeasures system against electronic detection and cybernetic sensors. Cybershroud has a passive resistance value of 19 against the action of a



would overwhelm the visual center of the brain. A character can have multiple 3-Eyes installed, and switch among them at will.

The 3-Eye allows normal vision and **does not count** as either a natural implant or a CyberVisual package. It is an extra eye. A 3-Eye can be given one additional natural implant. A 3-Eye requires a neural conductor.

Visual Nerve Socket: This interface plug replaces a natural eye. It allows the character to plug in modular CyberVision packages. Natural

implants cannot be installed in an eye that is replaced by a Visual Nerve Socket. Requires neural conductor.

Auditory Systems

These systems are fitted into an organic ear, or may replace it entirely. They are wired to the auditory nerves, and the user may switch between various enhancements at will.

Aural Nerve Socket: This replaces a natural ear. It allows the use of modular

CyberAudio packages. Natural implants cannot be made to the replaced ear. Requires neural conductor.

Bugsweeper: Detects audio feedback from active microphones, giving +3 to *find* for detecting bugs.

Codears: An implant capable of unscrambling speech distorted by a Voice Mask (see below). If the user knows the code pattern the speaker has set the Voice Mask to use, then understanding is automatic. Otherwise, the Codear user must generate a *Mind* total of 12 or more to understand what is being said.

Cybercorder: Can record anything the wearer hears. Signals may be filtered through any other auditory systems before being recorded. The recorder can also be used to record radio transmissions picked up on a Radiohear.

Recordings can be made in the 'corder's internal storage (20 data blocks) or routed to a DatChip in a ChipHolder.

Damper: Steps down loud noises to below the threshold of discomfort. Any noise over 80 Db (loud speech) is damped to 80 Db.

Freqfilter: The user can filter out sounds in any frequency range he desires, leaving other sounds uncluttered by background noise. For example, if listening to a conversation on a beach, the sounds of surf and wind could be filtered out, leaving the voices clearer. However, sounds in the same frequency range cannot be selectively filtered. All the conversations on that beach would be equally audible.

Radiohear: An implanted radio receiver that can pick up any desired wavelength in the radio spectrum.

Radio communications on Tharkold are always encrypted. Radiohears are universally equipped with a decryption expert system. The user can generate a *Mind* +3 total to try and decode transmissions picked up over the Radiohear. The difficulty values for codes vary from eight, for simple scramblers, to 25 or higher for the most sophisticated polyphase scrambler circuits.

Radio units operate off of a power cell and need recharging every once a month.

Sonar: Generates sonar ranging signals, which allow movement as if sighted even in total darkness or with



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Modspotter. It adds +5 to the difficulty number for anyone trying to detect the user's presence via electronic or thermographic means.

It reduces any bonuses for smart weapons or smart ammo used against the wearer by 2 points.

The ECM Shroud draws energy from a power cell and requires recharging once a week.

Nanodoc: This implant is a nanotech "dispatcher" that releases nanotech repair machines into the user's bloodstream, directs them and monitors their progress. The Nanodoc helps repair the user. It gives the user a *medicine* skill equal to her *Toughness* +2. This skill may only be used on the character herself.

Radiotalker: Allows the character to transmit his voice by radio, over any wavelength he desires, with a range of 10 kilometers. The implant can transmit subvocal speech - almost thought rather than speech - if a neural conductor is used. Audible speech can be transmitted without using neuro-transmitter enhancements.

Radiotalker requires a power cell and monthly recharging.

Radsensor: A Geiger counter built into a patch of skin. It warns of dangerous radiation levels with a prickling, burning sensation. The hotter the radiation count, the sharper the prickling. Precise measurements can be read out on a TextLED visual implant.

Skinscan: A nanotech web of sensors sensitive to air pressure, thermal energy, and visible light is infiltrated through the character's skins. This grants 360 degree perception within a range of 100 meters. It allows a +3 to *find* totals against events happening behind the user, or in total darkness. It allows movement at full value in the dark, or with vision otherwise impaired, with no danger of colliding with unseen objects.

Vocal Systems

These units are built into or replace the vocal cords and the resonance chambers in the head and chest.

Amplifier: Amplifies the voice, up to a top volume of 130 db (as loud as a jumbo jet at takeoff). This is not recommended unless the user has an audi-

tory system that can step down the volume of what he hears. Words spoken by amplified voices can be understood up to 1,500 meters away, and that is therefore the maximum distance for miracles with a range of "voice." An amplified voice can be heard as distorted noise as far away as 4,000 meters.

An Amplifier uses a power cell and requires recharging once a month.

Squeaker: Compresses speech into a single, narrow frequency band. Bands can be varied at will. Using a Squeaker, a character can speak to someone with a Hi-Freq Soundcatcher on a prearranged frequency without being overheard by those limited to normal hearing.

Voice Mask: Masks the user's voiceprint with a synthesized pattern of constantly shifting frequencies, giving it a metallic or electronic quality. This defeats voice stress analysis.

A Voice Mask can also be set to scramble the voice according to a selected encryption scheme. The voice can only be decoded by a character using Codears. If the listener has the code pattern programmed into her Codears, she can understand masked speech automatically. Otherwise, the Codear must try to decrypt the sounds.

Voice Mimic: The implant can store voiceprints of hundreds of voices, and allows the user to speak in any of these voices. In order to program a new voiceprint into the mimic, it must be fed input from a recording of the voice.

Detecting a mimicked voice to be false has a difficulty of 20 if the voice is subjected to voice stress analysis using a Truthear or similar device.

Structural Systems

These are cybersystems that augment physical structure and strength. All are energized by power cells that require recharging once every three months.

Interdermal Plating: Natural armor plating, installed by introducing nanomachine colonies into the body. Minerals from the bloodstream are used to secrete thicker, tougher cell materials into the skin and the subdermal layers of fat and muscle. Basic Interdermal Plating is implanted in the torso area.

Interdermal plating allows armor adds of +1 to +6, and has a cyber rating of +1. The Maximum Armor rating is 25.

Separate plating can be implanted in the limbs (treat as one point of armor) and head. Each increases the armor adds by +1. Limb plating counts towards the penalties in the event of systems failure.

A neuroconductor is required to prevent severe loss of mobility and sensation. If Jaz is used, then between doses the armor is considered to be in a state of failure.

When Interdermal Plating fails:

- the user suffers penalties to *Dexterity* and *Strength* equal to the armor adds. The same penalty applies to *Perception* when it involves touch.
- the armor still provides its armor adds as long as the local *Technological* axiom is 13 or more.
- if the character suffers a *fatigue* result for any reason, he takes result points of shock damage equal to a generated bonus plus the armor rating. Roll the die and determine the bonus. Add the armor rating. If the final total is 1 or more, the character suffers that amount of shock damage.

Exodermal Plating: Actual densiplast plating grafted to the surface of the character's skin, providing the ultimate in implanted armors. Exodermal Plating adds +1 to +5 armor adds, and is cumulative with Interdermal Plating and external armors. Maximum Armor Total for Exodermal Plating is 30.

If the user does not have a neural conductor, then each point of Exodermal Plating reduces the character's *Dexterity* by 1 point. If fitted with a neural conductor, then the *Dexterity* is reduced by 1 for every full two points of Exodermal Plating adds.

If a character is fitted with Nanocord, cyberarms and cyberlegs, this is reduced. The penalty is one point of *Dexterity* for each three points of exodermal armor. For example, a character with +3 armor adds due to Exodermal Plating would suffer a one point *Dexterity* penalty.

Having a Skeleton Replacement and two or more cyberlimbs installed cancels the *Dexterity* penalty entirely.

Bodymax: Major joints and bones



are surgically replaced with ultra-hard, densiplast. Nanomachine colonies reinforce the other bones and connective tissue, increase the mechanical strength of muscle fibers, and increase neuromuscular response. Synthetic bone marrow enhances blood cell production to avoid anemia or leukemia.

Bodymax has a rating from +1 to +5. Each add of Bodymax increases *Strength* by +1 and allows the body to support a cyberlimb rated at *Strength* +(5+Bodymax add).

For example, a character with Bodymax+2 receives a bonus of +2 to his natural *Strength*, and can support cyberlimbs with a rating of *Strength* +7.

Bodymax also grants a +10 bonus when pushing speed or power.

Bodymax **does not** combine its effect with Tendon Augmentation.

Tendon Augmentation: Installs nanomachine reinforcers that replace normal ligaments tissues with material almost 10 times stronger and more resilient. It is essential for characters with prosthetics granting a *Strength* bonus of +3 or more. Such extra-strong cyberlimbs will snap bones and rip muscle without reinforcement.

Tendon Augmentation provides safe anchorage for any prosthetic cyberlimb with a *Strength* bonus of up to +5.

It grants a +5 bonus when pushing speed or power.

Prosthetics

The Tharkoldu favor the use of prosthetics and cyberlimbs. Prosthetic replacements with zero adds to *Strength* can be installed and controlled without a neural conductor. They can only duplicate the functions of normal limbs, though it is possible to have devices built into them that are operated by manual controls built into the limb. For example, a prosthetic can contain a cyberweapon that is activated by a control stud or pressure pad on the limb's surface.

+0 prosthetics operate off of a power cell and require recharging every three months.

Prosthetics which increase natural attribute values or contain devices

operated by thought require a neural conductor.

Pain and touch sensors are built into cyberlimbs. The user feels all sensations as he would with a real limb, unless he deliberately shuts off the sensors with a mental command or manual switch. CyberTactile implants can be installed in cyberlimbs as easily as normal limbs.

Cybernetic limbs can be made far stronger than natural ones. **All adds are based on the user's natural *Strength*.** A limb can have a *Strength* add of up to +2 without any other structural modifications to the body. A *Strength* add of +3 to +5 can be supported by Tendon Augmentation. A *Strength* add of +6 to +10 requires a Bodymax. Naturally, a Bodymax can also support limbs with *Strength* adds below +6.

The maximum add for cyberlimbs routinely available on Tharkold is +10. Experimental models with higher adds, developed by the military scientists of the Race, have so far proven as dangerous to the user as to any opponents.

Cyberlimbs with adds operate off of a power cell that requires monthly recharging.

When a cyberlimb increases *Strength*, that increase only applies to the use of the limb in question. Sirach has a natural *Strength* of 8. If he has a Cyberarm +2 installed, the limb has a *Strength* of 10, even if Sirach also has a *Strength* Enhancer.

Sirach's cyberlimb would punch harder, and improve his climbing and throwing abilities, but would not have any effect on running or kicking, which would still be based on his normal *Strength*, though the *Strength* Enhancer would take effect to improve his attribute in their case.

Armor Adds and Cyberlimbs: The densiplast and cerametal construction of cyberlimbs acts as armor. All cyberlimbs have a +6 armor add, which applies only to the limb itself. However, a character with two or more cyberlimbs gets a +1 to his overall armor value for any armor which has a value of +6 or less. His inherent cyberlimb armor counts as protection for his limbs as described on page 132 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Cyberhands: These can be attached to normal arms or cyberarms. They can house cyberweapons, equipment, and can be given any Tactile System implant.

A cyberhand gives a character a +1 in all *Dexterity* skills involving manual dexterity, and this is cumulative with the effects of Tactile implants.

Cyberhands can have a *Strength* from +0 to +5. They can be used to crush flesh, plastic, wood, and light metals. In addition, once they get a firm grip on something, they can be locked in place. The grip cannot slip. Snatching something from a locked cyberhand grip requires a *Strength* total that beats the full *Strength* rating of the hand, that is, the user's *Strength* plus the hand's add.

Cyberarms: The cost and cyber rating of a cyberarm includes a cyberhand. Besides the benefits of a cyberhand, the arm replacement also confers a +1 to damage caused by a punch or melee weapon for every point of *Strength* add that the cyberarm has.

Cyberarms increase *climbing* and *lifting* limit values (page 44 of the *Torg Rulebook*) by the Power Push value of their combined *Strength* bonuses. A character with a single cyberarm with *Strength* +4 would have a climbing limit value of 4 instead of the usual 2, since the Power Push value for a +4 is 2. Cyberarms can crush plastics, light metals, wood, and similar materials.

The cyber rating listed for cyberarms on the Cyberware Table (see below) is the rating for a single cyberarm. The figure next to it, in parentheses, is the rating for a **pair** of arms.

Cyberlegs: A pair of cyberlegs increases the *running* and *long jumping* limit values by the Power Push value of their combined *Strength* bonuses. For example, a pair of cyberlegs with *Strength* +4 each have a combined bonus of +8. The Power Push value for 8 is +3. This increases a human's *running* limit by +3, from 10 to 13.

Cyberlegs also increase the damage for a kick by their *Strength* bonus.

The cyber rating listed for cyberlegs on the Cyberware Table (see below) is the rating for a single cyberleg. The figure next to it, in parentheses, is the rating for a **pair** of legs.

Cyberwings: Cyberwings are only



available to demons and must be installed in pairs. A single cyberwing is useless. The adds must be the same for each wing. The adds (based on the rating of one wing) directly increase:

- the push points on flying speed (normally 10 for Tharkoldu). A +2 wing automatically allows a push of +2, increasing the speed to 12.
- the limit on lifting capacity when flying (normally *Strength*-3 for Tharkoldu) as well as *Strength* for purposes of lifting things when flying.
- *flight* skill.

Cyberwings require a power cell that is recharged monthly.

Cyberorgans: Cybernetic replacements for hearts, lungs, even ductless glands like the liver or pancreas, are common in Tharkoldu. Demons have extensive experience in this technology, since it was the basis for LifeCyber. It is considered part of the duty to the Race to donate usable organs after death.

A cybernetic replacement organ can be fitted with up to three Booster Systems at no extra increase in cyber rating.

Booster Systems

These enhancements permit conscious control of the body's hormone and neurotransmitter systems.

Unless noted, the metabolic differences between demons and humans are so great that this class of implants cannot be transferred between species. The biochemistry of a Tharkoldu Adrenal Booster would be lethally toxic to a human, and vice-versa.

A character can only call on the "emergency reserves" tapped by booster systems so many times before he risks a toxic reaction; the usual limit is three times per day.

Unless otherwise specified in the descriptions below, any given booster can be triggered three times in a day without danger. Any additional use of that booster risks an Overdose (see boxed text).

Adrenal Booster: Provides a controlled burst of adrenalin (or the equivalent Demonic hormone) increasing *Strength* and *Dexterity* by +3. The effect lasts for at least three minutes. The total duration of the boost may be

pushed. Generate a power push total using *Toughness* instead of *Strength*. The difficulty number is eight.

Add the power push value to 11. Use this as a time value to see how long the system will sustain the boost. For example, if the *Toughness* total is 13, which beats the difficulty by 5, the duration of the boost by is increased +2, to 13. A time value of 13 has a measure of 400 seconds, or just shy of 7 minutes.

At the end of the boost, the user suffers shock damage determined by the push result. If he didn't try to push the duration, he suffers no damage.

Automed: An automed is an artificial nanotech "organ" which activates when the wearer suffers a *mortal wound*. Generate a *Toughness* total. The character will not suffer the usual shock damage for a *mortal wound* for that number of rounds. A fourth wound is still fatal, as always.

Drug Plug: A set of implants in the liver and kidneys which increase tolerance for specific boosters and other drugs. Drug Plugs are *specific*. A Drug Plug (Endorphin Booster) +1 only counts when using an Endorphin Booster.

Each add of Drug Plug increases the maximum safe dosage of the booster or drug by 1. A character with Drug Plug (Endorphin Booster) +2 could take 5 doses of Jaz in a day without risking overdose.

Endorphin Booster: This is a direct brain implant that controls the pain reception centers, generating endorphins that reduce the user's susceptibility to pain and shock. It increases her *Toughness* by +3 for 30 minutes.

Immunoresponse Booster: This system maintains heightened T-cell levels and can temporarily heighten the body's resistance to toxins and infections. Whenever a character is resisting disease or poison, or trying to throw off an infection, this booster may be triggered. It adds +3 to the character's values, whether they are acting or resisting. However, the booster triggers a surge in body temperature and a bout of weakness and nausea, lasting 30 minutes. All skill and attribute checks are reduced by 3 points during this period, for purposes other than resistance to disease or toxins.

This implant cannot be used to resist

the effects of a booster overdose. However, it may be used as often as needed without itself causing an overdose.

Mind Booster: The implant induces a psychogenic state that makes the user better able to resist mental trauma. One dose increases *Mind* by +3 for one hour. An overdose, besides its other effects, will reduce *Mind* by 3 points for 24 hours, and induce hallucinations and paranoia.

Shock Buffer: Increases metabolic support for organ most vulnerable to shock damage. Users can absorb considerably more shock damage before passing out. Each buffer allows the user to take 10 additional shock points before passing out. A character with *Toughness* 14 could take 24 shock points before passing out.

Shock Suppression Booster: Directly overrides pain signals to the brain and modifies the body's normal emergency reactions to trauma. Shock Suppression boosters do not use doses and users cannot overdose. The action of the implant is constant.

Characters using a Shock Suppression Booster:

- take three fewer shock points per blow.
- take only a K result from the first KO result they suffer. It takes a second KO to actually knock the character out.
- do not have to pass their next turn after suffering a heavy wound.

Accumulation of shock points from *mortal wounds* is not reduced and dying characters still die on schedule. The implant blocks the pain of wounds and overrides the body's attempts to immobilize itself when wounded. It does not actually reduce tissue damage, bleeding, and other trauma.

Shock Suppression Boosters mute the experience of pain sufficiently that a character who uses one cannot gain a *roll again* under the Law of Pain. Their effects combine with the Law of Ferocity so that a Tharkoldu using a Shock Suppression Booster and attacking ferociously is immune to K, O, and KO damage. The Tharkoldu can only be stopped by shock damage or lethal wounds.

Reflex Booster: Increases the rate of nerve impulses by flooding the system with enhanced neurotransmitters.



The user may choose to boost his *Dexterity* by up to +3. Each point that he boosts *Dexterity* increases his cyber value total by +2 as long as the boost is in effect. The boost lasts 3 minutes.

The duration of the boost may be pushed, using *Toughness*, using the same process described for the Adrenal Booster.

Cyberweapons

Cyberweapons are built into limbs, either natural or cyber. The sockets and weapon units are rarely concealed.

Cybercestus: Dull spikes that protrude from the knuckles when a fist is clenched or on mental command if fitted with neural conductors. The cybercestus may be implanted in a natural or cyberhand and does *Strength* +2 damage with a punch.

A cybercestus can be fitted as an electroweapon (see the Equipment section).

Fangs: Popular with the demons, and regarded as perverse by the Race, they do *Strength* +2 in unarmed combat. Fangs can be equipped with injectors to pump drugs or poisons into victims on a successful bite.

Gun Mounts: Gun mounts come in hand-mount, arm-mount, and leg-mount units. They allow weapons to be built directly into a limb, whether natural or cyber.

Normal guns, weapons that can also be used manually, can be attached to a gun mount but are always visibly ready. A gun in cyberweapon configuration can be installed and retracted into the Gun Mount when not in use, but such weapons can't be used manually, lacking grips, trigger, etc.

Hand-mount units can accommodate laser pistols, any gun in a pistol configuration, or a gas projector. These weapons may be fired without penalty. Smart weapons are common.

Arm-mount units can accommodate any firearm or energy weapon in a rifle configuration. Weapons in an arm-mount suffer a -3 bonus modifier unless equipped with a Smartgun interface and linked to a Killseeker.

Leg-mounts are usually used to conceal firearms or energy weapons, a *Tech* 26 version of the holdout pistol. Some cyborgs have leg-mounts and

Overdoses

If a character overdoses on boosters, or any other drug, he must use his *Toughness* to overcome a difficulty number of 13, +3 for every additional dose taken after the first overdose check. Drug Plugs can modify both the maximum safe number of doses and the incremental risk of overdosing. The maximum safe number of doses is three plus the Drug Plug rating. Add +3 to the difficulty of resisting the overdose for every dose above that figure.

For example, if a character has used Mind Booster three times already today and injects another dose, he must beat a difficulty of 13 with a *Toughness* total. If he takes a fifth dose, the difficulty is 16, and so on.

If the character had a Drug Plug (Mind Booster) +2, then the first overdose check would be on the sixth dose (3+2=5), and would have a difficulty number of 13. Every dose above the sixth adds +3 to the difficulty: 16 for the seventh, 19 for the eighth, etc.

If the *Toughness* check fails, the character passes out for a number of hours equal to the number of points by which he missed the difficulty number. If it is an abysmal failure (miss by 10 or more), the character falls into a coma and will die in a number of hours equal to his *Toughness*.

