

# DIGITAL HERO

# #20

MAY 2004

UNIDENTIFIED VESSELS DETECTED

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VECTOR : SIGMA CAERULEUS III  
ETA : 00:02:47

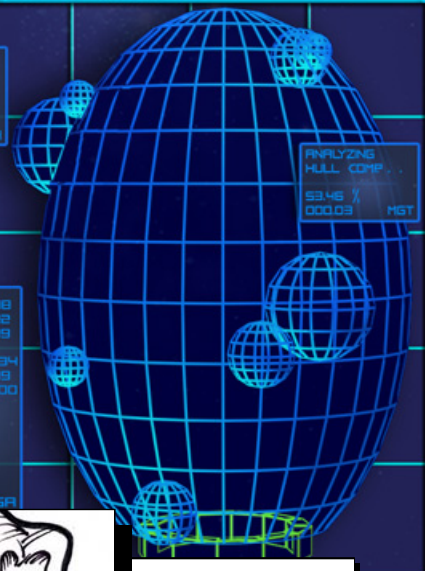


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MASS: 984544 KT  
SPEED: 0.034 LS  
ORIGIN: UNKNOWN  
THREAT LEVEL: HIGH

X1: 002897.98  
Y1: 059289.22  
Z1: 293829.09

X2: 005294.34  
Y2: 02066.09  
Z2: 252264.00

XENOVORE  
DROPSHIP  
INVASION  
IMMINENT  
CODE: OMEGA

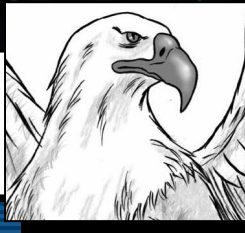


ANALYZING  
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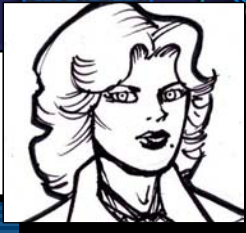
SCAN COMPLETE  
DROPSHIPS DETECTED  
INVASION IMMINENT



In this issue:  
• Bricks  
• Fights



- Monsters
- Aliens
- Killers



- Drains
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- Invasion!



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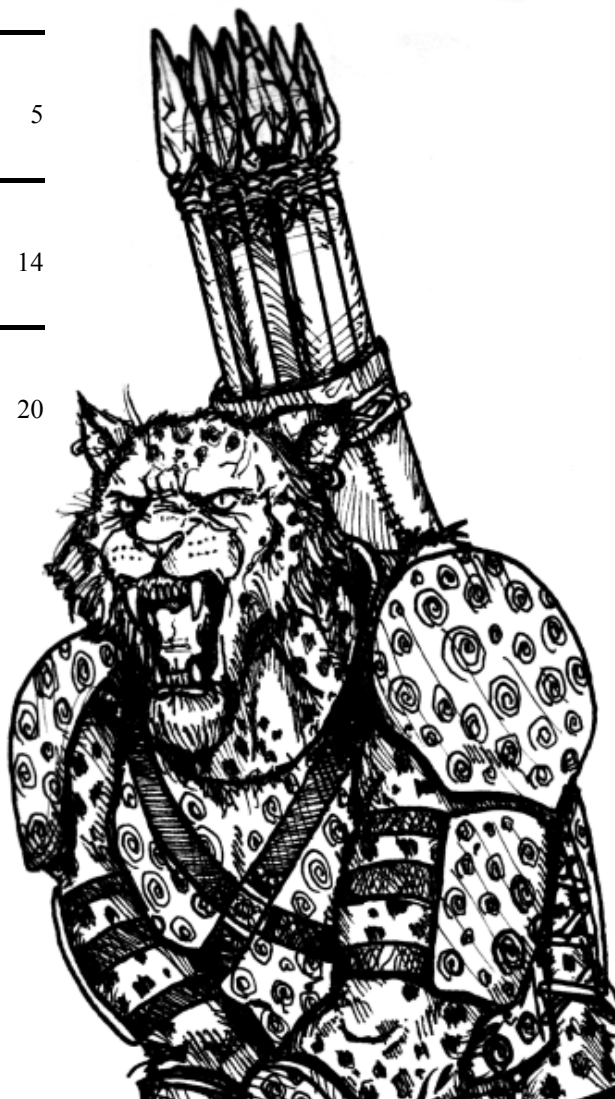
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## DIGITAL HERO

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Issue #20 (May 2004)



# When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

OK, let's get strong!

The next book up in the Hero release schedule is *The Ultimate Brick*, whose title comes from gamer slang for a character who possesses phenomenal strength, usually accompanied by equally-phenomenal resilience and endurance. Mythology gives us the first bricks, in such forms as Hercules, Thor, Gilgamesh, and Atlas — the stereotypical strongmen from whom many later bricks derive thematically. Early adventure fiction developed these concepts into the likes of Paul Bunyan and Doc Savage. The brick really came into its own as a concept with the debut of comic books, where not just high strength but *super*-strength was possible. Some of the most popular superheroes of all time — Superman, the Hulk, Captain Marvel, the Thing, and countless others — fight their foes with super-hard fists and superhumanly-strong muscles.

Bricks are one of the most popular character archetypes for roleplaying games; they appear in nearly every genre, though some bricks (such as those in *Champions*) are much stronger and tougher than others — it's all relative. ;) Not only are bricks lots of fun in the game — who can resist the excitement of swinging the biggest sword, or throwing cars at a supervillain? — they're relatively easy to create and play, making them an attractive choice for many gamers.

*The Ultimate Brick* is Hero Games's look at the rules for and uses of the *Strength* Characteristic (STR) in the *HERO System*, and at characters who have high STR and related attributes. For the purposes of this book, a *brick* is any character whose strength (and usually resistance to injury as well) is greater than the average character in the campaign, and who is defined to some degree by these attributes. In addition to expanding the rules and rules options for such characters, *The Ultimate Brick* provides players and GMs with guidance on designing more interesting and distinctive brick characters and integrating bricks smoothly into a campaign, irrespective of genre. Since characters can do more with STR the more they have, a lot of the information in this book focuses primarily on *Champions*, but it's just as applicable to Fantasy giants (or wizards with STR-augmenting spells), science fiction war-robots, cyber-warriors with artificial muscle implants, and the like.

Chapter One, *Strength Upon Strength: Building The Brick*, is the main chapter in the book. It opens with a discussion of the rules for STR itself; this section includes all the STR rules from the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition core rulebook plus much

more information. Chapter One goes on to review brick archetypes and the game elements used to create bricks and their intriguing abilities. At the end of the chapter there's an extensive selection of "brick tricks" — abilities and powers representing some of the things characters can do when they have prodigious strength. All told, there are well over 100 brick tricks, including some reprinted from the USPD (but usually with additional options and details) plus many, many more.

Chapter Two, *Smashing Fists And Bouncing Bullets: Brick Campaigning*, covers the subject of playing bricks and using them in the campaign. It reviews the Combat Modifiers and Maneuvers, providing additional rules and options for ones that bricks like to use, such as Grab, Haymaker, and Move Through. It's also got a lot of information about how much things weight, expanded rules for breaking things, optional "realistic" rules for throwing and lifting, and so forth. If you ever wanted to know how strong a character has to be to lift (or move) the Earth, what a cubic hex of steel weighs (and how much BODY it has), or ways to make bricks even more destructive than usual, you'll find plenty of interest in this chapter.

Chapter Three, *A Pile Of Bricks*, brings together the information and perspectives from the previous two chapters by presenting several sample brick characters. These characters cover a multitude of genre and character types, showcasing the flexibility of the "brick" concept. Two of them — Grond and Ogre — are classic *Champions* characters from CKC redone in light of UB's new powers and ideas. The others include two more *Champions* villains, two *Fantasy Hero* characters (a giantess and a thaumaturge with STR-augmenting tattoos), a *Dark Champions* legbreaker, a brutal Kung Fu fighter for *Ninja Hero*, a 1930s strongman for *Pulp Hero*, and a steroid-taking, cyberware-using Ackálian ex-soldier for *Star Hero*.

The Ultimate-series books are always fun to work on, and I think they add a lot to the game. *The Ultimate Brick* is no exception, and I'll bet even those of you who don't like to play bricks will find lots of useful information between its covers... and maybe even be inspired to create a brick for your next PC.

— Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer



# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## Down the Drain Applying Adjustment Powers To Characteristics Bought As Powers

It's not uncommon for characters to buy Characteristics as Powers — for example, some extra STR *Only For Lifting* (-1), or a DEX boost based on taking a drug (OAF, Continuing Charges), or a magic amulet that provides +1 SPD. This raises some interesting rules issues with regard to Adjustment Powers, primarily Drain.