An unconscious (not comatose!) character may try to come to every hour. The check uses the same difficulty number as the original test that he failed. The character uses his *Toughness* and *medicine* may be used to help him throw off the effects of the junk he's been pumping through his overtaxed bod. *First aid* is no help in this situation.

A character in a coma may check hourly and use *Toughness* to beat a difficulty number equal to *Toughness* +6. *Medicine* may be used to help the character with the check. If the character succeeds, he is now unconscious, as described above.

arm-mounts, making them mobile support weapons. Weapons in a leg-mount suffer a -5 bonus modifier unless equipped with a Smartgun interface linked to a Killseeker.

When gun mounts are fitted into a cyberlimb, there is no surgery involved. Instead of a weapon, the mounts may hold tools and other equipment.

Gun mounts draw operating power from a power cell that requires recharging every three months. This is in addition to any power sources used for energy weapons, but it does provide energy for accessories like smart gunsights.

Slashers are edged weapons (25 cm) built into the forearm or shin. They are activated by thought or by holding the hand in a flexed position programmed by the user. Regular Slashers have a damage value of *Strength* +4 in *unarmed* or *melee combat*. Monofilament edged Slashers have a damage value of *Strength* +5.

Slashers can be fitted as electroweapons (see Chapter Ten, "Equipment").

Talons: Can be added to natural or cyberhands. Talons do *Strength* +2 damage using *unarmed combat* skill. Monofilament edged Talons do *Strength* +3. Talons can be modified to inject drugs or toxins if they inflict any shock damage. They can also be fitted as electroweapons, or with pistol-equivalents of energy weapons. If mounted in cyberhands or limbs, talons count as a hand-mount for electroweapons or energy weapons. Talons used as gun mounts cannot be retracted.

Pain Weapons can be built into a cyberhand, if they are dagger-sized or smaller (see Chapter Ten, "Equipment").

Chipware

Chipware consists of miniature micro-processors, chips, which inter-



face directly with data processing systems, including properly modified living nervous systems. They can provide skills, store data, and provide information. They are the standard data access storage device in Tharkoldu technology, analogous to the diskettes and tapes used in Earth computers.

Chips are stored in cubical housings, about a 1 cm across by 5 mm thick, with a prong connector protruding from the bottom which fits into a standard ChipHolder.

Both the physical configuration of the connectors and the processing protocols of Tharkoldu chipware are quite different from those of the Cyberpapacy, so **chipware from one realm cannot plug directly into ChipHolders from the other.** However, during the Sim Wars with Kadandra, Tharkoldu developed an adapter which allowed Kadandran chipware to operate in their ChipHolders, and since Cyberpapal chips are based on Kadandran technology, the adapter will allow Cyberpapal chips to work in a Tharkoldu ChipHolder. The device is pretty crude and subject to systems

failure on a roll of 1 - 4, with failure in the chip as well on a 1.

DatChips can be installed in any cyberware implant that requires data storage (cameras, recorders, etc.) or used to hold data downloaded from a computer or peripheral. They can also be carried in an external reader and plugged into a Nervejack, or plugged into a ChipHolder. Any text data stored on a DatChip can be scanned via an LED Readout implant, or viewed on the screen of a DatChip reader, cyberterminal, cyberdeck, or other data display peripheral.

DatChips are rated for capacity in multiples of 20 "datablocks." The largest DatChip available is 100 datablocks. Size refers to capacity. The actual chips are all the same physical size.

DatChip Storage

Video footage: 1 hour = 1 datablock

Still photographs: 2000 pictures = 1 datablock

Audio signals: 4 hours = 1 datablocks

Program storage: Program size = datablocks

Datafile storage: File size = datablocks

UltraCAD Design Pattern: Value of item = datablocks.

VX Recording: 1 hour = 5 datablocks.

Reference Material: Skill adds -1 = datablocks. A textbook worth *Scholar* +3 would occupy 2 datablocks.

ExChips (for "expert chips") are expert systems programmed on a chip that actually confer skill adds from +1 to +5.

When a character uses an ExChip, it overrides any natural skill she may possess **even if the natural skill add is higher than the ExChip skill add.** For example, if Akiko has *fire combat* +2 as a naturally learned skill and brings an ExChip with *fire combat* +4 on-line, her skill level is +4, not +2 and certainly not +6. Similarly, if two ExChips with the same skill are on-line, the one with the higher skill add is in control.

If a character is mixing Tharkoldu and Cyberpapal technology, note that ExChips do not benefit from MemChip or ActChip bonuses. If an ExChip is on-line at the same time as an Act- or MemChip with the same skill, only the ExChip value is used.

Chip Points: A character has a num-

ber of **chip points** equal to her natural *Mind* score, unmodified by drugs or cyberware. Note that Tharkold has developed Chip Expanders, however, which increase ExChip processing capacity (see below). Each point of a chip's adds count towards that total and a character can't receive more chip adds than her *Mind*. For example, a character with a *Mind* attribute of 7 could run a *fire combat* +3 chip, a *medicine* +1 chip, a *language* +2 chip, and a *survival (urban terrain)* +1 chip. To bring a *land vehicles* +2 chip on-line, she would have to shift 2 adds or more of the current chip mix off-line.

A character must have one or more ChipHolders implanted to use ExChips. She can carry any number of chips plugged into her ChipHolders, as many as she has slots to hold.

An on-line chip is one from which the user gains an add. An off-line chip is one that is plugged into her ChipHolder, but is not currently giving her skill adds. A user can switch chips from on-line to off-line, or vice versa, at will.

Available ExChip Skills: The following skills are available on ExChips.

Perception: air vehicles, evidence analysis, first aid, land vehicles, language, scholar (by type), space vehicles, water vehicles.

Mind: artist, cybertech, medicine, occult technology, psychology, science (by type), survival (by terrain type), streetwise.

Arcane knowledges: All the standard arcane knowledges of the *Torg* magic system (see page 111 of the *Torg Rulebook*)

Dexterity: acrobatics, beast riding, dodge, energy weapons, fire combat, flight, heavy weapons, lock picking, melee weapons, missile weapons, stealth, unarmed combat.

Strength: climbing, lifting.

Dexterity and *Strength* skills are called "active skills" and require "chipping in." That is, the user must practice with them or have a set of ExWires to get the skill adds.

Chipping in: When a character acquires a new ExChip programmed with an active skill, she does not receive its adds right away, but must spend some time "chipping in" to mesh the instructions from the chip with her mind and muscles.

Spirit Chips

Tharkold has never managed to produce anything like a Spirit Chip, despite decades of experimentation in using artificial intelligence to replicate a living personality. It would appear that the action of the GodNet, powered by the incredible energy of the Cyberpoppe's Darkness Device, is an essential part of the process.

Tharkoldu offer generous rewards to those who can provide them with Spirit Chips. Whether they would pay the reward offered is uncertain.

The Race would strongly prefer to keep Spirit Chips out of demon talons. They have seen what Tharkoldu have done with SlaveChips, and do have no wish to give the enemy another tool to crush the human spirit.



For each add of the chip, the character must spend a week practicing the skill it provides. For example, Saira acquires an *unarmed combat* +3 chip. Until she spends a week practicing with it, she gains no bonus. After a week of practice, she will gain a +1 add when she brings the chip on-line. After a second week of practice, the chip confers a +2 and only after a third week can she access the full +3 in the chip's skill.

Once a character chips in an ExChip to a given level she can bring it on-line anytime and gain the add to that level. If she acquires a different ExChip in the same skill, she is still chipped in to that level. For example, Maya chips in *unarmed combat* +2. Later, she acquires *unarmed combat* +5. As soon as she brings it on-line, she has the skill at +2, but must spend the additional weeks of practice to get the additional adds from the chip.

Chip Expanders: These implants increase the capacity of a character for ExChip adds. They are rated from +1 to +3. A character's chip points are equal to her *Mind* plus the rating of her Chip Expanders.

ChipHolders: A ChipHolder can be fitted into any portion of the body. It can be implanted permanently, or as a removable module connected to a Nervejack.

The ChipHolder is a small processor that interprets the chipped programs into physical and mental instructions, and feeds physical and mental output from the user to the chip.

Tharkoldu ChipHolders come in 1-slot, 3-slot and 5-slot configurations. Each slot holds one chip, regardless of its skill adds, capacity or other features.

A character can have any number of ChipHolders installed, and switch the chips plugged into them from on-line to off-line and vice-versa, at will. Removing and replacing a chip is a simple action.

ExWires are implants that install neural processors, brain-wave modifiers and muscle replacements throughout the body. They are rated from +1 to +10. ExWires do not confer any special abilities themselves, but allow the user to plug in a new ExChip

and immediately gain its skill add, up to the bonus value of the ExWires. ExWires have a cyber rating of one point for every two adds, rounded down. So an ExWire +3 has a cyber rating of +1.

The character's benefit from ExChips is limited to the value of the wires and he cannot mix ExWires and chipping in. This also means that he cannot have ExChips on-line with active skill adds that exceed his ExWires rating.

A character can run a total number of active skill adds through his ExWires up to the rating of the wires. If he is equipped with ExWires+5, he could bring any combination of active ExChips on-line with adds totalling 5 or less.

ExWires do not increase a character's chip points. A character still cannot have more chip adds on-line than his *Mind*. However, a character with ExWires can choose how many adds he will use from a given ExChip in a round. For example, if a character has ExWires+5 and brings *fire combat* +3, *dodge* +3 and *unarmed combat* +2 on-line, he could choose to use +2 each from *fire combat* and *dodge* chips, with +1 from the *unarmed combat* chip, or any other combination.

SlaveChips were developed by the demons to keep human slaves under control. They may be plugged into a standard ChipHolder, and for this reason, some members of the Race are reluctant to use chipware at all, since having a ChipHolder makes them vulnerable to the installation of a SlaveChip. More usually, a SlaveChip is implanted surgically within the chipslave's body. Removing an implanted SlaveChip requires surgery with a difficulty number of 15 (*mortal wound*).

Typical SlaveChips produced by Tharkoldu do not affect demons, nor do they have the usual side effects of demon cyberware on humans. They are manufactured by Tharkoldu for use on humans.

Both Tharkoldu and the Race possess the technology to build SlaveChips for either species. Demons almost never use SlaveChips on their own kind. Such an action is usually re-

served for criminals or lunatics normally killed, but whose continued existence serves some purpose. The Race rarely uses SlaveChips. Putting one in a human is repugnant to the Way of the Race, and the Race rarely enslaves Tharkoldu. Demons are for killing.

SlaveChips impose a mental program on the wearer that requires him to obey the orders of Tharkoldu to the letter and to the best of his ability. One individual is recognized as his master, and the master's orders take priority over other commands. Slave chips are programmed with a recognition pattern that identifies the master to the chipslave. It can be deceived by illusions, voice mimicry, and other tricks.

SlaveChips analyze and identify the DNA pattern of the chipslave, and can be accessed by a radio signal encoding that pattern. Tharkoldu maintain extensive records of slave DNA patterns so that SlaveChips can be triggered remotely in this way. A properly coded radio broadcast can give orders to a chipslave or trigger any of the chip's special functions.

Anyone fitted with a SlaveChip has automatically submitted to the chip's programmed master and the Law of Domination applies to the chipslave. A chipslave must generate a *Spirit* total of 20 or more to resist or refuse an order, or to take any action harmful to the demons.

SlaveChips can also induce the following physical and mental responses:

- a burst of pain doing 20 points stun damage. The slave reduces this by his *Spirit*.
- an intense pleasure reaction, requiring a *Spirit* total of at least 10 to resist. Unresisted pleasure has its advantages, cancelling out K damage and 3 points of shock damage, but it leaves the slave disoriented for 30 seconds, with a -4 to all skill checks.
- a burnout. The SlaveChip generates a blast of destructive neural energy with a damage value of 25, plus a generated bonus. The slave reduces this by his *Toughness*. After a burnout, the SlaveChip is inert, destroyed, and the chipslave, if he survives, is free of its influence.



Technomagical Implants

During the decline of the *Magic* axiom, the Tharkoldu developed various technological aids for magicians, in a desperate attempt to retain some control over the power of the supernatural. As the *Technology* axiom increased, the humans became less and less inclined to spend precious research and resources trying to discipline the balky and fading power of magic. Tharkoldu continued their studies, driven by fear for their survival as a species.

One result of their efforts was the technomagical probe that brought Tharkold to the Gaunt Man's attention. Another was the LifeCyber technology that allowed the demons to survive the terrible years of magical famine in their home cosm.

Over the years, the bulky, balky apparatus of the early technomages became smaller, lighter, and more dependable. When the Darkness Device pressured the *Magical* axiom upwards again, this augmented the technomagical research. When Tharkoldu science achieved the breakthroughs needed to permit direct cyberware implantation, the stage was set for true cybermagical technology: implants that replicate and enhance the powers of magic.

Technomagical implants and natural skills in magic can be used in any combination. For example, a magician might use an *alteration* Enabler and her natural skill in an arcane knowledge to cast a fireball using either a SpellChip, a learned spell, a grimoire, or casting on the fly. A magician with natural adds in a magical skill could use an Arcane Knowledge ExChip or natural knowledge to use a SpellChip, if she was fitted with a ChipHolder to hold the chip. Any combination of natural knowledge and technomagical enhancement is allowed.

Technomagical Enablers grant skill adds in the four basic skills of magic: *alteration*, *appotation*, *divination*, and *conjunction*.

All Technomagical enablers are wired directly into the brain. They grant skill adds of +1 to +4 in the magical skills. Their cyber rating is the



add + 3. Thus, a *divination* Enabler+3 would have a cyber rating of +6.

The adds from these implants are not cumulative with real skill adds and they lock the mental and neural patterns into their own configuration. A character cannot increase her normal skill level above the level granted by an implant. That is, a character with *alteration magic* +3 from an implant cannot improve her own skill level to more than +3. She would have to upgrade the implant or have it removed

in order to increase her skill. She can either use the implant's add, or her own, but not both at the same time.

Arcane Knowledges are available on ExChips (see above). Arcane Knowledge ExChips provide the skill needed to permit spell casting, as specified on page 115 of the *Torg Rulebook*. They may **not** be used to design a spell. Arcane Knowledge ExChips are plugged into a normal ChipHolder, just like any other ExChip. They do not require chipping in.



SpellChips: SpellChips are the high-tech equivalent of the ornate scrolls and grimoires of Aysle. They must be plugged directly into a Nervejack, not a ChipHolder. Swapping chips is a simple action but dedicated technomages usually have at least two or three Nervejacks installed so they can have several SpellChips at the ready.

When a technomage acquires a SpellChip, he should attune it. This costs a possibility. Using an attuned SpellChip is the same as using a learned grimoire spell. Per the rules on page 113 of the *Torg Rulebook*, the magician resists backlash using the spell skill total or *Mind* attribute, whichever is higher.

Attunement is specific to the chip, not to the spell. If a spell chip burns out or is taken from the technomage, a replacement chip would have to be reattuned, costing another possibility.

A technomage can use an unattuned SpellChip. It is cast with the same penalties as an unlearned grimoire spell, so the spell skill total resists the backlash, even if it is lower than the caster's *Mind*.

SpellChips also contain a sophisticated VX simulation system that allows the technomage to perform mimicry or use any props that the spell may require under the Theorems of Similarity or Contagion. For example,

a magician casting *Altered Fireball* using a SpellChip does not need the traditional ball of burning pitch physically, since he is experiencing the somatic component of the spell virtually, through the VX circuits of the SpellChip. The Law of Domination is again at work, allowing technology to substitute for integral parts of the spell casting process.

However, if a spell uses Specific Contagion, then either the usual sample of material from the target is needed, or else the SpellChip must be programmed with the target's DNA pattern or molecular structure using *occultech* skill. This requires a the same sample of material that the spell itself would use.

SpellChips can be used to cast impressed spells without contradiction in Tharkold, even though the *Magic* axiom is 12. The mage casts the spell with the chip on-line. If successful the chip stores the impressed spell. A Tharkoldu or Race mage who casts an impressed spell without the SpellChip causes a four-case contradiction, as the spell has a higher axiom level than Tharkold or the caster.

Backlash Buffers are systems that bolster the user against spell backlash. The magician's resistance value is increased by the rating of the buffer (+1

to +3). This applies even if the spell skill total is a failure. It will not turn that failure into a success, but it may make the cost of failure survivable.

Backlash Buffers have a cyber rating of +2 for every bonus point they confer. If the user suffers a wound as a result of backlash, check the buffers for systems failure.

Technomagical Systems Failure is possible, under the same rules as less exotic cyberware. In the event that systems failure occurs due to a poor roll when casting a spell, check each technomagical system involved for failure. For example, Shemosh is using a *divination magic* +4 implant, his own arcane knowledge of *magic*, and a SpellChip to cast *detect magic*, when he rolls a 1. The gamemaster generates two bonuses: one for the *divination magic* implant and one for the SpellChip, to see if they suffer damage.

Backlash and Technomagic: Besides the special considerations for systems failures and cyberware, technomages are vulnerable to temporary systems failures in their implants when backlash damage would normally cost a mage her powers for a time.

Mental damage from spell backlash (page 113 of the *Torg Rulebook*) that KO's a magician temporarily damages the arcane knowledge used to

Tharkold Systems Failure Table

Bonus Generated	Effect
Less than 1	Cyberware functions normally.
1	Cyberware function interrupted. It does not operate or confer any adds or bonuses for the remainder of the round.
2-3	Cyberware power surges. As above and in addition character suffers -1 to her next action.
4-5	Cyberware locks. As above. Any action this round that depends entirely on cyberware fails automatically. System is now a faulty system until repaired and fails on a roll of 1 or 2.
6-7	Cyberware locks. As above and system chance of failure increases +1. A normal system now malfunctions on a 1 or 2; a faulty system on 1 to 3, or more. This condition lasts until the system is repaired using <i>cybertech</i> .
8-10	Cybersystem shuts down until repaired using <i>cybertech</i> .
11-14	Affected cyberware system goes erratic. Unless user shuts it down, it behaves unpredictably. Limbs twitch, lose <i>Strength</i> adds or exert strength at dangerous levels. Sensory enhancements scramble data or go blank. Boosters may randomly trigger dangerously high levels of medication into system. Erratic cyberware must be repaired using <i>cybertech</i> .
15+	As above, affected system goes erratic. In addition, character suffers an electroneural surge with a damage value equal to the Bonus Generated on this table. Armor does not reduce this damage. The affected system then shuts down until repaired.



cast the spell. In the case of technomagic, this sets up circuit hysteresis in the ExChip that renders it useless for 24 hours, or until it is repaired using *occultech*, or until the cybermiracle of *refreshment* is performed (see Chapter 7).

When mental damage raises a technomage's wound level to *heavily wounded* or greater, both the Arcane Knowledge ExChip and the appropriate Technomagical Enabler suffer this penalty. The temporary damage to the cyberware does *not* prevent the character from improving her wound status, whether the skill implants are restored or not.

LifeCyber: When magic reached its lowest ebb on Tharkold it was too weak to sustain the life of magical beings. The demons developed early forms of implant technology to preserve their existence during this period. Artificial organs and bulky life-support units were the earliest forms of LifeCyber. Though the *Magic* axiom has been raised, the demons have continued to refine LifeCyber. It allows them to function, at least for a time, in

even the most unmagical of cosms.

LifeCyber implants can sustain a demon's occult metabolism. Tharkoldu can live in cosms with a *Magic* axiom lower than 9 as long as the LifeCyber works. Otherwise, they suffer an affliction called *lightblight* as soon as they disconnect. The magical energy osmoses out of the demon, forming a glowing pox on its skin. Tharkoldu takes one shock point per day. These shock points may not be recovered through *medicine*, *first aid*, miracles, spells, or the expenditure of Possibilities. When the amount of shock damage taken equals the demon's *Toughness* it dies. The shock damage is recovered at a rate of one shock point per day, once the Tharkoldu is in an area with *Magic* axiom 9 or more, or is reattached to working LifeCyber.

LifeCyber is a *Tech* 26 implant, and its user must fear disconnection in cosms with a lower *Tech* axiom. The level of the *Magic* axiom has no effect on disconnection. The net effect of LifeCyber is that the demon's very existence in a low-magic cosm does

not create a contradiction. LifeCyber uses a power cell and requires recharging weekly when in a cosm with a *Magic* axiom lower than 9.