For purposes of this discussion, let's consider four characters, each of whom has some extra STR bought as a Power:

1. Drogar, a *Fantasy Hero* warrior with 15 STR who has a potion that provides +30 STR (OAF Fragile, 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Minute each).
2. Captain Tentacle, a superhero with 10 STR who wears a harness that has four steel tentacles he can control by cybernetic command. He buys this as an OIF that provides him with Extra Limbs (4), plus +30 STR *Only With Extra Limbs* (-1/2), plus Stretching 4" (though only the +30 STR matters for purposes of this discussion).
3. Graall Axetooth, a troll with 35 STR who has a magic amulet (OAF) that grants him +30 STR.
4. Fleshtone, a supervillain with "biokinetic" powers who can increase his normal STR of 20 by +30 with Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2).

Where you read "STR" below, you can of course substitute any other Characteristic; this article only refers to STR to make the discussion easier to read.

Because of the wide variety of potential powers and situations involved, there aren't necessarily any hard-and-fast rules you can apply. The text below provides *guidelines*, but the GM has to decide how best to apply those guidelines in light of common sense, dramatic sense, the special effects involved, and considerations of game balance.

Generally speaking, the basic guideline in these situations is that the Drain comes "right off the top" — in other words, it affects the character's entire STR. For example, if Drogar (STR 15 + 30 = 45) were subjected to a Drain STR spell that removed 14 points of STR, he'd have STR 31 until the Drain's effects wear off.

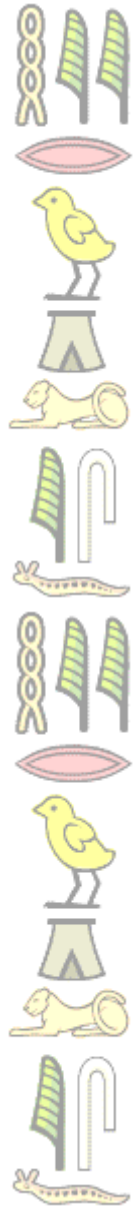
## INNATE VERSUS SEPARABLE CHARACTERISTICS

In situations where the extra STR is *innate* to the character once applied — as with Drogar's potion or Fleshtone's biokinesis — there's generally no need for further rules or guidelines. Such STR doesn't really differ, in rules terms, from the character's natural STR in any significant way (even though it may come from an outside source), because once it's applied to the character it can't be taken away from him directly.

But if the STR is *separable* from the character — as with Tentacle's harness or Graall's amulet, both Foci — other considerations come into play, primarily this: what happens if the source of the STR is taken away from the character? For example, imagine that Graall, with a total STR of 65 (35 innate, +30 from magic amulet) suffers 14 points of Drain STR effect. Then he loses his amulet. Perhaps an enemy Disarms it away from him; it's Accessible, after all. So, what is Graall's STR at this point?

In many cases, the best answer from the viewpoint of both common sense and dramatic sense is that the Drain affects the character's innate STR before his separable STR — thus, Graall would have STR 21 if he lost the amulet (and the person who took the amulet away from him could use it to gain +30 STR himself). Otherwise, if the Drain affects the separable STR first and exceeds the amount of separable STR, the separable STR functions as a sort of defense against the attack. Suppose Graall suffered a Drain STR of 35 points, reducing his STR (with the amulet) to 30. If the Drain affected the amulet first, he could de-activate it or take it off and have his normal 35 STR — thus effectively "healing" 5 points of Drain effect. That hardly seems sensible or fair; it may also seem contrary to the nature of the source of the STR. (If the GM follows this rule, an attacker could, in appropriate circumstances, target the source of the separable STR directly — in short, target the magic amulet, not Graall himself. This may be difficult, if the item is small and thus has a high DCV.)

In some cases, the GM may want characters to build their STR-providing items to comply with this rule. For example, perhaps Graall's magic amulet has the Advantage *Inherent*, representing the fact that any Drain STR used against him affects only his normal STR, not the STR from the amulet. Similarly, Captain



Tentacles might build his harness not as a Focus, but as an Automaton Follower with DEX, SPD, and other relevant Characteristics equal to his own. That way it's a separate "character" who has to be targeted with attacks separately. (There's a *Steel Tentacles* device in *Gadgets And Gear* built this way.) This definitely emphasizes the concept of "separable" Characteristics.

### **ENDURANCE RESERVES**

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A similar issue arises with respect to Endurance Reserve. If a character's hit with a Drain END, what does it affect — his own END, or the Reserve's END? What if he has two or more Endurance Reserves?

Generally speaking, the same rules should apply. One of the reasons characters buy Endurance Reserves is to separate that source of END from "themselves," so that they don't have to worry about what happens if they run out of innate END. Taking into account special effects — such as an electricity-based power that only affects batteries — the GM may rule that a Drain applies to the Reserve and not the character, or affects them both in some ratio (usually 50-50), or the like.

Since Endurance Reserves are discrete things, usually if a Drain affects one and reduces it to 0 END, it doesn't go on to affect a second Reserve or the character's personal END if it has "Drain points" left to use. But as always, the GM has to interpret this in light of special effects, game balance, and other considerations. If a character buys several small Endurance Reserves to try to exploit this rule, the GM should allow "overage" to affect other Reserves, or maybe establish some other restriction (such as imposing an Extra Time requirement for switching from one Reserve to another, for -0 Limitation value).



# Hero Universe

 by Darren Watts

*Kalimera*, my Digital buddies, and welcome to yet another installment of Hero Universe, the column that's here to kick butt and chew bubblegum, but is sadly all out of bubblegum. The ongoing adventures of the Sentinels here recorded have reached the salutatory year of

1973, and if you recall the team had just returned from an extended mission in the deepest reaches of Outer Space, while their friends and family back on Earth had assumed they had joined the Heavenly Choir. Face Front, True Believers, as we pick up the tale from there....

Vol XXIV Issue I

ISSN # 99-102

## ☪ 1973: A Year in Review ☪

1973 was a busy year for the Sentinels, full of adjustments and changes, hellos and goodbyes. The year began with the team still recovering from their extended trip into outer space, re-connecting with the friends and families who had thought them dead. They also had to deal with the destruction of their headquarters in Berwick, Connecticut. Though they immediately started rebuilding the mansion, it was clear to everyone that the location was no longer a safe haven for the team, and their presence was extremely disruptive and dangerous to the other inhabitants of the bucolic town. They set about looking for another location, temporarily taking up residence in the Manhattan headquarters of the Fabulous Five (see earlier entry).

In February, Dr. Phantom and Microman announced they were changing their status to reserve members, saying they wanted to concentrate on their scientific work (and, rumor has it, to at long last starting a family). They maintained that they would both still be available in an emergency. This left MeteorMan the last remaining member of the original lineup, though that also was only temporary, as in April the team announced that original member Beowulf had returned to the team after nearly seven years' absence, at least some of which was reputedly spent in the mysterious other dimension he originally came from.

In April several members of the team went up against a new superpowered madman calling himself Slab, a massive creature with innate earth-moving powers. As part of his challenge to the heroes of New York, he raised a small island off the coast of Manhattan with his powers, incidentally causing a sizable earthquake felt as far away as Pennsylvania. After Slab was finally defeated by a mixed group of Sentinels along with Diamond, Streak,

the Hornet, and Dr. Scarab, city officials were left to decide what to do with the hunk of land jutting out of Upper New York Bay between Manhattan and Staten Island. Eventually MeteorMan and Black Mantis approached the Mayor with a proposal, and on May 13<sup>th</sup> the city officially announced it was donating the half-mile-long new island to the team and officially naming it Sentinel Island. The heroes promptly set about installing buildings, a landing pad for their VTOL jet and helicopter, and setting up generators and water pumps to turn the island into a habitable base.

While the team was in the process of moving into their new HQ, they were also kept busy by another invasion attempt by the Lemurians (during which Archon the Emyrean joined the team), the visit to Earth by envoys of the strange race called the Mandaarians, a rash of bombings in Manhattan that were traced back to a strange Satanist cult, and a plot by several of their foes to pit the Sentinels and Justice Squadron against each other in a race to recover several magical artifacts hidden in locations around the world.

By late October the team finally moved into their new home. Ruth Willmore, who had served for years as the team's housekeeper, cook, and general majordomo, at first moved to the island with the team but decided after a few weeks that she wasn't suited to take care of the facilities any longer. She retired, turning her job over to former FBI agent Theresa Quinn, a longtime friend of MeteorMan. Ray Dillon, the team's gardener and maintenance man, also moved out to the island.

The Sentinels wrapped up 1973 with a successful battle against the villainous team known as Triptych, and remain one of the most successful and prestigious superteams on Earth. Rest assured, we here at *SuperWorld* will keep you informed on what they're up to. ■

SuperWorld Newsletter

Jan '73

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### AUTHOR'S NOTE

The write-ups for the Sentinels in this and following articles represent the heroes after they've had a few years of experience under their belts. If portraying them at the beginnings of their careers, you may want to lop off some skill levels or secondary powers. Later in their careers, you may want to buy up their skills, levels, and possibly add some new powers to represent tricks they've learned over the years, while diminishing some of their physical stats slightly to represent their advanced age (especially those who served into their late forties and even early fifties).