LifeCyber works through occulttech processes, creating a limited reality effect similar to a talisman. As long as the LifeCyber remains charged, it provides the demon with enough magical energy to simulate elements of *Magic* axiom level 9, just enough to keep the demon alive. The implant does not provide enough energy to cast spells. The implant provides a *Tech* 26, *Magic* 12 field for itself. This field does not encompass the demon, just the implant. If the demon disconnects, the LifeCyber keeps working.

Cyberware Charts

The cyberware charts summarize some of the information given in this chapter. The prices listed are black market prices (in US dollars) for bootleg cyberware in Los Angeles. Tharkoldu and the Race aren't selling cyberware. A price of "na" means the cyberware is not available for purchase.

Syndrome Table

Die Roll:		Psychotic Syndrome
Human	Demon	
1-4	1-2	Fugue: Character does not react to external stimuli. Stands like a statue. The character can be led about physically, at a slow walk (5 meters per round). When character comes out of it, he has no memory of whatever has gone on around him.
5-6	3-6	Rage: Character will attack any living thing in sight with deadliest possible hand-to-hand attack. The afflicted character always makes all-out-attacks and the Law of Ferocity applies.
7-9	7-9	Catatonia: Character rolls into a tightly curled ball on the ground, oblivious to the world around her. She will not react to external stimuli and will have no memory of events when she recovers.
10-13	10-11	Panic: Character siezed with terrible fear. Will flee from any confrontation. All skill and mental attribute checks are at -4.. When panicked, a character's resistance value to <i>intimidation</i> is 0.
14-16	12-14	Hebephrenic Schizophrenia: Character becomes docile, uncoordinated, easily startled or frightened. All skill and attribute checks at -4 value. Opponents get a +4 bonus modifier on all character interactions with a hebephrenic due to the victim's heightened suggestibility.
17-19	15-16	Depression: Character becomes sluggish, depressed. Unable to follow plans or orders effectively. All skill and attribute checks at -4 bonus modifier. Character's resistance to <i>charm</i> and <i>persuasion</i> is increased by 4. His resistance to other interactions is reduced by 4. All movement is halved.
20	17-20	Perverse Rage: Character attacks available targets but will choose targets normally close to her (in descending order of preference): • friends, relatives, lovers, etc. • members of same organization or group. • members of same species. • any available target. A victim of perverse rage will break off combat with one target to attack a more desirable target if one appears.





Tharkold Cyberpsychosis Table

Result Points	Effect
-10 or less	Gain inner strength by resisting cyberpsychosis: Reduce cyber value by 3. Do nothing else this round.
-9 to -6	Gain inner strength by resisting cyberpsychosis: Reduce cyber value by 2. Do nothing else this round.
-5 to -3	Gain inner strength by resisting cyberpsychosis: Reduce cyber value by 1. Do nothing else this round.
-2 to 0	Cyberpsychosis resisted: No effect.
1	Minor Mental Block: -1 bonus modifier on mental skills and attribute checks this round.
2	Minor Physical Revulsion: -1 bonus modifier on all physical and mental skills this round.
3	Mental Block: -2 bonus modifier on mental skills and attribute checks for next 2 rounds.
4	Physical Revulsion: -2 bonus modifier on physical and mental skills for next 2 rounds.
5	Minor Psychotic Episode: Roll on Syndrome Table and apply result for three rounds.
6-7	Major Mental Block: -3 on mental skills and attribute checks for next three rounds.
8-9	Major Physical Revulsion: -3 bonus modifier on physical and mental skills for next three rounds.
10-12	Psychotic Episode: Roll on Syndrome Table and apply result for six rounds. Increase cyber value by 1.
13-15	Major Psychotic Episode: Roll on Syndrome Table and apply result for 1-20 rounds. Increase cyber value by 2.
16-18	Major System Scramble: Roll on Systems Failure Table for 3 systems selected by afflicted character.
19-20	Massive Psychotic Episode: Roll on Syndrome Table. Apply results for 1-20 hours. Increase cyber value by 3.
21-25	Breakdown: Roll on Syndrome Table. Results apply until <i>psychology</i> or the <i>cyberharmony</i> miracle are used to successfully reduce cyber value.
26+	Permanent Insanity: Character is now a gamemaster character. Character may express insanity using an affliction from the Syndrome Table or in some other manner that seems fitting to the gamemaster. This form of cyberpsychosis is incurable by normal means and is considered a divine sign by the Demons, so that attempts to cure it with <i>cyberharmony</i> are at a +15 difficulty modifier. Humans have no such compunctions.



Cyberware

Basics	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
HighSkin	10	Wound	0	na	
Nanocord	10	Wound*	+3	4,000 (18)	Allows control of cyberware by thought.
Nervejack	11	Mortal	+2	250 (12)	Interface to cybernetic controls

Visual Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Cybercam	6	Wound	+1	1,500 (16)	Records visual data
Dangerscan	6	Wound	+3	2,500 (17)	+3 to <i>find</i> hidden dangers
Darksight	6	Wound	+2	2,000 (17)	See normally in darkness
EMVue	6	Wound	+2	2,000 (17)	+3 to detect or manipulate electronics
Eyestealer	6	Wound	+2	3,000 (18)	Record and display retinal ID patterns
Farsight	6	Wound	+2	1,200 (16)	X50 telescopic vision. +3 to <i>find</i> when observing at distance
Glarestopper	6	Wound	+1	900 (15)	Cancel bright or glaring light
Heathunter	6	Wound	+2	2,000(17)	See by infrared light. +3 to <i>find</i> in the dark.
Hidehunter	6	Wound	+2	2,500 (17)	+3 to <i>find</i>
Killseeker	6	Wound	+3	1,500 (16)	+1 to ranged attacks. +2 when using smart weapon.
Microsight	6	Wound	+2	2,000 (16)	X10,000 microscopic vision. +3 to <i>find</i> vs. small items. +2 to skills at microscopic level.
Modspotter	6	Wound	+2	1,000 (15)	<i>find</i> value 20 to spot cyberware
Sharpsight	6	Wound	+2	1,500(16)	+2 to all <i>Perception</i> checks using vision.
TextLED	6	Wound	+1	1,000 (15)	Displays text data
Third Eye	8	Heavy	+3	2,000 (17)	Add extra eye.
Visual Nerve Plug	8	Heavy	+2	1,250 (16)	Allows modular CyberVisual Enhancement packages.

Auditory Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Aural Nerve Socket	6	Wound	+2	1,000 (15)	Allows modular CyberAuditory Enhancement packages
Bugsweeper	6	Wound	+2	700(15)	+3 to <i>find</i> bugs
Codears	6	Wound	+2	700(15)	Unscrambles distorted sounds
Cybercorder	6	Wound	+1	600 (14)	Records audio data
Damper	6	Wound	+1	600 (14)	Steps down loud noises
Radiohear	6	Wound	+1	1,200(16)	Receives radio signals and decrypts them
Sonar	8	Wound	+3	1,000(15)	Substitutes echo location for sight. +3 to <i>find</i> totals.
Soundcatcher	6	Wound	+2	900 (15)	+2 to <i>Perception</i> using hearing
Hi Freq	6	Wound	+2	900 (15)	+2 to <i>Perception</i> high frequencies
Lo Freq	6	Wound	+2	900(15)	+2 to <i>Perception</i> low frequencies
Soundtrap	6	Wound	+2	600(14)	Zero in on one sound or speaker
Truthear	6	Wound	+2	1,500 (16)	Stress analysis. <i>Mind</i> +3 to detect lie. +3 vs. verbal attacks

Gustatory Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Poison Snooper	6	Wound	+1	400(13)	+3 <i>Perception</i> to detect drugged or poisoned food.
Tattletaster	6	Wound	+1	400 (13)	+3 to <i>Perception</i> using taste



Cyberware

Olfactory Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Oxyplugs	6	Wound	+2	600(14)	10 minute supply of air.
Purifier	6	KO	+1	400 (13)	Filters smoke, dust,gas from air
Toxsniffer	6	Wound	+2	400(13)	Warns against airborne poisons
Windhunter	6	Wound	+2	600(14)	+3 to <i>tracking</i> by smell
Windsniffer	6	Wound	+2	600 (14)	+3 to <i>Perception</i> using smell
Tactile Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Circuitspy	6	Wound	+2	600(14)	Trace electrical circuits by touch
Microtouch	6	Wound	+2	1,000(15)	+3 to <i>Perception</i> or <i>Mind</i> skills involving manipulation on miniature level
Touchboost	6	Wound	+1	1,000 (15)	+3 to <i>Perception</i> or <i>Dexterity</i> using touch
Touchmike	6	Wound	+2	500 (14)	Pick up sonic vibrations in walls, windows, etc.
Metasensory Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Balance-wires	10	Heavy	+2	4,000 (18)	+3 to skills using agility and balance. +3 melee defense skills.
Biostat	8	Wound	+1	600 (14)	Biological monitor. +3 to <i>first aid</i> and <i>medicine</i> used on wearer
Cybershroud	8	Wound	+2	2,500(17)	Shields cyberware from Modspotter. +5 vs. electronic detection. +2 defense vs. smart weapons.
Nanodoc	12	Mortal	+3	3,500 (18)	Built-in self-repair. <i>Medicine</i> skill equal to <i>Toughness</i> +2.
Radiotalker	6	Wound	+1	600(14)	Allows radio broadcasting
Radsensor	8	Wound	+1	600(14)	Built in Geiger counter detects radiation
Skinscan	10	Heavy	+2	1,000 (15)	Motion sensor. +3 to <i>find</i> in dark or to rear. "See" in darkness.
Vocal Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Amplifier	6	Wound	+1	600 (14)	130 db volume for voice.
Squeaker	6	Wound	+1	400 (13)	Modulates voice to ultrasonic level
Voice Mask	8	Wound	+1	800 (15)	Distorts voice. Defeat voice stress analysis.
Voice Mimic	8	Wound	+1	1,200 (16)	Scrambles vocal patterns Duplicates other voices.
Structural Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Interdermal Armor	10	Heavy	+1	2,500(17)per pt.	+1 to +6 armor adds
Exodermal Armor	10	Mortal	+1/add	2,500 (17) per pt.	+1 to +5 armor adds (cumulative with Interdermal adds)
Bodymax	10	Mortal	+1/add	10,000 (20)per pt.	+1 to +5 to <i>Strength</i> . Supports cyberlimbs with <i>Strength</i> add of (5 + Bodymax adds). Bonus to pushing of (5 + Bodymax adds)
Tendon Augmenter	10	Heavy	+2	7,500(19)	Supports cyberlimbs up to <i>Strength</i> +5. Bonus to pushing of +5.



Cyberware

Cyber Limbs	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
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Cyberhands:

Strength +0	6	Wound	0(1)	600(14)	Replaces normal limb
Strength +1	6	Wound	1(2)	1,500 (15)	
Strength +2	7	Wound	2(3)	2,500(16)	
Strength +3	8	Wound	3(4)	4,000 (17)	
Strength +N	10	Wound	N(N+1)	(14+N)	+2 value for pair

+1 all *Dexterity* skills requiring digital control. Can do crushing damage. Can lock grip.

Cyberarms:

Strength +0	6	Wound	0(1)	1,500(15)	Replaces normal limb
Strength +1	6	Wound	1(2)	1,500(16)	
Strength +2	7	Wound	2(3)	2,200(17)	
Strength +3	8	Wound	3(4)	3,500(18)	
Strength +N	10	Wound	N(N+1)	(15+N)	+2 value for pair

Adds +N to *Strength* of limb. Power push *climbing* limit by *Strength* add total

Cyberlegs:

Strength +0	8	Heavy		1,000 (15)	Replaces normal limb
Strength +1	8	Heavy	1(2)	1,500(16)	
Strength +2	9	Heavy	2(3)	2,500 (17)	
Strength +3	10	Heavy	3(4)	4,000 (18)	
Strength +N	12	Heavy	N(N+1)	(15+N)	+2 value for pair

Adds +N to *Strength* of limb. Power push *running* and *long jumping* limit by *Strength* add total

Cyberwings:

Strength +0	8	Heavy		na	Replaces normal limb
Strength +1	8	Heavy	1(2)	na	
Strength +2	9	Heavy	2(3)	na	
Strength +3	10	Mortal	3(4)	na	
Strength +N	12	Mortal	N(N+1)	na	+2 value for pair

Adds are power push of *flight* skill, *Strength* in flight, and limits on *speed* in flight and *lifting* in flight.

Cyberorgans	10	Mortal	+1	3,000(18)	Allows up to 3 boosters at no extra cyber rating.
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Booster Systems	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
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Adrenal Booster	8	Mortal	+1	1,000(15)	+3 to <i>Dexterity</i> and <i>Strength</i>
Automed	8	Heavy	+1	600 (14)	Temporarily halts deterioration of mortal wound.
Drug Plug	6	Heavy	+2 each	600(14)	Increases tolerance for specific booster or drug
Endorphin					
Booster	8	Heavy	+1	1,000(15)	+3 to <i>Toughness</i> for 30 minutes
Immuno-response					
Booster	10	Mortal	+2	600(14)	+3 to values when resisting disease or poison
Mind Booster	11	Mortal	+2	2,500(17)	+3 to <i>Mind</i> for one hour
Shock Buffer	10	Heavy	+2 each	na	Each buffer allows ten additional shock point before losing consciousness.

Shock Suppression

Booster		Heavy	+2	na	Absorbs three shock points per blow.
Reflex Booster	10	Mortal	+2	na	+1 - +3 to <i>Dexterity</i> . +2 cyber value per point for duration of boost.



Cyberware

Cyber Weapons	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Cybercestus	6	Wound	+1	250 (12)	<i>Strength</i> +2 damage
Fangs	6	Wound	+1	300(13)	<i>Strength</i> +2 damage
+injector sacs	7	Wound	+2	400 (14)	
Gun Mounts					
Hand	6	Wound	+1	600(14)	
Arm/Leg	8	Heavy	+2	600(14)	
Slashers	6	Wound	+1	1,000(15)	<i>Strength</i> +4 damage (+5 monofilament)
Talons	6	Wound	+1	na	<i>Strength</i> +2 damage (+3 monofilament). May be used as gun mount in Tharkoldu cyberlimbs.
+ Electro-Weapon	+2	-	+1	+2,000	
+ Pain Weapon	+4	-	+2	na	
Chipware	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
ChipExpander	10	Heavy	+1 to +3	2,000 (17)	Adds to <i>Mind</i> to increase chip points.
ChipHolder					
1-slot	6	Wound	+1	1,200 (16)	
3-slot	6	Wound	+2	3,000 (18)	
5-slot	6	Wound	+3	5,000 (19)	
ExWires	12	Mortal	+1/ per 2 adds	na	Allows immediate use of ExChips.
DatChip	-	-	-	150 (11)	Data Storage
ExChip	-	-	-	2,500 (17)	Substitutes chip adds for skill adds.
Slave Chip	10	Wound	-	na	
Techno Magic	DN	Wound	Cyber Rtg.	Cost (Value)	Effect
Technomagical					
Enabler	13	Mortal	+3 to+7	na	Cyber rating -2 skill adds in a magic skill (<i>alteration</i> , <i>apportation</i> , <i>divination</i> , <i>conjuraton</i>)
Backlash					
Buffer	10	Heavy	+2	na	
			+4	na	
			+6	na	
SpellChips	-	-	-	na	Each 2 cyber rating points increases spell skill total (or <i>Mind</i>)for purposes of resisting backlash by +2
LifeCyber	10	Mortal	+2	na	May cast impressed spells, create VX components
					Allows Tharkoldu to survive in <i>Magic</i> axiom below 9.



Chapter Ten

Equipment



In primitive societies, someone who needs a piece of equipment either knows how to make it herself, goes to a crafter who can make it for her, or does without.

In industrial societies like Core Earth or Nippon Tech, the means of production are factories, specialized complexes tooled up to produce whatever is needed in bulk, from chain guns to disposable lighters. The ability to use an item is often far removed from the ability to make it.

Tharkold is a post-industrial civilization. One individual can operate the equivalent of a Core Earth factory. Technology bridges the gap between knowing how to use an item and programming a machine to make it. The general term for this technology is UltraCAD, derived from the ancient (on Tharkold) concept of CAD/CAM (Computer Assisted Design/Computer Assisted Manufacturing).

UltraCAD

Given self-adjusting UltraCAD modules, a single operator can design and control a high-level dispatch program that coordinates different modules, creating a mechanized process that takes in raw materials at one end and puts out finished goods at the other.

UltraCAD Programs and Patterns

UltraCAD equipment, or "modules," are controlled by a highly complex program, containing millions of coded instructions. If these had to be programmed the old-fashioned way, the technology would never have gotten off the ground.

As it is, programmers design UltraCAD programs using a highly sophisticated expert system, coupled with a Virtual Experience ("VX") in-

terface. Rather than describing the design for a product to the machinery in abstract terms, the UltraCAD operator simply goes through a VX experience of himself using the product, or walking around in it, or testing it.

His responses are measured by the expert system, which adjusts the VX until it matches the operator's intention, and then it writes the actual program using those parameters.

This can be a difficult process, demanding significant time and energy from the operator, so when a useful, generic design comes along, it is generally used by other people. These canned programs are called "patterns," and correspond to brand-name designs found in industrial cultures.

Even when using a canned pattern, a skilled UltraCAD operator can improve the particular item he is making, or make it in less time than the pattern program could if it were operating without a skilled user's control.

UltraCAD complexes are designed for an operator with a Nervejack, plugged directly into the cybernetic controls of the modules. Manual programming is impossible. A character without a Nervejack (or a similar implant from some other cybertech civilization) can't run UltraCAD modules.

Production Cycles

The UltraCAD production cycle is in two stages. First, raw materials must be obtained and processed using one set of modules called **SyntheCyclers**. Processed materials are then fed into a set of UltraCAD modules called **MakerMods**, which actually produce the desired artifacts.

Both parts of the production cycle must be controlled by the operator, or by a pattern program, or both.

Both types of UltraCAD module come in one of four standard sizes:

Small: about 1 meter on a side.

Medium: about 2 meters long by 2 meters high 75 cm thick.



Large: 6 meters by 6 meters by 4 meters.

Industrial: 30 meters by 30 meters by 15 meters.

The size of a module is important. **All the modules in a given process must be the same size.** This is called the **scale** of the operation.

Scale is determined by the size of the product. The rule of thumb is that an item's scale is based on the smallest module size that can hold it. For example, a firearm will fit easily into a Small module. So making a firearm is a Small-scale operation. You cannot make more firearms by using bigger modules.

Making an item that will not fit into an Industrial module is still an Industrial scale project. It just takes longer, unless the operator can configure more modules to work on it.

MakerMods are manufacturing units. They are equipped with laser cutters, chemical nanoprocessors, polymorphous manipulator systems, and other simple tools. They are the factories of Tharkold. There are twelve basic types of MakerMod. Making something usually requires that the maker combine two or more MakerMods into a **complex**. Specialized units are sometimes built for specific projects, but the generalized modules are equal to almost any task.

Biochemicals: Produces drugs, toxins, and medical supplies.

Ceramics: Produces anything from pottery to cerametal parts used in power plants and jet engines.

Chemicals: Produces almost any desired chemical compounds, from propellants for bullets, chemical fuel mixtures, etc.

Cybernetics: Produces computer and cyberware components.

Electronics: Produces non-cybernetic electrical and electronic components.

Machining: Handles the forming of any metal, ceramic, plastic, or other physical components, from nails to nuclear power plant housings.

Nanotech: Produces nanotechnology machines.

Plasmatics: Produces components handling energy fields, radioactives, and plasma power.

Plastics: Produces plastic components, from light extrusions to

densiplast and other ultra-high-strength materials.

Polymers: Produces long-chain constructs, including monofilament elements, fiber optics, and teflon-type lubricants.

Structural: A compound MakerMod which produces structural artifacts, from pieces of furniture (small and medium modules) to complete skyscrapers (requires one or more industrial modules).

Vehicular: A compound MakerMod which produces vehicles. Medium units can make motorcycles, jetskis, and hovercycles. Large units can produce cars, both land and hover vehicles, small boats, etc. Industrial units can manufacture anything—hovertanks, large aircraft or ocean vessels, etc.

Complex Specification: All the modules have to be in the same scale; this scale is the size of the SyntheCyclers and the MakerMods that manufacture an item. Every product will require one or more MakerMods of a given type. The specifications list the types of SyntheCyclers necessary to gather the raw materials for the item. For a Tharkoldu firearm, hydrocarbons and metal are necessary. Two SyntheCyclers would be sent out to gather the materials. Every product will require one or more MakerMods of a given type. For example, to make a Tharkoldu firearm you need a complex of Small Electronics, Machining and Plastics MakerMods. The Electronics modules is needed because firearms use electronic ignition to fire their caseless ammo. This is the **basic specification**.