## Archon

**Background/History:** Archon is the current Crown Prince of the Emyreans, a subrace of Humanity created hundreds of thousands of years ago by the mysterious aliens known only as the Progenitors. (See *Champions Universe*, p.92-94, for more on this mysterious race.) Archon is of the “Fourth Generation” of Arcadians, and is approximately three thousand years old (he himself no longer remembers the exact date of his birth). His grandfather is King Hazor, who still rules the Emyreans from his throne in the hidden city of Arcadia deep within the Antarctic wastes. His father, Zoltar, was the Crown Prince for countless centuries as well as Commander of the Emyrean military in their campaigns against their hated rivals, the Lemurians. Zoltar himself died over a thousand years ago in combat with the bizarre monster called Kikada, and his mother Aleja followed the Emyrean spiritual leader Shaderon into Silence in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century.

From an early age Archon took after his father as a master of combat and general militaria, regularly leading Emyrean forces in their periodic battles with Lemurians or other forces that threatened Arcadia. When not serving Arcadia in battle, Archon was fond of living among humans, taking on various fictitious identities. Usually he would take on the role of a soldier, as he was fascinated with war and the study of tactics and strategy. In this manner he participated in most of the major wars of Earth’s recent history, from the Peloponnesian War to Vietnam, usually serving as a low-ranked officer or enlisted man and eschewing the use of his powers (though of course his superhuman durability made his activities considerably less risky than for most).

His first encounter with superhumans came in 1966, when the Fabulous Five first encountered both the Emyreans and Lemurians during one of Arvad’s attempts to conquer the Earth. Several years later another Lemurian plot was defeated by the Sentinels and Emyreans (of course, only after a series of misunderstandings had pitted the two groups against each other), and Archon was so impressed by the bravery and power of the Humans that he petitioned to join the team himself. The Sentinels welcomed the powerful warrior, who remained with the team from 1973 until 1976, when his wanderlust overtook him again and he left the team on good terms. He remains an occasional ally of the Sentinels and a particular friend of Diamond, as well as continuing to serve as his grandfather’s military leader and top advisor.

**Personality/Motivation:** Archon is first and foremost a soldier, most comfortable on the battlefield and fascinated by the art and science

of tactics. He believes that combat in the name of a worthy cause is inherently ennobling, and his definition of “worthy” is probably broader than that of most superheroes. For example, he admires patriotism in others whether the ideals and goals of the nation in question are themselves praiseworthy.

Because of his warlike demeanor, he frequently had conflicts with some of his teammates on the Sentinels, particularly over his willingness to kill his opponents. Though Archon was never entirely convinced by these debates, he was willing to follow their guidelines and did not in fact kill anybody during his tenure as a Sentinel (though he has killed opponents since leaving the team). Similarly, he occasionally had disputes with teammates that he felt were not sufficiently respectful to whoever was team leader (this of course usually meant Scarlet Archer, and the two were well known for their verbal sparring).

Nevertheless, Archon is absolutely devoted to protecting innocents and non-combatants, and his bravery and loyalty were above reproach, which eventually earned him the respect and friendship of all of his teammates during his tenure.

**Quote:** “I have sworn my allegiance to these mortals, monster, and I will die myself before abandoning their side.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Archon is one of the most physically powerful Emyreans known, though in fact his mental abilities are in fact weaker than the typical specimen. He is enormously strong, remarkably resistant to damage, and like all of his people immune to the effects of disease, poison, and aging. He can manipulate the bioenergy that sustains him for various effects, including projecting it behind himself in order to fly (at speeds around 200 mph), or releasing it from his body in destructive blasts (these are usually emitted from his eyes, though they can manifest from anywhere on his body, and are very tiring even for him to use).

Tactically, Archon is a genius, with centuries of experience in combat. He works very well in teams, and is equally comfortable in command or supporting another leader. He prefers a straightforward fight to sneakiness in general, but is perfectly willing to use stealth and deception if that’s what’s required for victory.

**Appearance:** Archon appears to be a massively-muscled human, standing about 6’5” and weighing over three hundred pounds. His hair is black, and his features are grimly handsome. His eyes are steel-gray and his entire demeanor radiates power and authority. His typical costume (he has worn several, but this is probably his favorite) is a white bodysuit which shows off his sculpted frame, over which he wears a sweeping



## DIGITAL HERO #20

cobalt-blue cape that comes over his shoulders and connects in a diamond-shaped pattern on his chest. (The cape is designed to swell out at the

shoulders, further enhancing his apparent size). He wears blue bracers on his forearms, and his belt and boots are also oversized and blue.

### Archon



**Archon**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	100 tons; 12d6 HTH [6]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
24	COM	7	14-	
				Total: 30 PD (20 rPD)
30	PD	18		
				Total: 24 ED (20 rED)
24	ED	18		
6	SPD	25		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
18	REC	0		
60	END	0		
65	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 259**

**Movement:** Running: 9"/18"  
 Leaping: 12"/24"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"  
 Flight: 25"/100"

**Cost Powers END**

44	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Immortality; Immunity to All Terrestrial Diseases, Biowarfare Agents, Terrestrial Poisons, and Chemical Warfare Agents; Safe in High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold and Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0
69	<i>Graviton-Manipulating Flight:</i> Flight 25", x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4)	2
40	<i>Bio-Energetic Projection:</i> EB 12d6; Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -1/2)	12
20	<i>Empyrean Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED)	0
6	<i>Keen Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Senses	0
10	<i>Graviton Control:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"	0
5	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Lack of Weakness (-5) for Resistant Defenses	0
10	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0
10	<i>Empyrean Mental Shielding:</i> Mental Defense (14 points total)	0

**Perks**

18	Contact: The Empyreans (Very Useful Skills or Resources, Very Good Relationship, Organization)	11-
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership	

**Talents**

3	Lightsleep	
10	Universal Translator 12-; Only Languages He's Encountered Before (-1/2), Only One Roll for Any Given Language (-1/2)	

**Skills**

20	+2 Overall
24	+3 with All Combat
3	Combat Piloting 14-
5	Defense Maneuver I-II
3	Disguise 12-
3	High Society 14-
3	AK: Arcadia 12-
3	KS: History of Warfare 12-
3	KS: Empyrean History 12-
3	KS: Empyreans around the World 12-
4	KS: Lemurians 13-
4	Navigation (Air, Land, Marine) 12-
3	Oratory 14-
3	Seduction 14-
10	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Desert, Mountain) 12-
15	Tactics 18-
3	Teamwork 14-
10	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Riding Animals, Balloons & Zeppelins, Carts & Carriages, Chariots, Combat Aircraft, Railed Vehicles, Tracked Military Vehicles, Wheeled Military Vehicles
17	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Early Firearms, Emplaced Weapons, Siege Engines, Small Arms, Flamethrowers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Lances, Shoulder-Fired Weapons

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 387**

**Total Cost: 646**

**200+ Disadvantages**

5	Distinctive Features: Strikingly Handsome with Piercing Eyes (Easily Concealed)
10	DNPC: Arcadian Empyreans 8- (Slightly Less Powerful, 2x DNPCs)
15	Enraged: Opponent Cheats or Behaves Dishonorably (Common, Go 8-, Rec 11-)
20	Hunted: The Entire Lemurian Nation 11- (Less Pow, NCI, Very Easy to Find, Harsh)
20	Psychological Limitation: Fascinated by Warfare, Strategy, and History (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Does Good Deeds for Their Own Sake, but Avoids Emotional Connections (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hates and Mistrusts Lemurians (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Other Bricks in Combat
10	Social Limitation: Maintains Several Alternate Secret Identities (Frequently, Minor)
331	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 646**



### Theresa "Terry" Quinn

**Background/History:** Theresa "Terry" Quinn was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1941. Always a tomboy and an academic overachiever, after graduating from college in 1962 she went to the Columbus Police Academy and graduated with honors in 1964. Despite her success, she found herself relegated to a series of uninspiring desk jobs due to her gender, and finally quit in frustration in 1966. Still looking to help the innocent, she joined the fledgling organization UNTIL, and after finishing her training in 1967, was assigned to the London embassy as a junior officer in the Tactical Command Division.

It was there she first met MeteorMan II in 1969 when he was in London tracking down the killer of his friend Sir Peter Hallsey. She was assigned to coordinate efforts with him, and the two became close friends while battling the supervillain Abyss. Indeed, for several months they explored the possibility of a romantic relationship while MeteorMan was estranged from his longtime girlfriend Dawn Simmons, but eventually they decided to simply remain friends.