If you want to make smartguns, you'd have to add a Cybernetics module to the complex. In the rules that follow, this spec would be written as follows:

Firearms

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Electronics, Machining, Plastics

+Smartlink, Cyberweapon Configuration, or Cybernetic Accessories: +Cybernetics

Complexes are specific for a particular pattern. A firearms builds firearms and nothing else. We provide the complex specifications for all the equipment described in this book.

Patterns Versus Brand Names

In a lot of games, *Torg* among them, the future is brand names. A character doesn't just pull out a gun, he pulls out a Hachiman 12mm KM11 or a .44 Smith and Wesson Magnum. He doesn't drive a sports car, he drives an Aston-Martin Special.

Brand names are part of industrial culture. When the average citizen can make a car in a couple of days, using the equivalent of a basement workshop, brand names join dinosaurs and the phlogiston theory on the list of ideas whose time has come and gone.

"How do you like the car? It's a Fred."

On the other hand, when a good design is discovered in an UltraCAD society, it gets around. The result on Tharkold is Pattern names.

Two items with identical stats and made from the same pattern will not necessarily look the same, especially if they were made by individuals rather than from a pattern chip. If one Tharkoldu prefers his guns matte black, with lots of flanges and protrusions, and a big sign on the end of the barrel that reads "You are looking into the wrong end of this weapon," and another goes for finely machined stainless alumisteel, as sharp as a scalpel, both might still be making pistol from the 13/Zan Magnum pattern. UltraCAD allows huge variety in cosmetic areas without altering the difficulty of the job one bit.

The Patterns described in this section are representative samples of the thousands of common Patterns known on Tharkold. They represent the state-of-the-art as far as equipment goes.

It is worth noting that UltraCAD can make any other pattern a character might desire, including items for lower tech levels. If a Tharkoldu is about to head off into Orrorsh, he can whip up a Weston rifle and Lee-Hollings revolver that look identical to guns fresh out of the factory



back on Gaea, assuming he had access to Orrorsh weapons as models. They would be the same as the Orrorsh weapons. The same goes for anything from knapped flint arrowheads to the latest goodies from God's Word Industries.

Designing Patterns: A character designs a pattern using the appropriate MakerMod complex. He has to control the production of his design, and makes a prototype of the item. Once this is done, he can record the UltraCAD program on a DatChip, or put it in a computer file, for future reference. A Pattern program occupies a number of datablocks equal to its value, that is, the value of the item it makes.

If the prototype process comes up with above average results, the operator may apply them to the gizmo he is making, but the bonuses do **not** become part of the Pattern!

Pattern Names: Pattern names are alphanumeric codes, and since Core Earth typesetters have difficulty with Tharkoldu script, we use the names of Tharkoldu letters rather than the letters themselves. In case you find it more convenient to use Roman script for Pattern designations, we include the following elementary guide to the Tharkold alphabet.

Alph = A	Lam = L
Bet = B	Mim = M
Gam = G	Nu = N
Del = D	Sim = S
He = H	Ain = O
Ep = E	Pe = P
Vav = V,W	Digam = F
Us = U	Xedi = Ts
Zan = Z	Xo = X, Ks
Ket = K	Qo = Q
Tet = T	Res = R
Iot = I,Y	Shin = Sh
Chod = Ch	Thav = Th

Equipment Descriptions

Cyberware

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Biochemical, Ceramic, Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Biochemicals, Cyber-

netics, Electronics, Nanotech, Plastics

Cyberlimbs: +Machining

Armor: +Polymers

Detailed descriptions of cyberware are given in Chapter Nine.

Cyberdecks

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Cybernetics, Electronics, Machining, Plastics

See Chapter 11 for a discussion of cyberdecks, as well as *The GodNet* supplement for a detailed discussion of cyberdecks.

Firearms

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Electronics, Machining, Plastics

+Smartlink, Cyberweapon Configuration, or Cybernetic Accessories: +Cybernetics

Tharkoldu firearms load caseless ammunition with an integral propellant charge. Instead of mechanical firing mechanisms, they use an electronic ignition system to fire the bullet. A built-in power cell provides several years of energy for the igniter.

Unless otherwise indicated below, any firearm may be made in a cyberweapon configuration, and installed in a natural or prosthetic limb using a Gun Mount. Pistols can be fitted in a Hand Mount. Larger weapons must use an Arm or Leg Mount. Cyberweapons are denoted by the affix -Ket in the pattern designation. For example, a snub pistol made for use as a cybergun would be a 9/Gam-Ket.

Similarly, most weapons larger than a handgun are also made in vehicular formats, for mounting on vehicles. Vehicular weapons are designated by the affix -Vav.

All firearms capable of automatic fire have fully selectable rates of fire, that is, they can fire single shots, bursts, or full auto.

9/Gam Snub Pistol: A short barrelled autoloading handgun, easily concealed and accurate at short ranges.

11/Alph Automatic: A heavier

autoloader, this 11mm weapon is the standard sidearm in the Free Nations.

13/Zan Magnum: A 13mm magnum autoloader delivering a tremendous punch. As a cyberweapon, it will not fit in a Hand Mount, but must be installed in an Arm Mount.

Vav-9 Machine Pistol: A small, light-caliber submachine gun. Sophisticated muzzle brake design prevents the severe problems with climbing found in light autoweapons on Core Earth. It is compact enough to fit into a Hand Mount in cyberweapon configuration.

Thav-9 Submachine Gun: A standard SMG pattern, in wide use on Tharkold. The cyberweapon format fits into an Arm Mount.

Nu-15 Close Assault Weapon: A combat shotgun, capable of autofire. Murderous in close combat. A short-barrelled cyberweapon configuration can fit into an Arm Mount.

Mim-8 Assault Weapon: The Mim-8 is a fully automatic weapon and comes in carbine (Mim-8/Alph) and rifle (Mim-8/Bith) configurations, firing 8mm ammo. The carbine can be fitted as a cyberweapon in an Arm Mount, but the rifle is too large for this modification. Vehicular rifle designs are popular, however.

Pe-Ain Assault Chaingun: The Pe-Ain is the standard squad automatic weapon in Tharkoldu tactics. It loads 5.5mm, ultra-high velocity ammunition and can only fire in bursts or on full automatic. It is too bulky, and its recoil too violent, to use as a cyberweapon. However, a Pe-Ain-Ket design does exist, for use in Power Armor weapon mounts.

Firearm Ammunition

Scale: Small (a production cycle produces a full load for a specified firearms Pattern)

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Chemicals, Machining

+Gas rounds: +Biochemicals

+Smart rounds: +Cybernetics, Nanotech

+Plasma: +Nanotech, Plasmatrics

Besides ball ammo similar to rounds used on Core Earth, Tharkold has developed explosive ammunition,



"smart" target tracking ammo, and most devastating of all, plasma ammunition.

Ball ammo: The standard caseless ammunition used in Tharkoldu firearms. All damage values given for firearms measure the effect of ball ammo.

Explosive ammo: The round contains a small explosive warhead. It does not create an area blast, but increases the damage value for hits against a single target by +1.

Plasma ammo: Each bullet is a tiny plasma explosive. Nanotech lasers trigger a microfusion blast when the bullet's built-in control circuits detect proximity to the target. It increases the damage value of ammo by +1 and the explosion delivers this damage to all targets within a 2 meter radius. The effect when firing automatic weapons is impressive, and a chaingun firing plasma rounds has to be seen to be believed.

Smart ammo: Each bullet contains cybernetic nanocircuits that lock onto a target's thermographic signature and adjust the slug's flight path to enhance accuracy. Smart ammo adds +2 to the firer's *fire combat* skill. This bonus is negated if the target is equipped with an ECM Shroud or similar countermeasure to infrared detection.

Energy Weapons

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Ceramic, Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Ceramics, Electronics, Machining, Polymers

+Plasma Weapons: +Plasmatics

+Smartlink, Cyberweapon Configuration, or Cybernetic Accessories: +Cybernetics

There are several energy weapon technologies known on Tharkold.

Energy weapons can be designed in either "pistol" or "rifle" configurations, to suit the taste of the maker. Unless noted this has no effect on their use, range, or damage. An energy "rifle" simply uses a long gun format, rather than being shaped like a handgun.

Energy cyberweapons are possible. The Race has not been able to control the electromagnetic energies involved in plasma technology, which burns out any other cybernetic systems the

user was wearing. Tharkoldu have solved this problem through *occultech*, and do mount plasma cyberweapons.

Overloading Energy Weapons: A character can trigger a discharge from an energy weapon that packs its entire charge into one shot.

This increases the damage by an add equal to the value of the number of shots left in the weapon's power cell (see Equipment Chart).

For example, a freshly-loaded Res-14 Laser gets 50 shots from a standard power cell. A measure of 50 has a value of 8. If the user fired it on overload, the weapons damage would be 33. 25 (the normal damage) +8. If a Res-14 with 20 shots left in the cell fired on overload, its damage would be increased by +6, the value of 20.

However, this is a dangerous trick. No matter what the difficulty of the shot, a roll on the action die of 4 or less means that the overload has harmful effects.

On a 4: The power cell fuses. The weapon delivers a normal shot and exhausts the cell. It must be reloaded.

On a 3: The power cell fuses without firing. The weapon must be reloaded.

On a 2: The weapon fuses. It is junk.

On a 1: The weapon explodes. An explosion with the increased damage goes off. Plasma weapons cause their usual explosive damage. Other weapons affect all targets within 4 meters.

If the die roll also happens to trigger disconnection, the character may consider himself lucky. An overloaded energy weapon that disconnects simply fuses into useless junk, even on a 1.

Ion Guns: Ion weapons generate a carrier beam using a low-power laser, then deliver a lethal blast of electricity down the path of that beam. They are useless in water, or even heavy rain. Metallic armor is ineffective against Ion attacks.

Ion Guns use a standard power cell for ammunition.

The **Pe-6 Ion Gun** is a light weapon. In a cyberweapon format it can fit into a Hand Mount.

The **Pe-9 Ion Gun** is a heavier weapon, requiring an Arm Mount if used as a cyberweapon.

Lasers: High-powered lasers have been used as weapons for centuries. Lasers use **two** standard power cells,

hooked in series, for ammunition.

The **Res-14** is a standard laser side-arm pattern. A Res-14-Ket will fit into a Hand Mount.

The **Res-14/Alpha** is a heavy laser pattern derived from the Res-14. As a cyberweapon, it requires an Arm Mount. It is too large to be mounted in a pistol, requiring a rifle.

Plasma Guns: Plasma weapons fire packets of charged hydrogen plasma, bound in pulsed electromagnetic containment fields until they reach the target, whereupon they detonate, causing a violent explosion. Plasma guns draw power from **two** standard plasma cells.

As noted above, the Race cannot use plasma weapons as cyberweapons, since their energy interferes with neural circuitry. However, cyber-formats of plasma guns do exist, and are used in power armor. Tharkoldu do use plasma weapons as cyberweapons.

The **Thav/6-Nu Plasma Gun** is small enough to fit handily into a handgun format, but is more comfortably used in a long gun configuration, using both hands. If compressed into a handgun format, the firer suffers -1 bonus modifier when firing the weapon. The blast from this weapon creates an explosion with the following ranges:

Short: 3

Medium: 6

Long: 10

The **Thav/7-Nu** is an infantry support weapon. It is available as a bi-pod stabilized rifle, weighing over 140 pounds (65 kilos). The weapon is fired from the ground, with the firer prone. A character firing the rifle while standing or kneeling suffers a -3 bonus modifier unless her *Strength* is 15 or better, in which case she can stabilize the weapon. The explosion radii are the same as the Thav/ 6-Nu.

The **8/Thav-Nu Plasma Field Blaster** is a hefty piece of hardware. Weighing better than 240 pounds (110 kilos) it can only be fired when the blastgrips are planted against the ground. The blastgrips prevent the weapon from bucking when it fires. The 8/Thav-Nu generates a blast over a wider range:

Short: 4

Medium: 10

Long: 15





Stunners: Stunners and neural weapons use microwave pulses to damage the target's central nervous system and disrupt cyberware systems.

Stunners directly affect the nervous system and armor is of little or no use against them. Energy screens are effective. Similarly, stunners cannot penetrate heavy cover, such as vehicular armors or structural surfaces. If you cannot see the target, you generally cannot stun it (unlike, for example, plasma weapons, which deal with most cover by blowing it to smithereens).

They draw power from standard power cells.

The **Bith/66 Stunner** combines ultrasonic and microwave energy to stun the target. It is ineffective past medium range.

The weapon does stun damage. Armor as does not reduce the damage from the Bith/66. A Shock Repression implant will add +1 to resistance against the Bith/66.

Bith/42 Neural Distorter: The Bith/42 delivers a concentrated microwave pulse beam. The combination of energies does stun damage, but on a K result, the target suffers a KO instead. Armor is ineffective against a Bith/42.

Bith/90 Pulse Gun: Similar to the Bith/42, but the weapon is specifically designed to induce current hysteresis in cybercircuitry. If the victim of a Pulse Gun shot has any implants at all, the weapon does normal damage. Otherwise it does Stun damage. In either case, it has the same heavy stun effect as a Bith/42, so that a K result counts as a KO. Armor is ineffective against a Bith/90.

Heavy Weapons

Scale: Medium

Team-served or smaller: Medium

Large: Large

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Electronic, Machining, Plastics, Polymers

+Cybercontrols: Cybernetics

Common patterns exist for all of the weapons listed on page 136 of the *Torg Rulebook* that have a Tech value of 20 or more.

Thav-5/Mim Minigrenade Launcher: A man-portable weapon, it requires the *heavy weapons* skill to operate. The Thav-5/Mim is designed to be used independently of any other weapons system. The original Thav-5 pattern was designed to be fitted to the Mim-8 assault weapon as an integral grenade launcher. Both formats load a magazine of either 3 or 6 30mm aerodynamic minigrenades and fire them singly or in bursts of 3.

Thav-10/Mim Grenade Launcher: The Thav-10 is a heavy, team-served grenade launcher capable of direct or indirect fire. It has largely replaced the mortar in Tharkoldu tactics as a squad barrage weapon.

One character can handle the Thav-10 if her *Strength* is 15 or higher. The weapon can be fired from a shoulder position, like a bazooka, or from rest,



using a bi-pod and butt-plate.

The weapon loads a magazine of six 50mm grenades and can fire them individually or in bursts.

Zan-10 Chaingun: A heavier, team-served chaingun, usually mounted on vehicles or in fixed emplacements. It fires 8mm rounds, available in the same formats as other firearms ammunition.

Thav-Zan Plasma Cannon: A direct-fire, team-served energy weapon, used in vehicle mounts or fired from a tripod. Note that *heavy weapons* skill is used to fire this weapon rather than *energy weapons*. The weapon is powered by standard plasma cells, but exhausts a cell in one shot. It's magazine can hold 10 plasma cells at one time. If fired on overload, its damage value is increased by the number of charged cells in the magazine.

Grenades, Shells And Missiles

Scale: Small

Aerodynamic Grenades: Small

All Other: Medium

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Ceramics, Chemicals, Electronics, Machining

+**Smarts:** +Cybernetics

+**Plasma Warhead:** +Cybernetics, Plasmatics

Smart Shells: Add +2 to the *heavy weapons* skill used to fire the weapon. ECM equipment on the target cancels this advantage.

Plasma Warhead: These add +1 to the damage value of the shell or missile and increases the blast radii given on page 137 of the *Torg Rulebook*. The radii increase to the next higher measure of the value above the original radius. For example, a Plasma Shell from a 125mm tank gun has a damage value of 30. The explosive burst radius increases from:

Short: 0-4

Medium: 10

Long: 25

to:

Short: 0-6

Medium: 15

Long: 40

Aerodynamic 30mm Mini-grenades are slim, rounded shells with retractable-fin stabilization. The casing, including the fins, are irregularly matrixed ceramics which fragment violently upon detonation. As they work on fragmentation, plasma variants are counterproductive. The increase due to plasma is negated by a loss of damage due to the loss of fragmentation caused by the plasma.

Aerodynamic 30 mm Antiarmor MiniG are variants of the standard minigrenade. Its shaped charge allows it to ignore the first five armor adds of a target. The shaped charge lessens the collateral damage, so the grenade does damage value 18 to other targets in short range blast radius. The damage decreases normally at medium and long radii, to 15 at medium and 13 at long range. Plasma variants do increase the damage by +1, but do not increase the blast radius.

50mm are high explosive rounds. Plasma variants work just fine for 50mm grenades.

Melee Weapons

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Machining

+**Electroweapon:** +Electronics

+**Mass Impact:** +Polymers

+**Monofilament:** +Polymers

+**Plasma:** +Plasmatics

Tharkold has long since left behind the traditions of sword and lance. Melee weapons are designed to be used only as a last resort, and to be used with the most violent effect when it IS the last resort. Thus, standard UltraCAD patterns exist only for daggers, combat axes, and an assortment of batons and staffs. Swords, halberds, maces, and other antiques are not typical on Tharkold.

Whips are common melee weapons on both sides, and are a ceremonial weapon among the demons. Many Race initially learned the use of the whip on the receiving end, as slaves, before putting those lessons to use in uprisings. It is regarded as a weapon symbolizing the Race's commitment to liberation and has religious significance in the Way of the Race.

A simple machining module can manufacture excellent melee weapons from high-quality steel. However, technologically enhanced melee weapons are also available.

Electroweapons: These weapons shoot a jolt of electricity into a target on contact. The weapon does normal damage, but if the target takes any shock damage, increase the shock damage by 3 points.

Electroweapons use a standard power cell. This requires reloading or recharging after the weapon has been in use for 20 rounds. Electroweapons may also be constructed as Monofilament or Mass Impact weapons. Melee cyberweapons, such as Talons or Slashers, may be made as Electroweapons as well.

Monofilament weapons: These weapons have an extremely thin polymer chain bonded to the edge of the weapon. They increase the damage value and Maximum Damage of edged weapons by +1. In the event of disconnection, they lose this bonus and function as normal weapons of their type for the disconnected character.

Mass Impact weapons: Impact weapons made from a polymer construction that focuses kinetic energy to the point of impact. MI clubs and staves are the standard weapons used for crowd control by Race law enforcement personnel. They increase the damage value and Maximum Damage of impact weapons by +1. In the event of disconnection, the plastic construction of the weapons is in fact lighter and less potent than that of more primitive bludgeons, and their damage values are reduced to 1 point below the normal ratings for the disconnected character.

Plasma Melee weapons: Weapons sheathed in a plasma field, these add +2 to the damage value and Maximum Damage of the weapon. Screens cancel this bonus (see below).

Plasma melee weapons use a standard plasma cell for power. This will energize the plasma sheathe for one week of fairly heavy use and must then be replaced.

In the event of disconnection or power exhaustion, plasma melee weapons may be used without power, losing their damage bonuses.



Pain Weapons

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Cybernetics, Machining

Pain Weapons are *Tech 26* creations of occult technology, channeling the trained, psychic power of the user into a Spiritual attack.

A character using a Pain Weapon must first strike her opponent using *unarmed combat* or *melee weapons* skill.

If the blow lands, it does no direct damage, but the attacker now uses *pain weapons* skill as her effect value, adding the bonus from the attack and the damage add for the weapon format, if any. This does Spiritual Stun damage to the opponent. Victims of a Pain Weapon attack use their own *pain weapons* skill, or their *Spirit*, as the opposing difficulty.

In the event of disconnection, Pain Weapons are useless, being too light to do any serious physical damage.

Agonizer: An Agonizer is a cylindrical, hand-held unit, about 8mm long and 2 mm in diameter. *Unarmed combat* skill is used to strike a target with the Agonizer.

The Agonizer may be built as a cyberweapon and fitted into a Hand Mount.

Pain Wand: A 50-centimeter (20 inches) long wand. Either *unarmed combat* or *melee weapons* skill may be used to hit someone with a Pain Wand.

Pain Baton: A heavier, one-meter (40 inches) long Pain Weapon. *Melee weapons* skill is used to strike a target with the Pain Baton.

Pain Staff: A two-meter (80 inches) staff. *Melee weapons* is used to hit the target.

Pain Whip: A two-meter (80 inches) whip.