Eventually Terry began to miss living in the United States, but since UNTIL remained forbidden to operate within the US she was unable to find work here that was as interesting and exciting as her work with UNTIL. When the Sentinels moved their headquarters from Berwick to Sentinels Island, however, their longtime housekeeper, chef, and majordomo Mrs. Willmore decided she had no interest in moving with them. At MeteorMan's suggestion, the Sentinels offered the expanded job of maintaining the base, handling the monitor systems, and dealing with the team's increasingly-complicated administration to Quinn, who accepted happily. She moved into a small apartment on the island, and served with the team from 1973 until retiring with the most recent major team shakeup in 1997.

She now lives happily in New York City with a gentleman friend, having accepted a job as a Superhuman Affairs advisor to the Mayor and coordinating efforts between the city's police and fire departments and the several superteams that make their home in or near Manhattan.

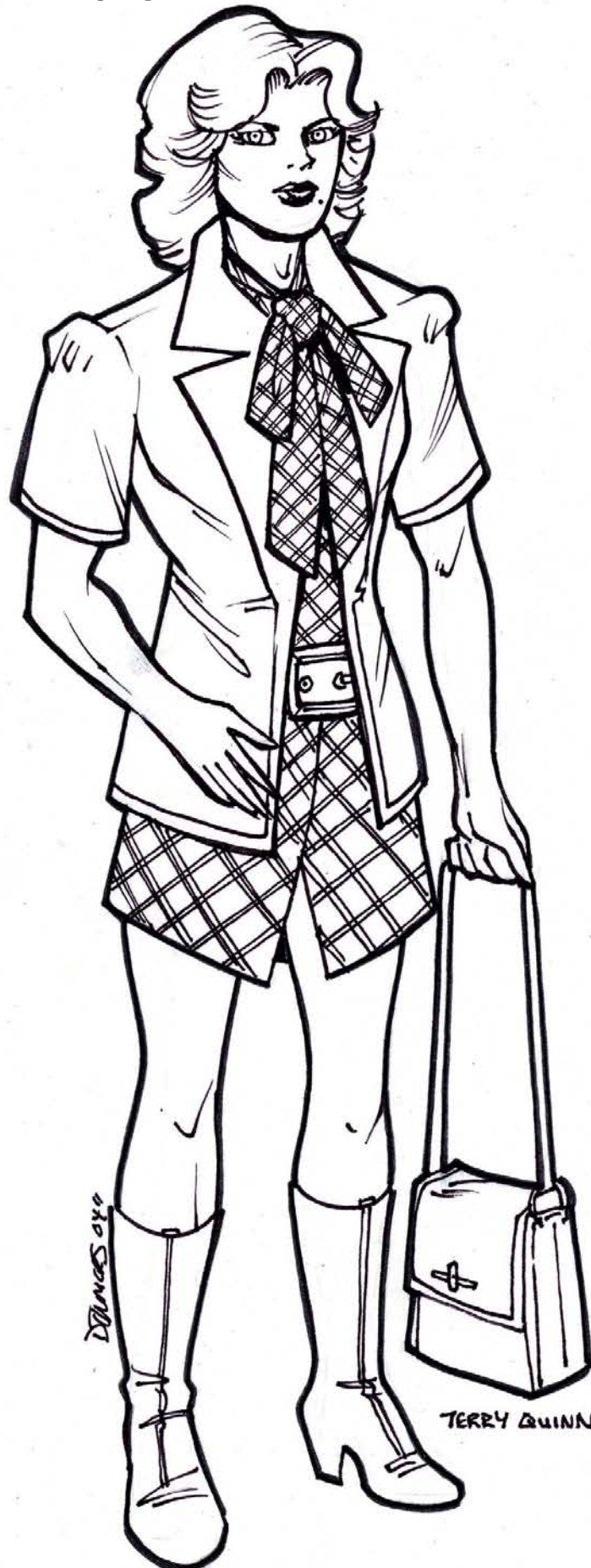
**Personality/Motivation:** Terry is an extremely competent administrator, capable and calm in an emergency. She's an excellent multitasker, which came in handy when she was charged with coordinating the efforts of several far-flung Sentinels dealing with a wide range of crises. She was also comfortable dealing with the sometimes extreme personalities of the heroes she worked with, adapting her own conversational style to fit the situation; she was equally at home exchanging dirty jokes with Tiger and Diamond, patiently answering Lightwave's endless questions about human behavior, or formally presenting budgetary reports to Dr. Phantom. She was well-liked by pretty much all of the team, who admired her bravery and thoroughness. When she wasn't manning the team's emergency switchboards or repairing the computers, she could usually be found watching one of her beloved local sports teams, especially the Knicks or Rangers.