Energy Whips

As noted in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook, when a character scores a *Good* success or better using a whip, she may entangle her target. The entangled opponent must generate a *Strength* total of 12 to break free.

An entangled character can suffer damage when caught in an electrowhip, plasma whip, or pain whip.

At the beginning of each turn that a character is entangled, regardless of which side has initiative, a character entangled in such a whip must resist damage.

Electrowhips and plasma whips have a damage value of 20, plus a generated bonus, against an entangled opponent.

If the victim is entangled in a pain whip, then the attacker and defender determine damage as usual for pain weapons.

Armor

Scale: Medium

SyntheCyclers: Ceramics, Hydrocarbons, Metals

MakerMods: Machining, Plastics

+Jets: +Vehicular, Plasmatronics

+Power Armor: +Cybernetics, Electronics, Polymers

+Diffrax: +Polymers

+Screen: +Electronics, Plasmatronics

Considering the damage done by Tharkold weaponry, it should come as no surprise that personal armor technology is very advanced.

Armor over armor: External armor worn over cyberarmor, or a mesh armor liner worn under heavier armor, improves the armor adds if the weaker armor is within 2 points of the stronger armor. Add +2 to the armor add, and the maximum value, of the stronger armor.

For example, if a character has Interdermal Plate (*Toughness* +5/Maximum 25) and is wearing Chod/5 Skirmisher Armor (*Toughness* +5/Maximum 30) the net result is an armor add of TOU +7, with a maximum of 32.

If the armor adds are not within two points of each other, only the stronger protection has any effect. A character with Interdermal Plate +5 and Chod/8 Power Armor (*Toughness* +8) would only receive protection from the power armor.

If a character is wearing more than two kinds of armor, only the two best forms of armor are considered.

Kap/3 Mesh: A flexible ballistic armor providing armor +3. Maximum value is 20. Used widely fatigues and in reinforcing liners worn under heavier armors, such as Kap/5 or Chod/5. It can be reinforced against energy weapons with Diffrax.

Kap/5 Synthileather: A synthetic leather made from rigiplast, a pressure responsive polymer and cerametal mesh. Light and flexible, Kap/5 reacts to impact by hardening momentarily into a resistance, hard plate at the point of impact.

Provides armor +5 with a maximum of 25. It can be reinforced against energy weapons using Diffrax.

Chod/5 Skirmisher Armor: Light armor made from thin plates of cerametal, with superior ventilation and placement preventing fatigue. It provides armor +5 with maximum of 30. Besides its lightness, it is sufficiently rigid that it can be reinforced against energy weapons using Screens or Diffrax. It can be fitted with Jets.

Chod/8 Power Armor: Servomotor augmented armor made from articulated cerametal plates. Thermocouple conversion units use body heat to power the armor, avoiding fatigue and cooling the wearer. Chod/8 still requires a power cell, which lasts one month before it needs recharging. Properly meshing with the armor's servomotors requires the wearer to be fitted with a Nervejack. It provides armor +8 with a maximum value of 30.

If the armor's wearer has no Nervejack, or disconnects, Chod/8 still provides +8 protection as long as the local Tech axiom is 13 or higher, but the wearer is subject to fatigue and a -1 *Dexterity* penalty.

Chod/8 armor can be augmented against energy weapons using Screens. It can be fitted with Jets.

Chod/10 Power Armor: The Chod/10 is the latest in powered armor technology. It draws power from solar energy and waste heat from the wearer's body, but still requires a standard power cell. The power cell lasts for one month before it requires recharging.

Chod/10 provides +10 armor adds with a maximum value of 30. The user must be connected to the armor via a Nervejack, or suffer a -2 to *Strength* and *Dexterity*. If jacked in, the user gets a +2 to *Strength* and no *Dexterity* penalty. The wearer's *climbing* and *lifting* maximums are increased by +2.

The *Strength* add is not cumulative with that due to cyberarms, and if the user has a higher set of bonuses due to cyberarms, those supersede the armor's bonus.



Tharkoldu wear Chod/10 armor modified to accommodate wings or cyberwings. It gives the wearer +2 to the demon's *flight* skill and flying speed.

The Chod/10 has Gun Mounts in both arms. Any desired cyberweapons may be installed in these mounts. If the wearer is jacked into the armor, he can fire these without penalty. Otherwise, increase his difficulty numbers by 2 since he must use manual controls to fire.

Attacks can be made directly on the armor instead of the wearer. In the event of a KO against the armor, it malfunctions until repaired using *cybertech* skill. Each wound level suffered reduces the armor adds by 3. Wounds can be repaired using *cybertech*, treating each wound as a separate repair job. "Killing" the armor damages it irreparably. Shock damage against the armor has no effect.

If the wearer of Chod/10 armor disconnects or the armor is "killed," then wearer is subject to the same penalties as if he were not using a Nervejack. All special functions: built-in weapons, jets, and other systems, are unusable.

Chod/10 can be augmented against energy weapons using Diffrax or Screens, and can be fitted with Jets.

Jets: Chod-pattern power armor may be equipped with plasma jets, allowing flight at a speed value of 13 (100 mph). The jetpacks are powered by a plasma cell providing one hour of flight. The jets also increase *long jumping* by +5.

Diffrax: Diffrax is a special polymer coating that increases armor's resistance to energy weapons. Diffrax sheathing provides +6 armor adds against energy weapons, electroweapons, and plasma weapons, with a maximum of 25. Against other attacks, the armor has its normal protection. For example, Kap/3 Diffrax Mesh would have a +6/Maximum 25 against energy weapons, as well as its normal +3/Maximum 20 against other forms of violence.

Any form of armor with a value of +6 or less may be given Diffrax sheathing.

Screen: Screen is a plasma force field that impregnates the fabric of

armor and increases its resistance to energy weapons and blasts from plasma bullets or shells. When hit, it radiates a wave-burst that partially cancels the energy weapon's damage. Screen draws power from a plasma cell.

Unlike Diffrax, screens do **not** increase armor adds against energy weapons. Instead, they reduce the damage value of the energy attack by five. No maximum applies. **Note:** This difference in protection type becomes important in the case of plasma weapons. If a screened character is in the short range burst of a plasma weapon, the damage value against all characters is reduced by five. If more than one screened character is in the short range burst, the damage value is additionally reduced by the Many-on-One bonus modifier.

Example: Five characters wearing energy-screened armor, along with two who are not, are caught in the short range burst of a Thav/ 7-Nu, which has a damage value of 35. The damage value is reduced by five, and reduced again by four, the Many-on-One bonus modifier for five characters. The damage value is 26 (35-5-4). This damage value is applied to all seven characters.

The power pack for a personal screen unit contains two standard plasma cells. Every time a character takes any shock damage from an energy weapon, roll the action die. If the die roll is less than or equal to the shock damage suffered, a plasma cell burns out. Once both are exhausted the screen is down until at least one cell is replaced or recharged.

Screen can be used to reinforce any plated armor. It cannot reinforce flexible armors (Kap/3 or Kap/5). It cannot be used to reinforce cyberarmor (Interdermal or Exodermal) since the currents it sets up would disrupt the wearer's nervous system and cybercircuitry.

Vehicles

Scale: Large
Motorcycle, Hovercycle: Medium
Hovercar, Ground Car: Large
All Other: Industrial

SyntheCyclers: Ceramic, Hydrocarbon, Metal

MakerMods: Electronics, Machining, Plastics, Vehicular

+**Armor:** +Polymers

+**Cybercontrols:** +Cybernetics

+**ECM:** Cybernetics

+**Screen:** +Plasmatics

+**Jet Aircraft:** +Ceramics, Plasmatics

Arming Vehicles: There is no change in the cost/value of vehicular weapons from other types of weapons. A Pe-Ain-Vav, the vehicular version of the Pe-Ain chaingun, has the same value as a version of the weapon designed for personal use. Vehicular weapons are not configured for manual use and generally cannot be used except when they are installed in a weapons emplacement.

Most popular vehicle patterns have one or more weapon emplacements. These come in four sizes:

Very Light: Can accept any firearm or energy weapon, but no heavy weapons.

Light: Can accept any firearm or energy weapon, or one of the following Heavy Weapons: Thav/5 and Thav/10 grenade launchers, a rack of three Iot/10 Rockets, 20mm autocannon, Zan-10 chaingun.

Heavy: Can accept any heavy weapon with a caliber of 30mm or less, including energy cannons of any size. It can also mount three missiles of any type, if configured as a missile rack.

Very Heavy: Can accept any heavy weapon. If installed as a missile emplacement, it can hold 6 missiles of a specified type.

Emplaced weapons may be fired via cybercontrol or using manual controls built into the vehicle's console. Manual fire suffers a -3 to the character's skill to hit.

Ground Vehicles

Ground vehicles use solid tires for durability. Control and traction are enhanced by microprocessor-compensated any-wheel drive technology. Vehicular power cells power each tire individually. They require recharging or replacement after 30 days of operation. Built-in solar accumulators allow batteries to recharge without access to commercial power: one day without



driving allows six hours of operation at cruising speed (Maximum speed value-1) or three hours at maximum speed.

Chod-Lam/1 Groundcycle: A heavy, all-terrain motorcycle with gyro-stabilization and optional cybercontrols that make it capable of maneuvers unthinkable on a more primitive machine. The Chod-Lam/1 has a front mounted Very Light weapon emplacement. It cannot be reloaded without stopping the vehicle.

Nu-4/Tet Groundcar: A Large scale four-seat groundcar. Capable of carrying 50 kg of cargo, plus an additional 100 kg in place of each passenger.

The Nu-4/Tet has front and rear Light weapons emplacements. These cannot be reloaded without stopping the vehicle.

Mim-16 Ground Freighter: An Industrial scale truck, the size of a large Core Earth tractor/trailer. The cargo area is about 20 meters long and can carry 30 tons of cargo. The driver's cab can accommodate two people comfortably or three with some crowding.

The Mim-16 mounts a Heavy 360-degree Turret on top of the cargo area. This can be reloaded from inside the vehicle, if a loader is present inside the cargo area.

Lam-Res Combat Car: A heavily armored, Large ground car. The Lam-Res can accommodate a driver and 8 other passengers. It mounts a Heavy 360-degree Turret on top, which can be fired by the driver or by a turret gunner, a Light front emplacement, and two Very Light 180-degree turrets to either side of the passenger compartment. In addition, passengers can shoot through firing ports at -2 to their skill. There are two firing ports in the rear of the vehicle and on each side.

The top- and side-mounted turrets can be fired by the driver or by turret gunners. If the turret gunners have Nervejacks and the combat car has cybercontrols installed, they can jack in and fire the weapons cybernetically. However, if they fire the weapons manually, turret gunners do not suffer the 3 point skill penalty that a driver would get for using manual control.

Any weapon can be reloaded by a character at it's turret position inside the combat car.



Hover Vehicles

Tharkold's hover technology allows vehicles to move at the same speeds over any terrain, including open water. Hover vehicles have largely replaced small water craft, though large cargo ships, the equivalent of Tech 24 tankers as far as capacity and speed go, are still used.

Maximum cruising altitude is 5 meters, but the hover fans are capable of brief jumps to higher altitudes, al-

lowing the vehicle to leapfrog obstacles or survives drops from moderate heights. Vectored thrust impellers give Tharkoldu hovercraft a high degree of maneuverability.

Hover vehicles draw power from vehicular power cells, containing enough power for 60 hours of operation at cruising speed (maximum speed value-1) or 30 hours at maximum speed.

Hoverjumps: If the driver wants to move to an altitude greater than 5



meters, she must generate a power push total using *land vehicles* skill. The difficulty is the value of the vehicle's weight in tons. Hoverjumping a vehicle that weighs a ton or less has a difficulty of 0. Hoverjumping a 60 ton tank would have a difficulty of 9.

If the push succeeds, the vehicle can jump to a height value of 4 plus the push modifier. For example, Debra pushes her hovercar and gets a +2. This allows her to get up to a height value of 6, or 15 meters.

Hoverjumping causes vehicle fatigue (see *Torg Rulebook*, page 81).

A hoverjump lasts only one round. Sustaining a jump gets harder. The driver has to push the vehicle each round that she is maintaining the jump and the difficulty goes up by +1 for each round that the jump lasts.

A hoverjump can be used if a hover vehicle is falling from a height. Reduce the effective height of the fall by the altitude of the hoverjump. This may turn a lethal crash into a good landing, i.e. one the characters can walk away from. If the height of the fall is less than the altitude of the jump, the hover vehicle can simply continue moving, having made a safe descent to its cruising altitude of 5 meters.

Xedi-1 Hovercycle: A Small scale hovercraft with room for a single rider and capable of carrying 100 kg of cargo. It mounts a single, forward mounted Very Light emplacement. The weapon cannot be reloaded while in flight.

The pilot is protected by a forward windscreen, but is otherwise exposed to attack and the elements. Armor and screen protects the vehicle, but not its rider.

Xedi-Qo/4 Hovercar: A Large hovercar with space for a driver and 3 passengers. It can carry 50 kg of cargo, and an additional 100 kg in place of each passenger. The Xedi-Qo mounts a Light 180-degree turret in the front. This can be reloaded while the hovercar is in flight.

Xedi-Pe Hovertank: A heavy weapons platform of Industrial scale. It mounts impressive armor and screens and has room for a crew of 3: one driver, a main turret gunner, and a loader/gunner.

The Xedi-Pe mounts a Very Heavy 360-degree turret on top, a Heavy front

mounted emplacement, and a Heavy 180-degree turret in the rear.

Air Vehicles

Vectored thrust turbofan aircraft, jets, and "black sky" suborbital ramjets form Tharkold's aerial arsenal. Space research lags behind the mainstream of Tharkoldu technology, and orbital vehicles have not advanced past Tech 23 models similar to the Core Earth Tech 23 Space Shuttle (page 139, *Torg Rulebook*). Tharkoldu prefer raiding other cosms to exploring other planets. Race space programs have been hampered by the demands of the war and Demonic sabotage. The addition of cybercontrol circuitry increases a shuttle's rating to Tech 26, but there is little else to justify the increase.

Turbofan and other commercial aircraft use vehicular power cells. A cell can power them for 15 hours at cruising speed (maximum value -1) or six hours of flight at top speed before it requires recharging or replacing. Combat jet aircraft use an aerial plasma cell which can power them for 10 hours of flight at cruising speed (maximum speed value -1) or four hours at top speed before they need to be replaced.

Thav-Iot/6 Carrier: A vectored-thrust cargo plane capable of carrying 30,000 kg of cargo, with a cargo bay capable of holding two hovertanks, or 12 trucks, or 16 smaller vehicles, or 100 troops equipped for combat.

While armored and screened, the Thav-Iot/6 is not armed. It is too slow and clumsy to have much of a chance in aerial combat, and must depend on fighter escorts for protection.

Alph-120 Passenger Jet: A passenger craft, about the size of a Core Earth Learjet, seating 24 passengers, with a cockpit crew of 2.

Standard Alph-120's are not armed and their use is generally restricted to air space considered safe from attack.

Tet-Sim VTOL: A vectored thrust close support craft carrying a pilot and an observer, heavily armored and screened. It mounts three Heavy weapon emplacements: one in the nose, one under each wing, all aimed forward.

Digam-Sim/12 Fighter: A single-seat jet fighter. It carries one Very Heavy

weapon emplacement in a pod mounted under the belly, and a pair of Heavy emplacements, one under each wing. Light on the armor but fast and agile.

Digam-Bith Fighter-Bomber: A heavily armored, long-range jet crewed by a pilot and a navigator/bombardier. It carries a restricted Very Heavy weapon emplacement that can carry an assortment of missiles and bombs. A Heavy emplacement mounted in the nose and Heavy emplacements under each wing round out the armament.

Zan-1/Xo Suborbital Fighter: The cutting edge of Tharkoldu technology, with an operational ceiling of 100 km. The Zan-1/Xo mounts two Heavy weapon emplacements and restricts its weaponry to missiles or heavy energy weapons since its typical range of engagement is between 5 and 10 km.

Its speed and maneuverability are reduced considerably at an altitude below 10 km.

Vehicular Modifications

Cybercontrols: Any vehicle may be given cybercontrols. Nervejacked operators get a +3 to their vehicle skill when jacked into a cybercontrolled vehicle. Jacked gunners get a +3 to their weapon skill when operating weapon emplacements in a cybercontrolled vehicle.

ECM: ECM cancels the +2 attack bonus of "smart" projectiles. It also makes the operator's *vehicle* skill the defense against any attempts to find the vehicle using radar. The skill may be used actively to defend against a radar lock-on. An ECM system adds +2 to the operator's skill for purposes of evading radar detection, or other electronic sensors.

Screen: Screen operates for vehicles exactly as it does for personal armor, decreasing the damage value of energy weapons and plasma blasts by five. Vehicular screens operate using vehicular plasma cells. On any hit that does shock damage to the vehicle, these may be knocked out of action. Roll the action die. If the result is less than or equal to the shock damage done, a plasma cell burns out. Medium vehicles carry two plasma cells. Large vehicles carry three. Industrial vehicles carry four.



Power Cells

Scale: Small

SyntheCyclers: Ceramics, Hydrocarbons, Metals

MakerMods: Ceramics, Electronics, Machining, Plastics

+Plasma Cells: +Plasmatics

Energy generation, transmission, and storage is the lifeblood of the technological segment of Tharkold's society. A variety of batteries exist, used to power portable equipment, cyberlimbs, and weapons. Power is generated from high-efficiency solar panels, geothermal sources, and, on the cutting edge of technology, fusion generators that convert almost any mass into usable energy.

Cells

Tharkold has two standard sizes of power cell. Regular cells, the size of a Core Earth D-cell battery, power portable devices of all kinds: cybernetic implants, powered equipment, energy weapons, and so on.

Vehicular power cells are larger, about the size of one-quart (one-liter) bottle. A typical Tharkoldu vehicle will have one battery for each drive wheel, or hoverfan. Very large vehicles will require banks of vehicular cells.

The length of time a power cell can energize a given device varies, and is specified in the device's description. Powered equipment that draws a steady charge has a rated operating time on a single power cell. When the time is up, a fresh power cell is needed, or the power cell must be recharged.

Energy weapons will be allowed a specified number of shots from a single power cell. After it has fired that many

shots, the weapon must be reloaded with a fresh power cell.

Plasma cells are similar to power cells, but besides a storage battery, they contain hydrogen compressed under pressure and retained in a hydride matrix. Regular plasma cells are about the size of a can of soda. Vehicular plasma cells are about a meter on a side and will just fit into a Small MakerMod complex.

Recharging: All Tharkoldu power cells are equipped to recharge from available electrical current, using an induction field "leech." Attaching the leech within 10 cm of any electrical circuit will begin drawing power.

Usable current is available at *Tech* level 20 or higher. Recharging from a state-of-the-art *Tech* level 26 electrical supply takes four hours for a regular power cell, ten hours for a vehicular cell, and a day for an air vehicle cell. Plasma cells take eight hours for a regular plasma cell, and 20 hours for a vehicular plasma cell, and 60 hours for an air vehicle plasma cell. More primitive, or different, power systems recharge batteries more slowly. The time value modifiers are as follows:

Space Gods	+1
Cyberpapacy	+3
Nippon	+4
Core Earth	+5
Nile Empire	+6
Orrorsh	+7

Reduce the time value by three if the character has access to a high-voltage transmission line, industrial current, or other high-powered source of electricity, by five if the character can hook up to the generators in a power

station. The minimum recharge time is the time it would take the cell to charge in Tharkold. Any faster would overload the cell, fusing it to worthless junk; the cells have surge-protection to prevent overload.

Plasma cells also require a source of water when they are recharging, in order to refill their hydrogen storage through electrolysis.

Vril Batteries: A source of power developed by demon science is the *Vril* battery, a power cell capable of driving a cyberware device for an indefinite period without recharging. *Vril* batteries are charged in an involved *occultech* process. Life force is drained, slowly and painfully, from a possibility-rated being. This produces a compact and powerful energy source.

Vril technology is rare even among Tharkoldu, and almost unknown among the Race, who outlaw its use under penalty of death. Rumors of ghastly experiments with large-scale *vril* technology have recently surfaced among the Race, tales of Tharkoldu power plants that draw their energy from victims being rendered down for their very life force. Given *Vril's* need for possibility-rated victims, this rumor is probably false.

Equipment List

The equipment list below give prices in dollars. An "na" in the price column means the item cannot be purchased. An "na" in any other column means that column does not apply to that item. A "-" in the range column means the weapon does not have that range category.



Equipment Table

	Tech	Dmg.	Ammo	Range			Price (Value)
				Short	Med	Long	
Firearms							
<i>Single Shot</i>							
9/Gam Snub Pistol	25	15	9	3-10	20	30	450 (14)
11/Alph Automatic	25	16	21	3-10	30	50	500(14)
13/Zan Magnum	25	18	21	3-10	40	60	600 (14)
<i>Auto Fire</i>							
Vav-9 MP	26	19	18	3-10	20	60	700 (15)
Thav-9 SMG	26	19	24	3-15	40	150	800 (15)
Nu-15 CAW	26	20	12	5-10	40	60	700 (15)
Mim-8/ Alph Carbine	26	21	30	3-20	150	400	900 (15)
Mim-8/Bith Rifle	26	22	30	3-40	180	600	900 (15)
Pe-Ain Chaingun	26	24	12	3-40	200	800	1,500 (16)
Energy Weapons							
Pe-6 Ion Gun	26	23	30	3-10	50	100	1,000 (15)
Pe-9 Ion Gun	26	24	20	3-50	150	300	1,500 (16)
Res-14 Laser	26	25	50	3-50	100	200	2,500 (17)
Res-14/ Alph Laser	26	26	30	3-150	400	2k	4,000 (18)
Thav-6/Nu Plasma Gun	26	30	20	5-50	300	500	10,000 (20)
Thav-7/Nu Plasma Gun	26	35	10	10-200	500	1.5k	100,000 (25)
Thav-8 Plasma Field Blaster	26	38	5	20-300	500	1.5k	na
Bith/66 Stunner	26	25	50	10-15	30		1,000 (15)
Bith/42 Neural Distorter	26	30	50	5-15	30	-	2,500 (17)
Bith/90 Pulse Gun	26	28	50	5-10	30	60	4,000 (18)
Heavy Weapons							
Thav-5/Mim Minigrenade Launcher	26	see grenade stats	10	5-25	200	500	700 (15)
Thav-10/Gim Grenade Launcher	26	see grenade stats	10	5-25	200	500	1,000 (15)
Zan-10 Lt. Chaingun	25	27	20	3-120	500	1k	4,000 (18)
Zan-20 Hvy. Chaingun	25	29	20	3-250	1k	2k	6,000 (19)

Grenades	Tech	Damage Value	Price (Value)
Aerodynamic 30 mm			
clip of 3	26	22	60 (9)
clip of 6	26	22	100 (10)
Aero 30mm Antiarmor			
clip of 3	26	22**	60 (9)
clip of 6	26	22**	100 (10)
50mm			
clip of 6	26	27	600 (14)

* No plasma variant.

* ignores first five armor adds, does damage value 18 to other targets in short range blast radius.

Cost of plasma round is 250% cost (+2 value).

Cost of smart round is 150% cost (+1 value).

Power Cells	Price (Value)
Standard	400 (13)
Vehicular	1,000 (15)
Air Vehicle	2,500 (17)
Plasma	
Standard	1,000 (15)
Vehicular	2,500 (17)
Air vehicle	5,000 (19)



Ammunition	Tech	Price (Value)
<i>Firearms</i>		
9/Gam	25	6 (4)
11/Alph	25	20 (7)
13/Zan	25	40(8)
Vav-9	26	60 (9)
Thav-9	26	100 (10)
Nu-15	26	60 (9)
Mim-8	26	150 (11)
Pe-Ain 5.5	26	600 (14)

Cost of explosive round is 150% cost (+1 value).

Cost of plasma round is 250% cost (+2 value).

Cost of smart round is 150% cost (+1 value).

Melee Weapons	Tech	Damage Plus	Max. Value	Price (Value)
<i>Mono-filament Weapons</i>				
Dagger	26	+4	18	200 (12)
Broadsword	26	+7	21	600 (14)
Combat Axe	26	+8	31	1,000(15)
Whip	26	+10	25	na

Melee Weapons	Tech	Damage Plus	Max. Value	Price (Value)
<i>Mass Impact Weapons</i>				
Club	25	+4	19	200 (12)
Staff	25	+5	20	300 (13)

Plasma Weapons

Dagger	26	+5	19	200 (12)
Broadsword	26	+8	22	500 (14)
Whip	26	+12	27	na

Pain Weapons

Gauntlet, "Agonizer"	26	-1	na	na
Wand	26	+0	na	na
Baton	26	+3	na	na
Whip	26	+3	na	na
Staff	26	+5	na	na

Armor	Tech	Value/Max	Fatigue?	Cost (Value)
Kap/3 Mesh	24	+3/20	no	60 (9)
Kap/5 Synthileather	25	+5/25	no	1,200 (16)
+Diffrax	26	+6/25*	no	(+1)
Chod/5 Skirmisher	26	+5/30	no	10,000 (20)
Chod/8 Power Armor	26	+8/30	yes**	150,000(26)
Chod/10 Power Armor	26	+10/30	yes**	na

* Vs. energy weapons, electroweapons, and plasma weapons only. Use armor's normal value against other weapons.

** Imposes fatigue and other penalties if disconnected, or if the user does not have a Nervejack. See description.

Vehicles	Tech	kmh/mph	Value	Pass	Tough	Price (Value)
<i>Ground Vehicles</i>						
Chod-Lam/1	26	290/180	15	1	15	18,000 (22)
Nu-4/ Tet	26	250/ 150	14	4	18	25,000 (22)
Mim-16 GF	26	200/ 125	14	2(3)	26	100,000 (25)
Lam-Res C-Car		200/ 125	14	9	27	150,000 (26)

Hover Vehicles

							Hoverjump Difficulty
Xedi-1	26	400/ 250	15	1	14	25,000 (22)	0
Xedi-1a	26	600/ 400	16	1(2)	12	na	0
Xedi-Qo/4	26	350/ 220	15	4	17	40,000 (23)	2
Xedi-Pe HT	26	200/ 125	14	3	42	na	9

Air Vehicles

Alph-120	26	1,600/1,000	18	26	24	na	
Tet-Sim VTOL	26	1,000/ 600	17	2	31	na	
Digam-Sim/12	26	4,800/ 3,000	21	1	26	na	
Digam-Bith	26	3,200/2,000	20	2	36	na	
Zan-1/Xo	26	25,000/ 15,000	24	2	27	na	





Chapter Eleven

The Grid



he Grid represents the culmination of centuries spent developing the interface between mind and machine. Processors got faster. Data structures became more complex. Old fashioned user interfaces based on text commands and pictorial icons were unable to give operators enough control to use the full capacity of their computer systems. The human factor became a bottleneck.

A cybertech civilization can overcome this bottleneck by interfacing the enormous processing power of the living brain and nervous system to its computer systems. Slow access methods like keyboards, icons, voice programming, all go out the window and are replaced by Virtual Experience (VX). Using a VX cyberterminal, or a **cyberdeck**, a computer user, a **decker**, can use the full power of an advanced system.

In this sourcebook, we use a "quick" system to resolve Gridruns. Instead, of moving through a mapped-out computer system, deckers use a series of dramatic skill resolutions to get at pieces of the Grid.

Torg players can use this system, or the detailed rules given in *The GodNet* supplement.

Grid Architecture

A really secure computer system has no direct connections to the outside world. Data is transferred into and out of such a system using physical storage media. This is terribly inefficient and wastes a lot of computer time. Open architectures, like the GodNet, tie all systems into a central network. This is supremely efficient, but compromises security.

On Tharkold, the dangers of computer warfare make security vital. Attacks on computer networks can wreak

havoc in a high-tech civilization. The result is that the Grid is not a single entity, like the GodNet, but rather a set of loosely connected networks.

A computer system is represented in the Grid by a Virtual Experience region called a **complex**.

Complexes are linked by networks. The GodNet is an example of a network that links all of the complexes in its "universe." Every major computer in CyberFrance is connected to the GodNet.

On Tharkold, there are many independent networks. Driven by the security concerns of the War, and the cultural peculiarities of Tharkold, these networks are rarely interconnected.

Connections between physical sites are made with land lines and microwave relays. Communications satellites are used only for the most low-security channels, since satellite communications are terribly vulnerable to invasion by deckers.

DemonGrid: Tharkoldu maintain a global computer network called DemonGrid. DemonGrid is the public data network of demonic civilization and virtually every pride has access to it. However, since secrecy is often an essential weapon in the continuous struggle for dominance in demon society, most prides also have secure systems devoted to secret research and work.

National Grids: The Free Nations each maintain a national computer Grid. There is no single "RaceGrid" because there are no secure lines of communication among the Free Nations. Land lines through demon-controlled territory are impossible and, as mentioned before, satellite communications are vulnerable to invasion by anyone with an uplink station.

When data must be shared by the Free Nations, the usual method is to send couriers carrying chips on the hazardous run across the Dead Lands and through the demon strongholds



to deliver it. If time is of the essence, Gridruns are made, using temporary links over stealth satellites. Combat Gridrunners make a dash through the VX world to deliver the data, while evading or fighting off attacks by demonic deckers.

The price of failure can be costly indeed. Eight years ago, Kham developed a vaccine against a mutated War plague that was ravaging Mizatyan. A Gridrun to deliver the information was hit by Tharkoldu forces and the human deckers were massacred. Not only was the formula prevented from reaching its destination, but Tharkoldu deckers used the link to invade the Grids in both Mizatyan and Kham, doing terrible damage before the link could be broken. The vaccine information eventually got through by chip, but the losses in the Grid were high enough to end Kham's cooperation with Mizatyan for six years.

Kham and Aurioch maintain a single Grid. Mizatyan and Jhou used to maintain connected networks, but since the civil disorders in Jhou, the two nations have broken those connections and their Grids stop at their borders. Helfei's grid stands on its own as well.

Accessing Networks

In order to log on to DemonGrid, a decker must get into demonic territory and get access to a communications line, or an online cyberterminal. Similarly, in order to deck into a Race Grid, the decker must be within the boundaries of the Free Nation in question, with access to a line or terminal.

Once the decker is connected to the network, he can perform a Logon resolution (see below) to access any complex connected to it.

Tharkoldu can have a tremendous advantage in Gridruns. A few selected demon deckers have combined magic and occulttech skills into a potent force. Usually great alphas or better, these deckers use SpellChips containing *extradimensional gate* and *pop* spells to circumvent VX obstacles such as hardware gates or guardians. They exit VX through the *extradimensional gate*, move or *pop* to a line beyond the security

point, and reenter the Grid. Fortunately for the Race, these runs tend to be solitaire hunts by the demons rather than coordinated attacks. The Swarm that ambushed the Kham vaccine run and infested the Mizatyan/Jhou network is a notable exception.

Despite their advantages, Tharkoldu are vulnerable to Gridrunners. DemonGrid has access nodes all over Tharkold. Human deckers can infiltrate demon territory and link up to the Grid more easily than Tharkoldu agents can get into the human systems.

Possession of a cyberdeck by a human is punishable by death in all demon territories. Slave programmers are allowed access only to highly restricted cyberterminals. These devices have only those features that are essential to the slave's assigned task, and keep a detailed log of all their actions in the Grid.

Accessing A Secure Complex: Access to a network won't help if the complex you need is secured by being disconnected from the Grid. A decker has a limited set of options in this case.

She can physically infiltrate the site of the complex hardware. She doesn't have to get to the main computer. Once she is jacked into a terminal or other peripheral on the system, she can do a Logon resolution to get into the complex. This approach requires guts, usually backed up by bodyguards.

All but the most paranoid complexes usually drop their defenses periodically to exchange information with the outside world. If a decker knows when such a link is scheduled, she can try and do a Logon resolution once the complex connects to the Grid. Data security on these temporary gateways is ferocious, exactly because the complex is most vulnerable to invasion.

Grid Access Devices

A character must have a Nervejack (or its Cyberpapal equivalent) to use the Grid: no jack, no access. No exceptions. Oh, there are still terminals that use old tech like keyboards and

screens, but they're practically useless for any serious work on the Grid. They are the kinds of controls you might use to change simple settings on computerized equipment.

Cyberterminals display information that the Grid gives them. Dumb terminals have no processing power of their own. More powerful cyberterminals can be the equal to cyberdecks, with the exception of their ability to avoid detection.

A cyberterminal has to be connected to a registered Grid access point. If a decker uses a cyberterminal to access the Grid, any trace programs used to locate her access point are **automatically** successful. That is, the trace will report something like "Terminal Code Alph-945204-Gim/142 located at 4523 Decker Drive, Suite 14" when it runs.

Dumb cyberterminals are intended for clerical jobs, simple information retrievals from public databases, home shopping, and the like. More powerful "smart" terminals may be used by researchers, legitimate programmers, bureaucrats, and the like.

A decker can jack into a smart cyberterminal and use it like a deck. He can also use any cyberterminal as an access point to a network or complex for his own cyberdeck. He connects his cyberdeck to the terminal to get access to the VX world.

Cyberdecks are portable terminal devices with powerful computing capacity. They are expressly designed for Gridrunning.

Cyberdecks have a Stealth rating. This measures the deck's ability to conceal its presence from security software and to avoid a trace to its point of entry into the Grid. Trace programs do not automatically succeed. The decker may be able to defeat them. Stealth has no application in a legitimate Grid session, but is crucial in a Gridrun.

Cyberdecks can access the Grid through a number of possible connections. A cyberdeck can, of course, use a telephone line to connect to the Grid. However, a cyberdeck can also log on to a complex if it is plugged into any device that is connected to that complex: a cyberterminal, a security camera, even a beverage dispenser.

The VX protocols used in



cyberdecks from Tharkold, Kadandra, and the Cyberpapacy are compatible. A deck from one civilization can be used to access a computer in the other two.

Cyberdecks can also be used to access more primitive computer systems, often with devastating effectiveness.

Deckers

A character who uses a cyberdeck to access the Grid is called a decker. Through Virtual Experience — VX — a decker's mind is projected into the virtual reality created by the interaction of her cyberdeck and the Grid. While she is decking, a character will be completely unaware of her physical body or its surroundings.

In *The GodNet* supplement, a detailed description of deckers, and the way they experience the VX world is presented. For our purposes, only a few factors need to be considered.

Attributes: A decker's only attributes in the Grid are mental: *Perception*, *Mind*, *Charisma*, and *Spirit*. *Perception* is used in place of *Dexterity* in the Grid. *Mind* is used in place of *Strength* and *Toughness*.

Note that skill values based on physical attributes are **not** recalculated using the mental attributes. A character with 4 adds in *fire combat* and a *Dexterity* of 8 still has *fire combat* 12, whatever his *Perception* may be.

Skills: A character has all her normal skill adds and values in the Grid. These skills are part of her self-image, and so go to make up her virtual image as well. Skill values for the VX image are the same as they are for the physical decker, even those based on physical attributes.

A decker also calculates a set of "net skills" based on a combination of skills values and the capabilities of her deck.

Net skills are derived from one of the decker's regular skills, plus his *cyberdeck operation* adds. The ratings of his cyberdeck may also increase the net skill value, as will appropriate programs running on the deck. For example, an Attack+2 program would add +2 to the *net attack* skill.

If a decker doesn't have *cyberdeck operation*, then *computer science* may be

used to calculate all the net skills listed here. However, in this case, the decker is considered to be using them unskilled.

The net skills were summarized in Chapter Six under *cyberdeck operation*. Here they are described in more detail.

Net Attack: *Net attack* equals the character's best combat skill value, plus his adds in *cyberdeck operation*, plus his deck's Response adds, plus the adds for any Attack program running on the deck.

The combat skill used here may be *unarmed combat*, *melee combat*, *fire combat*, *energy weapons* or *heavy weapons*. If the decker does not have an appropriate combat skill, use *Perception* in its place.

Net Defense: *Net defense* is equal to the decker's defensive skill, plus her adds in *cyberdeck operation*, plus her deck's Response adds, plus the adds for any Defense program running on the deck.

This is calculated using the decker's best defensive skill (usually *dodge*). *Unarmed combat* or *melee combat* may also be used.

If the decker does not have an appropriate defense skill, use *Perception* as the base value.

Net Find: *Net find* is equal to the character's *find* skill, or his *Perception* if he has no *find* skill, plus his adds in *cyberdeck operation*, plus any Scan program running on the cyberdeck.

Net Manipulation: This skill is used to issue commands to a complex to make the Grid conform to the decker's will.

Net manipulation is equal to the decker's *cyberdeck operation* skill, plus his deck's Response rating, plus any manipulation programs he has running.

Net Stealth: *Net stealth* is equal to the decker's *stealth* skill, or her *Perception* if she has no skill, plus her adds in *cyberdeck operation*, plus her deck's Stealth adds, plus the adds for any stealth programs active on the deck.

Net Track: *Net track* is equal to the decker's *tracking* skill, or his *Perception* if he has no *tracking* skill, plus his adds in *cyberdeck operation*, plus his deck's Response rating, plus any tracking programs he may have running.

Hard Dumps

To exit the Grid safely, a decker must complete a Jack Out resolution. This disengages her mind and nervous system from the VX interface. If, for any reason, a decker's connection to the Grid is broken without jacking out, she suffers a hard dump.

This does mental damage. The damage value is the security value of the complex, plus any alarm points the decker has currently accumulated.

The decker resists the damage with his *Mind*.

If the decker suffers a KO due to this damage, he is considered unskilled when using *cyberdeck operations* for the next 24 hours, or until he experiences the cybermiracle of *refreshment*. The difficulty number for the miracle is the damage value of the hard dump.

If the decker's wound status is raised to *heavy wound* or worse, he is unable to tolerate the VX interface until it is healed.

Grid Resolutions

Grid resolutions use a dramatic skill resolutions, as described on page 62 of the *Torg Rulebook*. A decker repeats the skill resolution every time he wants to do something on the Grid.

Some steps in the resolution are optional. They may be skipped under certain circumstances. Breaking the seal on a file is obviously unnecessary if the file isn't sealed.

If a decker fails in one step of the skill resolution, he may set off alarms or encounter other problems.

Bad Things In The Grid: The difficulties that afflict dramatic resolutions in the physical world can pop up in the Grid as well. *Possible setback*, *complication*, and *critical problem* cards can make a decker's life exceedingly irritating.

Possible Setback: Failing a skill check during a *possible setback* round has the same effect it always does. The dramatic skill resolution slips back one step.

Complication: Increases all the difficulty number on all checks for the remainder of the resolution by one. Some system glitch has cropped up in the deck to make it temporarily less efficient. Once the resolution is com-



plete, the penalty no longer applies.

Critical Problem: If the decker fails a check during a *critical problem* round, the Grid resolution subroutine that the decker is running crashes. The gamemaster can apply the usual penalty and require the decker to completely rethink the resolution. Alternatively, the cyberdeck's efficiency is affected, and for the rest of this run in the Grid, suffers a +1 to all difficulty numbers. These penalties are cumulative. If a decker fails three *critical problem* rounds, his difficulty numbers could be at +3 for the rest of the run.

Security Levels: All complexes have a security level, from *minimal* to *spectacular*.

Minimal security complexes include typical home computers, or complexes that are normally open to public access. Minimal security is a rarity on Tharkold, but common in Los Angeles as computer bulletin boards and small businesses do not yet know they are part of the Grid.

Average security is found on typical business complexes and secure private systems where the operators avoid connection to the Grid, and don't anticipate decker intrusion.

Good security is found on important business systems or research complexes that are connected to the Grid. *Good* security is the highest security level of any Core Earth installation inside Los Angeles. This may change as Tech 26 computer science spreads throughout the city.

Superior security is typical of all highly sensitive complexes, whether they are connected to the Grid or not: major military complexes, central complexes in top-secret research establishments, intelligence agencies, national governments, and the strongholds of Demon Lords or powerful prides. Top Kanawa facilities have *Superior* security.

Spectacular security is rare. Less than a hundred complexes on Tharkold are this powerful. The central military and banking computers of the Free Nations, the Demon Princes, and the High Lord Jezrael have this kind of murderous data security.

Security Totals: Whenever a decker performs a Grid resolution (see below), the gamemaster generates a security total. The security total is the

Grid Security Chart

Level Of Security	Base Security Rating	Alarm Tolerance
Minimal	8	10
Average	12	8
Good	15	5
Superior	18	4
Spectacular	21	3

difficulty number for the resolution. Generate a bonus, as always, and add it to the base security rating of the complex.

When generating the total, treat the complex as "unskilled" when it is not in an alarm. Roll again only on rolls of 10. If the complex is in an alarm condition, it is "skilled" and rolls again when a 10 or 20 comes up on the die, and gains a +3 bonus modifier.

Alarms and Alarm Points: A decker accumulates alarm points in two ways. When the security total of the complex exceeds the deckers *net stealth* value, the alarm points are increased by the number or result points.

Whenever a decker fails to make a successful skill check during a Grid resolution, she accumulates alarm points.

If she fails the check by three or less, she gets one alarm point.

If she fails the check by four to nine, she gets two alarm points.

On an *abysmal failure*, missing the difficulty by 10 or more points, the decker gets three alarm points.

The number of alarm points a decker can accumulate before something bad happens is equal to the alarm tolerance for the complex, as shown on the Grid Security Chart.

If the total alarm points are greater than or equal to the complex's tolerance, and

- 1) The decker fails a skill check, or
- 2) The complex's security total equals or exceeds the decker's *net stealth* ...

she generates a *net stealth* total with a difficulty number equal to the base security rating of the complex. Consult the Alarm Results Chart to determine what has happened.

Example: Yvana is decking into an average complex, so the alarm tolerance is 8. She already has 6 alarm points when she blows a delicate resolution and gets 3 more, for a total of 9. Her *net stealth* is 15. The complex has a security rating of 12. Yvana gets a bonus of -1, and so has a result of 2 on the Alarm Results Chart. All her difficulty numbers will be increased by +1 as long as she stays in this complex. She still has a total of 9 alarm points. If she fails another skill check, the total will go up and she will have to consult the Alarm Results Table again.

A decker can try to eliminate accumulated alarm points and shut down any internal alarms by performing a Cancel Alarms resolution.

Internal Alarms: An internal alarm means that the complex suspects that it has been invaded, but isn't *quiiiiite* sure. During an internal alarm, the complex is running increased diagnostic checks on its subsystems.

While an internal alarm is in progress, the complex counts as skilled when generating security totals, and receives a +3 bonus modifier. If the decker triggers another alarm, the complex will go into an external alarm.

External alarm: The complex has verified that an intruder is accessing the system. During an external alarm, the complex informs its operators that a decker is loose in its innards. The Grid equivalent of all hell then breaks loose.

During all the decker's resolutions, the complex will be running a Track resolution, trying to locate his access point. See below for details.

Every time the decker triggers an



other alarm, internal or external, he will be snatched into Trap Memory and must fight his way out using Grid combat.

Once a complex goes into an external alarm, it stays that way as long as the decker is logged on, and usually stays that way for some hours after he departs, as the operators run heavy diagnostics to verify that their system is safe again. Nothing a decker can do will cancel an external alarm.

Time In The Grid

Since dramatic skill resolution is used in the Grid, that means cards are going to be turned over. This is done one round at a time. A round in the Grid is still 10 seconds, since action is measured in the scale of human time perception.

When the gamemaster is coordinating action between a decker in the Grid and a character or characters in the physical world, the same drama cards turned over for a round serve for both sequences.

Required Skill Checks: Once a decker begins a Grid resolution, he must attempt to make a skill check in any round that allows it. That is, if the decker is trying to complete step A of an resolution, and step A is listed on the drama card, then the decker must try and complete step A that round. If he does anything else, the step fails

automatically, and so his alarm points go up.

The other rules for dramatic skill resolution are in effect. If the required skill step does not come up, the decker can gain a card through an approved action by successfully making her skill roll. Each resolution may be resolved through a last ditch effort.

Similarly, if a *possible setback*, *complication*, or *critical problem* is in effect, the decker must make the skill check that round or suffer the penalties of failure.

If the drama card gives the decker a *flurry* he can use one of the actions to make a required check and the other one any way he wishes (including a second skill check, if needed).

Other available actions: A decker doesn't have much free time when she is in the Grid. If she's not in the middle of a Grid resolution, then she's usually in combat.

However, there are a few other actions they may perform when not facing a required skill check.

Communicate allows the decker to talk to characters over the communication circuits in her cyberdeck. Characters can communicate with the decker as well. Naturally, there must be someone at the deck's location to have this conversation.

Loading programs allows a decker to change the mix of active programs in her deck. See Cyberdeck Ratings, below, for details.

Mark time is only allowed when the decker has completed a Grid resolution and if no alarms, internal or external, are in effect. The decker simply hunkers down, doing nothing.

When a decker is marking time, she is passive, a tiny bundle of VX routines running in the Grid. She may conduct extended conversations with other characters via his cyberdeck. She may monitor the activity of some subsystem in the complex, such as a security camera. She may simply wait until it is time to carry the next phase of some plan. If the complex has not raised an alarm, no cards turn and no skill checks are required while marking time. If an alarm is active, continue to flip cards.

Breach Checks: Grid resolutions may require a breach check. A decker may choose an active or passive breach.

An **active breach** destroys system security using *net attack* skill. Its advantage is that it can be fast. Its disadvantage is that every attack made on a security seal accumulates two alarm points whether it fails or succeeds.

In an active breach, the decker and the security seal engage in Grid combat. Seals have a *Toughness* equal to the base security value of the complex. Seals always spend all their actions on active defense. Check damage results on the Ord column of the Combat Results Table. The seal is broken if it suffers a KO, if the Shock damage exceeds its *Toughness*, or if it suffers four wounds.

A Alarm Results Chart

Result Value	Effect
15 or more	No alarm. Reduce accumulated alarm points by cyberdeck Stealth rating +1. Cancel any existing internal alarms.
12 to 14	No alarm. Reduce accumulated alarm points by cyberdeck Stealth rating +1.
9 to 11	No alarm. Reduce accumulated alarm points by cyberdeck Stealth rating.
6 to 8	No alarm. Retain accumulated alarm points.
2 to 5	Heighten security. Add +1 to difficulty numbers for resolutions in this complex. This penalty is cumulative with previous penalties, and lasts as long as the decker stays in the complex.
-1 to 1	Internal alarm. If an internal alarm is already in effect, trigger an external alarm. If an external alarm is already in effect, decker is caught in Trap Memory.
-4 to -2	Trigger external alarm. If any alarm is already in effect, decker is caught in Trap Memory.
-9 to -5	Trigger external alarm. Decker is caught in Trap Memory.
-10 or less	System isolates and crashes the decker's VX subroutines, causing a hard dump.



A **passive breach** uses *net stealth* to generate a fake VX ID code that the security seal will accept. Its advantage is that alarm points only accumulate on failed checks. Its disadvantage is that on a failure, the seal gets tougher. If the breach attempt fails, read the result value on the Power Push chart. For example, if the *net stealth* check fails by 4 points, the seal's difficulty increases by +2.

A decker can switch from one breach method to another at will.

Note that if a decker actually knows the password or VX sequence that opens a security seal, then he can simply use it. No need to bash open a door when you have a key.

Grid Resolutions

All Grid resolutions have two steps — A and B. Most resolutions require step C. All of the resolutions described below have the same steps for A and B. The difference lies in step C.

Step A is always "Locate Virtual Address." The decker must determine the location in cyberspace of the memory she needs to access: the communications gateway of a complex, file storage, a processor, and so on. This requires a *net find* or *net track* check.

Step B is always "Relocate VX Code." The decker injects the VX sub-routines that make up her identity in the Grid into the memory address she located in step A. This requires a *net manipulation* check.

Step C will be different for each type of resolution (see below). In some cases, there will be no step C at all. For example, if accessing an unprotected file storage area, step C in the Open Files resolution (Breach Security) is irrelevant, since there is no security seal to breach.

Extended Steps: Step C can involve an extended operation, something that can go on for a number of rounds: breaching a seal, or fighting a guardian program or hostile decker. The action cannot begin until a C appears on the drama card, but once it does, then the dramatic skill resolution information on the card does not affect it any longer. The extended actions are resolved like any other interaction or combat in *Torg*.

Cancel Alarm

This resolution eliminates any alarm points that the decker has accumulated. It will also cancel internal alarms, reprogramming the complex to call off its increased security. It will **not** cancel an external alarm.

Step C requires a *net manipulation* or *net stealth* skill check.

Control Remote

This resolution allows the decker to take control of any remote system or terminal that the complex controls. Typical examples are security cameras, automated doors, elevators, building systems like plumbing, automated food processing, air conditioning, lights, and so on.

Step C is only required if the remote system has a live operator or guardian program, who must be beaten in Grid combat, or a security seal, which must be breached. If none of these things are present, then the decker can control the remote after finishing step B.

Crash System

The decker makes the complex shut down. This will cause a hard dump and kick the decker out of the Grid.

Step C uses *net manipulation* or *net attack*. The decker has a -3 bonus modifier for step C.

File Locate

The decker scans the complex's data directory looking for files containing specific information. Step C requires a *net find* check.

The search criteria can be a keyword ("Find all files containing the name Jezrael"), or type of information ("Find all files pertaining to *vril* research").

If it the gamemaster thinks it is possible that there are many files satisfying the search criteria, she may use the level of success in step C to see how well the decker does in finding the particular file he is looking for.

A *Minimal* success means that the decker is flooded with information. He must sort through it in a second File Locate resolution at +5 to his effective skill.

On an *Average* success, the gamemaster should roll the action die and divide the result by two, rounding fractions up. The decker has located that many files that satisfy the search criteria. He must open them one by one to see which is the one he is looking for. The gamemaster can randomly pick one of the files to be the right one.

On a *Good* success, the gamemaster should roll the action die, dividing by four, rounding fractions up. As above, the decker must search each one. The gamemaster can pick one of the files to be the right one.

On a result of *Superior* or better, the decker locates the exact file he is looking for.

File Open

Once a file is located, the decker must access it and open it.

Step C is needed only if the file is protected by a security seal, which must be breached. Very secret files may be protected by a guardian program, which must be defeated in Grid combat.

Once the file is open, the decker may:

- download it to her cyberdeck, at the data transfer rate for the deck (see Cyberdeck Ratings).
- edit it, that is, change the contents. If the decker is worried about someone discovering the edit, have the decker generate a *net stealth* total. This total will be the difficulty number that a character must overcome to detect the tampering. For example, if a decker falsifies a computer entry to support a forged ID card, then the difficulty number for anyone who tries, later on, to verify that ID will be equal to the *net stealth* total.
- read it. The decker simply looks at the file and learns the information without downloading it.
- erase it.

Datafiles: The size of file is measured in data blocks. A typical datafile is two to four blocks in size. Eight blocks is a very large file. The size of a file controls how quickly the decker can download a copy to his deck.



Jacking Out

A decker who wants to leave the Grid cannot just yank the nerve plugs out of his jack. He must disengage his consciousness from the VX world first.

Step C requires a *net manipulation* check. The decker cannot jack out any other way. If someone else shuts down the deck, or pulls the plug out of the Nervejack, then the decker suffers a hard dump.

Logon Resolution

The decker must perform this resolution upon entering a new complex, whether she is accessing it from a network or through a local device of some kind. It allocates local memory that allows her VX routines to run as part of the regular system transactions, and step C requires a *net manipulation* check.

Monitor Activity

This resolution allows the decker to mark time until some specified action occurs on the complex, or the decker gets tired of waiting and goes off to do something else. Since it involves marking time, the decker can't do this if there is an alarm in effect.

Step C requires a *net find* or *net track* check. Once it succeeds, the decker can mark time until the specified event takes place. For example, waiting until a given remote system starts up, or a particular user or terminal logs on. If the decker is waiting for another decker to show up, then the results of the check must be greater than or equal to the other decker's *net stealth* rating.

Networking Resolution

The Networking resolution is required whenever a decker wishes to get into a complex through a network. This resolution is also used to move from one complex to another through a network. The decker does not need to perform a Network resolution if he is logging on to a complex through a terminal or device that is connected to it directly.

The security total for this task is always *average*, since it is using the general communications network. The

security level of the complex being invaded is **not** used for this resolution.

Step C requires a *net manipulation* or *net stealth* check to get past the network's switching systems.

Trace Resolution

This resolution is usually done by gamemaster characters who are trying to find an invading decker's point of entry into the Grid. A trace resolution may not be attempted until the tracing character has seen or otherwise detected the VX image of the invading decker, or an external alarm has sounded. If the point of entry is found, the tracing character may move to the point and engage the decker in Grid combat as she attempts to jack out (right after she completes step B, but before she has a chance to complete step C). The tracer may also alert "real world" forces of the location of the point of entry. Quick reaction can catch a meat body without its mind; easy prey. Step C of a trace generates a *net tracking* total against the decker's *net stealth* value.

Other Resolutions

It is certain that deckers will come up with ideas that don't fit any of these resolutions. In that case, Step C must be made up on the spot by the gamemaster. She can use this rule of thumb:

If the operation is trivial, no step C is needed.

If the operation involves a computer operation that would involve a security seal, a live operator, or a guardian program, then step C requires a breach or Grid combat.

When in doubt, step C usually involves a *net manipulation* check to succeed.

Resolutions into Gridruns

Gridruns are made out of groups of resolutions. The simplest Gridrun would be

1. Logon
2. Jacking Out

A more useful, and typical, Gridrun consists of

1. Logon
2. File Locate
3. File Open
4. Jacking Out

The decker may choose to add other resolutions, such as "cancel alarm." Sometimes she gets caught in combat. Logon is the first resolution, and jacking out is the last. What comes between depends on the nature of the mission, and the resistance the decker encounters.

Grid Combat

When a decker encounters a guardian program or a hostile decker during a resolution, or his alarm points get him pulled into trap memory, he must either overcome the opponent in Grid combat, or else run for it (trying to Jack Out).

Grid combat can occur in all the myriad worlds that VX can create. But no matter what skills the decker or his opponent uses, no matter what form the weapons appear to take, combat is always resolved the same way.

In Grid combat, attacks are made with *net attack* against a difficulty equal to the target's *net defense*. *Net defense* may be used actively as well as passively.

If the attack hits, the damage value of the attack is the attacker's *Mind* plus any adds from attack programs active on his deck.

Grid combat damage is real damage, applied as in any Torg combat, with the following special differences.

A *knockdown* means that the victim cannot switch programs or perform any action except an active defense for one round.

A KO scrambles the cyberdeck for three rounds. The decker cannot use any of its programs or adds. A second KO renders the decker unconscious and causes a hard dump. This hard dump is automatically considered to cause a KO and has long-term effects on the decker (see Hard Dumps, above).

Guardian programs crash when they suffer a KO.

Shock damage is applied to the *Mind* of a target, which is the Grid equivalent





lent of its *Toughness*. When a decker loses consciousness due to shock damage, he also suffers a hard dump. If a decker is killed in the Grid, he does not have to check for a hard dump.

Pain And The Grid: Tharkoldu cyberdecks include the necessary circuitry to generate the pain weapon effect. Certain powerful Guardian programs may also be equipped to generate pain damage. Any character with this equipment can decide to use *pain weapon* skill to inflict Spiritual damage instead of *Mind* based Grid combat damage.

Who is a decker going to be fighting? Her opponents will either be opposing deckers, or guardian programs. The ratings in these profiles include their net values and the ratings for their cyberdecks, or equivalent (see Cyberdeck Ratings, below).

Opposing deckers can be designed by the gamemaster, such as the demon decker given in Chapter Eight.

Guardian Programs: Guardian programs in this system are not as varied as the numerous beings who inhabit the GodNet. If the gamemaster wants to make the Grid more dangerous, he can use the same ratings for various Guardians. Even entities can appear. In the Grid, these are highly advanced Artificial Intelligences or else cyborgs, permanently connected to the grid. The religious imagery of the GodNet would be replaced by a more technological look and feel: killer robots, crackling forms made of energy, or slashing machines extruding razor-edged manipulators.

Typical Guardian programs have the following attributes and skills. The gamemaster can design less generic guardians for high-security systems.

Guardian Program

DEXTERITY 8+Security rating
STRENGTH 9+Security rating
TOUGHNESS 9+Security rating
PERCEPTION 10+Security rating
MIND 9+Security rating
CHARISMA 8+Security rating
SPIRIT 8+Security rating

Net Values: all equal to base attribute

Possibility Potential: never

Response/Processor/Storage: 2/
 5+Security rating/5+Security rating

Programs: Attack 2, Defense 2, Scan 1

The complex security level is added to the basic attributes. *Minimal* security counts as an add of 0. So on a complex with *good* security, a guardian program would add +2 to all attributes and skills.

The adds to Processor and Storage are a bonus that the gamemaster may add as she sees fit to the Guardian's programs. For example, on a *superior* complex, the gamemaster has 3 points to distribute as she wishes among the Attack, Defense, and Scan programs. The gamemaster could also put a different program into the Guardian, such as Trace.

Cyberdeck Ratings

Cyberdeck ratings are determined by its design. See chapter 6, under *cyberdeck operation* skill.

"Off-the-shelf" decks have a base value of 1 to 7. This represents the *cyberdeck operation* adds of its maker. These decks are assumed to be the best deck possible using those adds, which means that the ratings will be:

Response	Base value - 1
Stealth*	Base value - 2
Processor	Base value
Storage	Base value + 6

*Cyberterminals **never** have a Stealth rating.

To generate a random base rating for a deck, roll the action die and read the result on the Power Push table (on a roll of 18+, the deck has a base rating of 7). Response and stealth each have a minimum rating of +1. If the roll causes a 0 or negative number for either rating, increase it to +1.

Guardian programs and, if they are used, entities in the Grid, act as virtual decks, and will have built-in ratings for *response*, *processor*, and *storage*.

Response

This measures the operating speed of the deck. It enhances net skills. It also controls the speed at which the decker can read, edit, upload, or download files. A decker can process a num-

ber of data blocks in one action equal to his deck's *response* rating.

When loading or switching programs, the number of programs the decker can load or unload is equal to *response*. A deck with a *response* of 1 would have to spend one action unloading a program, then a second action loading a new one. A deck with *response* 2 could swap out one program and swap in a second in one action.

Stealth

This measures how well the deck evades detection in the Grid. Only cyberdecks have *stealth*. Legitimate cyberterminals do not.

Stealth enhances the *net stealth* skill.

Processor

This limits the number of programs a decker can have active in current memory at one time. Programs have adds, and the total adds that a deck can run actively at one time are equal to the *processor* rating.

For example, a deck with a *processor* rating of 5 can run a single program with a +5 add, two programs with a +3 and +2, respectively, and so on.

Storage

Storage limits the number of programs the deck can store, ready to load into current memory. *Storage* is similar to *processor*. That is, it can only contain a number of program adds equal to its rating.

A decker cannot have an active program that is not also in his deck's *storage*. That is, a decker cannot go on a Gridrun with Attack+2 active unless he also has Attack+2 in storage.

Storage also contains files that deckers download from, or plan to upload to, the Grid. One data block occupies one point of *storage*. So a decker looking for loot needs to keep some space available.

Programs

Cyberdeck programs enhance net skills. The programs used in these rules are a limited subset of the programs



described in *The GodNet* supplement. Additional programs may be introduced from that book to increase the dange...er...interest of this system.

None of these programs are for sale. They must be stolen from Tharkoldu, or their equivalent imported from the Cyberpapacy.

Alter lets a decker alter a file by changing data, deleting, editing, or adding data to a file. The alter adds increase the decker's *net manipulation* skill. The size of the alter program is equal to its adds. Alter program have a size equal to their adds. Alter programs have been written up to five adds.

Attack adds increase the decker's net attack value. An attack program is for a specific combat skill, such as energy weapons or melee weapons, and the decker must specify which combat skill the attack program enhances. Attack programs have a size equal to their adds. Attack programs have been written up to seven adds.

Defense programs increase the decker's *net defense*. They also add to her *Mind* when she is resisting damage. Defense programs with up to six adds have been written, and the programs have a size equal to their adds.

Search adds increase the decker's *net find* when searching for files during a file locate resolution. Search programs have a size equal to their adds. Search programs have been written up to five adds.

Scan adds increase the decker's *net find* when scanning data gates, seals, and locations. Scan totals that equal or exceed a hidden decker's (or guardian's) *net stealth* value reveals the hidden character. Scans also reveal a number of programs in an opponent's cyberdeck equal to the adds of the scan program. Success is automatic, but the opponent chooses which programs to reveal. Scan programs have a size equal to their adds. Scan programs have been written up to five adds.



Shroud adds increase the decker's *net stealth*. Shroud programs have a size equal to their adds. Shroud programs have been written up to five adds.

Trace adds increase the decker's *net tracking* when trying to find a decker's point of entry into the Grid. Trace programs have a size equal to their adds. Trace programs have been written up to six adds.





Chapter Twelve

Character Creation



here are new templates for Tharkold in the back of this book. But there are also three new character types: cyborg, mutant and rebellious Tharkoldu. These rules tell you how to generate your own characters of these types. All of these character types have Tharkold for their home cosm.

Cyborgs

Cyborgs are Race characters who have been engineered into part machine. They may have been created by either Tharkoldu or Race scientists. They have tremendous amounts of cyberware. Being half-robot is part of a cyborg's self-image. Being part machine is more natural for a cyborg than a pure-meat character; cyborgs are less susceptible to cyberpsychosis than their human counterparts. This is reflected by the *cyberpsyche* skill, a *Spirit* skill that only cyborgs may take. *Cyberpsyche* is used instead of *Spirit* to resist the effect of cyberpsychosis. Cyborgs begin with 66 attribute points, and must create a character with attributes equal to or less than the cosm limits of a regular member of the Race. Cyborgs may choose their cyberware, as long as the cyberware has a total cyber value of 20 or less. Cyborgs may not take technomagical implants.

Cyborgs who are transformed to a reality with less than *Tech* 26 die immediately.

Mutants

Mutagens and magical plagues have devastated Tharkold for centuries. Of the thousands of mutations, only a handful are beneficial. Mutant characters are those lucky few. Mutants grew up on the edges to Tharkold civilization, living in tribes or small city-states struggling for survival against an environment inimical to

life. Mutants begin with 66 attribute points. They must create a character with attributes equal to or less than the cosm limits of a regular member of the Race. They then receive two enhancement packages, of three points each. They add the packages to their attributes, one package to two attributes or two packages to one attribute. The packages must be allocated as a whole, they may not be split between two or more attributes.

These enhancements have an adventure cost. Possibilities must be paid at the end of an adventure to maintain the enhancements. The number of Possibilities per enhancement depends to which attribute the enhancement was applied:

Attribute	Adventure Cost
Dexterity	1
Strength	
Spirit	
Perception	2
Mind	
Charisma	3
Toughness	

So a mutant character with enhanced *Dexterity* and *Mind* pays three Possibilities at the end of an adventure. If the player fails to pay the adventure cost, his character is struck by an ailment called *atma stech*. *Atma stech* is a mystical ailment which ravages mutants. The gamemaster randomly chooses an attribute. This attribute is permanently reduced by one, and will continue to be reduced by one point per adventure until the adventure cost for the enhancements is paid, stopping *atma stech*. If an attribute reaches zero, the character dies. The attribute may be increased after *atma stech* is cured, improving the attribute as given on page 20 of the *Torg Rulebook*.

Using improved attributes, or related skills, creates a contradiction in any realm that does not have at least



Tech axiom 26 and *Magic* axiom 12. When a mutant disconnects, he loses his enhancement packages. It requires three successful links to reconnect: one for the character, and two for the enhancement packages. Until the mutant makes all three links, he may not cause a contradiction; he does not get any of the the enhancement packages back until he fully reconnects.

A mutant that is transformed to a reality with a *Tech* axiom less than 26, and/or a *Magic* axiom less than 12, loses its enhancement packages.

Rebellious Tharkoldu

An Important Note: a Tharkoldu Storm Knight template is included in this book. The gamemaster may disallow the use of Tharkoldu templates if she so chooses.

Rebellious Tharkoldu live under the cosm limits for an alpha or rogue demon. Their dominant has died, or released them to another demon who has died or disappeared. Rather than seek a new niche in the chain of dominance, rebellious Tharkoldu reject the chain altogether. Their rejection of the "natural order" of life under the Law of Domination labels them as rogues to other Tharkoldu. Demons have a chance of detecting rebellious Tharkoldu when they see them. Tharkoldu generate a *Perception* total against the rebellious Tharkoldu's *Spirit* or *faith*. If the demon has *alpha sense*, and the *Perception* total equals or exceeds the defender's value, the rebellious Tharkoldu is revealed. Techno-demons without *alpha sense*

must generate a *good* success or better to sense the rebellious Tharkoldu. If the demon can actually smell the rebellious Tharkoldu (usually possible within 10 meters for Tharkoldu senses) it receives as +3 bonus modifier to the *Perception* total.

Demons react very negatively to rebellious Tharkoldu, considering them dangerous aberrations, and are always wary in their presence. Rebellious Tharkoldu receive a -5 bonus modifier when attempting *trick*, *test*, *charm*, or *persuasion* on a demon aware that the character is rebellious. Rebellious Tharkoldu may *intimidate* demons at no penalty.

Humans and other folk races also react negatively. Rebellious Tharkoldu receive a -3 bonus modifier when attempting *trick*, *test*, *charm*, or *persuasion* on a human, or other folk race. Rebellious Tharkoldu *intimidate* humans and other folk, with a +1 bonus modifier.

Rebellious Tharkoldu begin with 66 attribute points. Assign the points to generate the base Tharkoldu character. The character may choose cyberware, up to a total cyber value of 16. The character then receives six three-point enhancement packages, whole, and may not be split between two or more attributes. The player adds these enhancements to her character as she wishes as long as two conditions are met:

- 1) The character abides by the cosm limits for a rogue demon.
- 2) The character ends with a *Strength* and *Toughness* of at least 13 each.

Each enhancement package has an adventure cost of one Possibility each, a total of six Possibilities for the six packages. After Possibilities are awarded for an adventure, the character pays the adventure cost. If the character does not have the Possibilities to pay, it is reclaimed by the Law of Domination, immediately becoming a gamemaster character.

Using improved attributes, or related skills, creates a contradiction in any realm that does not have at least *Tech* axiom 26 and *Magic* axiom 12. When a rebellious Tharkoldu disconnects, it loses its enhancement packages. It requires seven successful links to reconnect: one for the character, and six for the enhancement packages. Until the character makes all seven links, it may not cause a contradiction; it does not get any of the the enhancement packages back until it fully reconnects. This is different than the situation in Aysle, where the elves and giants are enhanced by pure magic, not technomagic.

A demon that is transformed to a reality with a *Tech* axiom less than 26, and/or a *Magic* axiom less than 12, loses its enhancement packages. If the transforming realm's *Magic* axiom is nine or higher, the demon retains its wings and ability to fly. If the transforming realm's *Magic* axiom is eight or less, and the Tharkoldu has not physically transformed, the demon dies.



Player Name:

Demon Scholar



Cosm: Tharkold

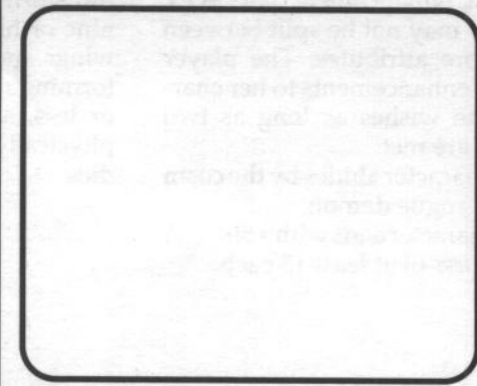
Background: You submitted directly to a powerful great alpha, a researcher who had developed many weapons' patterns. You worked with many of the Race slaves, enough so that you no longer eat their kind if other food is available. The demon prince who dominated your great alpha refused to submit to Jezrael, but respected the urge for vengeance against Kanawa and the monkey-kind of Earth. The prince agreed to release your great alpha and its pride into service for Prince Sterret. You were part of the great alpha's personal entourage as it made its way to the Ichi Entertainment building to submit. An ambush killed your great alpha. Now you have submitted to no one. You find you enjoy that freedom. This freedom is found more easily in the monkey-kind than your own breed, so you live on the fringes of their world. If they all weren't so soft, you might even like some of them.

Equipment: Wings, flight speed 10; Pe-9 Ion Gun, plasma axe. Cyberware: Nanocord (3), Nervejack (2), 3-slot chipholder (2), cybercam (1), cyberwings (3), LifeCyber (2) talons (2), TextLED (1); cyber value 16. Language chip (English) +3, Language Chip (Japanese) +3, three blank DatChips, two SpellChips.

Quote: "Not bad, pav boy. Scan this!"

Possibilities 10

Character Name	Home Cosm	Tharkold Cosm	Magic	Social
Age	Wound Level	Shock Damage	12	20
Height	Wound			
Weight	Hvy Wound			
	Mortal			
	Dead			
		K	17	26



Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality	1	SPI	12
Energy Weapons		DEX	
Fire Combat		DEX	
Flight		DEX	
Melee Weapons		DEX	
Unarmed Combat		DEX	
Alteration Magic		PER	
Divination Magic		PER	
Evidence Analysis		PER	
Find		PER	
Scholar		PER	
Apportation Magic		MIN	
Conjuration Magic		MIN	
Occultech		MIN	
Science	3	MIN	13/16
Test of Will		MIN	
Faith		SPI	
Intimidation		SPI	

Attributes		Approved Actions	
Dexterity	8 (11)	Maneuver	
Strength	11 (14)		
Toughness	10 (16)		
Perception	11	Trick	
Mind	10 (13)	Test	
Charisma	8	Taunt	
Spirit	8 (11)	Intimidate	
Movement Rates		Limit Values	
Running			
Swimming			
Jumping			
Climbing			
Lifting			

Equipment	Value	Level	S	M	L
Armor					
Kap/3 +3	19				
Weapons					
Plasma Axe +8	22	26			
CyTalons +5	19	26			
Pe-9 Ion Gun	24	26	3-50	150	300
Cyberwings	10	26	*		

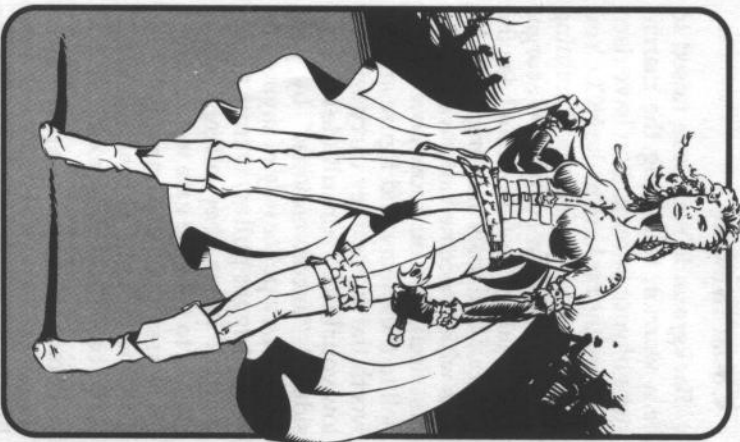
Bonus Chart

Die	3	5	7	9	11	13	21	26	31	36	41	46									
Roll	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	+5	
Bonus#	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

Player Name: _____

Background: The devastation of your homeland left little of interest for either the Free Nations or Tharkoldu. You grew up in one of many small, scattered tribes that eked out existence in your homeland. At your birth the Tribemother announced you were "Vril Atma," a healthy mutation. When you came of age the Tribemother asked you to use your strength to journey far, then return with something to give your tribe strength. Your journey led to the edges of a Tharkoldu army, where you led a daring and precarious life of thievery. You marveled as the army marched down a hole-in-the-universe to another world, screamed as Earth's reality boiled over into Tharkold, and hurried to Earth in the backwash of the reality storm. Earth is a wondrous living place. You wandered the lands still mindful of your Tribemother's charge. Now the demons have come again. You do what you can to prevent this land from dying as yours has.

Personality: You prefer to be quiet rather than draw attention to yourself. Attention too easily leads to disagreement or death. You are optimistic, even in environs of Tharkoldu Los Angeles. Companions sometimes think your attitude too light-hearted for the situation; you know it's because you have seen far grimmer situations than this one.



Equipment: Deactivated plasma sword (STR+6; +7 if new power cells are found, damage maximum 22), dead batteries, Berlin metropolitan police badge, Atlanta tourist brochure, shiny trinkets, old holocube and Kap/3 Mesh (armor value +3/15).

Quote: "You are not welcome here, demon. Submit or leave."



Player Name: _____

Possibilities

Age	Wound Level	Shock Damage		Social
		Magic	Tech	
Height	Wound	12	20	
Weight	Hvy Wound	Spiritual		
	Mortal	17	26	
	Dead	K	O	

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality	1	SPI	10
Melee Weapons	3	DEX	15 (18)
Prestidigitation		DEX	
Running		DEX	
Stealth		DEX	
Unarmed Combat		DEX	
First Aid		PER	
Find		PER	
Scholar (Tool Making)		PER	
Survival		MIN	
Test of Will		MIN	
Faith		SPI	
Intimidation		SPI	

This is a blank, lined page from a notebook. The page features horizontal ruling lines and a vertical margin line on the right side. The paper has a slightly aged, off-white appearance with rounded corners. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

[illegible]

Attributes		Approved Actions
Dexterity	8 (11)	Maneuver
Strength	12 (15)	
Toughness	12	
Perception	8	Trick
Mind	9	Test
Charisma	8	Taunt
Spirit	9	Intimidate
Movement Rates		Limit Values
Running		
Swimming		
Jumping		
Climbing		
Lifting		

Die		3	5	7	9	11	13			21	26	31	36	41	46						
Roll	1	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	+5
Bonus#	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

Player Name:

Race Soldier



Cosm: Tharkold

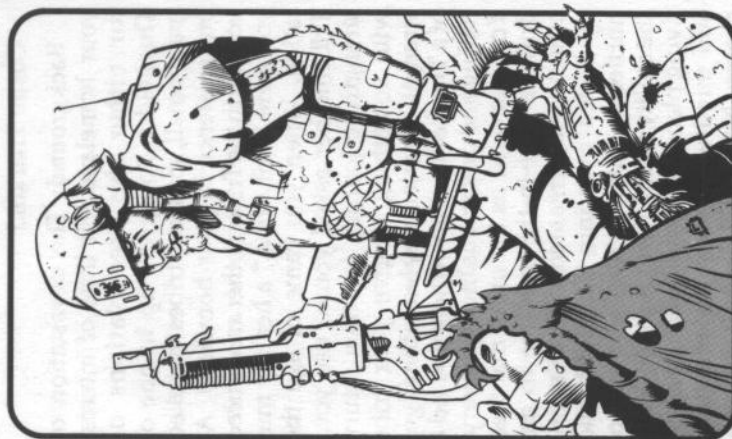
Background: You were raised to be a warrior, following the march-steps of your parents. You have risen through the ranks to make NCO. You were passed over for officer training because you aren't very good at organizing things. You just don't see the point of endlessly mulling over details which become vaporware in the first firefight. You know how to take hell to the enemy and figure anyone worth the ammo they carry will follow your lead. Your attitude was considered "unconventional" by your superiors; a polite way of saying you were a trigger-pull away from a court martial. When they offered you a chance to take the gate to Los Angeles, you stepped on through without a second thought. This new, unstructured battlefield suits you.

Personality: You are a personification of the Law of Ferocity. All your life you have been at war. You are the fifth generation of a warrior family, a testament to your family's pride and skill. Killing the enemy is more than what you do, it's a large part of who you are. You are at home with war, uneasy (perhaps even fearful?) of the time when peace breaks out.

Equipment: 11/Alph pistol (damage value 16), Mim-8/Bith Smart-Gun assault rifle (damage value 22), monofilament dagger (damage value

STR+4/14), Chod/8 PowerArmor (armor value TOU+8/19), black fatigues. Cyberware: Nervejack (2), eyepackage-Darksight, Hidehunter (+3 to find value to spot hidden targets), Killseeker (+1 bonus modifier to ranged attacks, +2 bonus modifier to smart weapon attacks) (4); cyber value 6.

Quote: "What's to know? Move; find a demon; kill it; move on."



Player Name:

Race Soldier



Possibilities

10

Home Tharkold
Cosm

Character Name	Age	Height	Weight	Wound Level	Shock Damage	Magic	Social
				Wound		12	20
				Hvy Wound		Spiritual	Tech
				Mortal		17	26
				Dead			

Skill Add Attribute Value

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality	1	SPI	10
Dodge		DEX	
Energy Weapons		DEX	
Fire Combat	3	DEX	15
Heavy Weapons		DEX	
Melee Weapons		DEX	
Running		DEX	
Stealth		DEX	
Climbing		STR	
Lifting		STR	
First Aid		PER	
Trick		PER	
Survival		MIN	
Faith (The Way)		SPI	

Approved
Actions

Attributes	Approved Actions
Dexterity 12	Maneuver
Strength 10	
Toughness 11	
Perception 9	Trick
Mind 8	Test
Charisma 7	Taunt
Spirit 9	Intimidate
Movement Rates	Limit Values
Running	
Swimming	
Jumping	
Climbing	
Lifting	

Equipment Value Level S M L

Equipment	Value	Level	S	M	L
Armor					
Chod/8	19	26			
Weapons					
11/Alph Pistol	16	25	3-10	30	50
Mim-9/Bith Rifle	22	26	3-40	250	600
Monodagger +4	14	26			

Bonus Chart

Die	Roll	3	5	7	9	11	13	21	26	31	36	41	46
		2	4	6	8	10	12	14	15	16	17	18	19
		-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bonus #		-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40
		45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100



Renegade Infiltrator

Player Name:

Cosm: Tharkold

Background: You are a cyborg, built by Tharkold occulttechs to infiltrate Free Nation strongholds. Your race lasted only hours, but it took Race soldiers over a week to run you down. You were repaired and reprogrammed to protect the Race and to hunt your former masters. Race scientists used modified Kadandran gate technology to send you to Los Angeles, the newest Tharkold stronghold. Your mission is to identify and join a resistance group, gather intelligence, resources and allies useful for the Race's struggle. If this mission takes you outside of Los Angeles into other realms, so be it. Your secondary mission is to destroy Tharkold targets of opportunity.

Personality: You have what Race scientists charitably call a "rudimentary social response matrix." You are often wooden or make slightly inappropriate remarks, particularly for cultures other than the Race. You have a rough sense of humor and often speak with candor. You take most statements very literally; idioms such as "Hey, hit the lights!" are an invitation to social disaster.

Equipment: Mim-8/Alph carbine (damage value 21), monofilament axe (damage value STR+8/22). Cyberware: Nanocord (3), Nervejack (2), eye-package 1- Cybercam, Darksight, TextLED, Hidehunter (+3 to find value to spot hidden targets)



(4), eye-package 2 - Killseeker (+1 bonus modifier to ranged attack, +2 bonus modifier when using smart weapon), Sharpshot (+2 to all Perception checks using vision) (3), Interdermal plate (armor value TOU +6/16) (1), exodermal armor (armor value +3/19) (3), Bodymax (+4 to strength, already noted in parentheses) (4); cyber value 20.

Quote: "I'll be back."



Renegade Infiltrator

Player Name:

Character Name

Wound Level

Shock Damage

Magic

Social

Possibilities

Age

Height

Weight

Wound
Hvy Wound
Mortal
Dead

K

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10

Skill

Reality

Energy Weapons

Fire Combat

Heavy Weapons

Melee Weapons

Stealth

Unarmed Combat

Find

First Aid

Land Vehicles

Language

Tracking

Test of Will

Cyberpsyche

Intimidation

1

DEX

DEX

DEX

DEX

DEX

DEX

DEX

12

SPI

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PER

PER

PER

PER

PER

3

MIN

SPI

SPI

SPI

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14

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THE SOURCEBOOK OF TECHNO-HORROR REALITY

Tharkold™

by Paul Hume and Greg Gorden



RR 3 Box 2345
Honesdale, PA 18431
For ages 12 and up

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Fantasy/Games

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**Hollywood has always
been a tough town.**

Now it's hell.

So are Compton and Burbank. Not to mention Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Tharkoldu descend on Los Angeles for vengeance on Kanawa Corporation. Their High Lord™ Jezrael and the Demon Prince Sterret of the Blades risk much to strike at Earth again. They bring technomagic and occultech™ to Los Angeles. Creatures mixed from magic and tech prow! flensers use magic to copy DNA, consume and then duplicate their victims, skats attack street-level at Mach 1.4, swarmrats have group intelligence. There is RelictinV, a nanovirus that raises the dead. Synthecyclers roam the city, mining useful resources from buildings, trash, and people. Gangslaves are given cybergear and plasma weapons, then set loose. And the techno-demons...



**A Companion Volume to the
Torg Roleplaying Game**

The *Tharkold* sourcebook is part of *Torg*, an epic game of adventure, power and altered reality. This volume describes the techno-horror invasion of Los Angeles. The supplement contains a timeline for Los Angeles from the beginning of the Possibility Wars, brief descriptions of the city, rules for Tharkoldu cyberware and equipment, magic, miracles, the largest creature section yet, and more.

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