**Quote:** "Hey gang, listen up. We've got a hot one here...."

**Powers/Tactics:** Terry Quinn had no superhuman powers, though she was a trained former UNTIL agent and quite capable of handling her own in a crisis. In most circumstances she remained on Sentinel Island helping to coordinate the team's efforts from the Monitor Bay, though on more than one occasion she found herself participating in direct action on the island itself, where she would usually arm herself with an UNTIL-issued blaster.

**Appearance:** Terry Quinn was a tall, thin woman standing about 5'9" and weighing 110 lbs. She had bright red hair that she wore in various styles, and green eyes. By the end of her service with the Sentinels she was slightly heavier and her hair was turning gray.

Theresa "Terry" Quinn



## DIGITAL HERO #20

### Theresa "Terry" Quinn

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
9	STR	-1	11-	90 kg; 1½d6 HTH [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
11	CON	2	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 13-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 7 PD (3 rPD)
5	ED	3		Total: 8 ED (3 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	2		
26	END	2		
20	STUN	1		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: 54

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"  
Leaping: 1½"/3"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**  
3 *Alert:* +1 PER with all Senses 0

#### Martial Arts: UNTIL Training

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
4 Escape	+0	+0	24 STR vs. Grabs
4 Strike	+0	+2	3½d6 Strike
3 Throw	+0	+1	1½d6 +v/5, Target Falls

#### Perks

- 2 Membership: Sentinels Employee
- 4 Contact: Former Friends in UNTIL (various) (Major Institutions, Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship) 8-

#### Talents

- 6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)

#### Skills

- 3 +1 with Firearms
- 5 Bureaucratics 13-
- 2 Computer Programming (Mainframes and Supercomputers of the 1970s) 12-
- 3 Criminology 12-
- 3 Cryptography 12-
- 2 KS: International Law and Law Enforcement 11-
- 3 KS: The Superhuman World 12-
- 2 KS: Supervillains of England 11-
- 2 KS: The United Nations 11-
- 2 KS: UNTIL 11-
- 2 KS: World Politics 11-
- 2 Language: Gaelic (Conversation)
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 3 PS: UNTIL Agent 12-
- 3 Security Systems 12-
- 7 Tactics 14-
- 6 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Combat Aircraft, Helicopters, Large Planes, Small Planes
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 86

#### Total Cost: 140

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Attractive Redhead (Easily Concealed)
- 15 Hunted: Dr. Macabre 8- (Mo Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Idealistic and Committed to Peace and Justice (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Has All the Latest Gossip (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Experience Points

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 140

**Sentinel Island**

**Description:** Sentinels Island sits in the middle of Upper New York Bay, about three miles from the southern tip of Manhattan and a mile from the Bayonne shore. Approximately a kilometer long and half that in width, the island was artificially created by the supervillain called Slab in 1973 when he used his powers over rock and stone to raise a portion of the ocean floor. Since the Sentinels moved in, they have added six buildings, a dock for boat service, and a small landing strip for their jump-jet, as well as planting several small trees and bushes for windbreaks and to stop their small "beachline" from eroding.

The main building sits on the small rise near the northeast corner of the island, and is three stories tall. It includes the main radar dish, the Monitor Bay from which the team can communicate with each other as well as various government agencies, the computer mainframes, and the team's meeting room and kitchen. Smaller outlying buildings run down either side of the landing strip, including living quarters used by various team members, several small labs, a generator shed (which uses special framistat technology developed by Dr. Phantom and powers the entire island) and the maintenance garage for their various vehicles.

**Sentinel Island**

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
10	BODY	8	
5	DEF	9	
15	SIZE	30	Length 12''', Width 64'', Area 8192'', DCV -14

**Total Characteristics Cost: 47**

Cost	Powers	END
8	<i>Holding Cells:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED); Partial Coverage (15 Hex Area; -2)	0
10	<i>Radar Station:</i> Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360°), Telescopic (+6 versus Range Modifier); OIF (Immobile, -1½)	0
5	<i>Monitor Bay:</i> High Range Radio Perception (Radio Group); IIF (Immobile, -1¼)	0

**Perks**

- 2 Grounds (x4 Base Size)
- 10 Location: Suburb; Floating in Water
- 4 Computer Link: UNTIL

**Skills**

- 2 *Research Library:* KS: Known History and General Knowledge 11-
- 3 *Chemistry Lab:* SS: Chemistry 12-
- 3 *Electronics Lab:* SS: Electronics 12-
- 3 *Mechanics Lab/Vehicle Bay:* Mechanics 11-
- 9 *Emergency Medical Bay:* Paramedics 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 59**

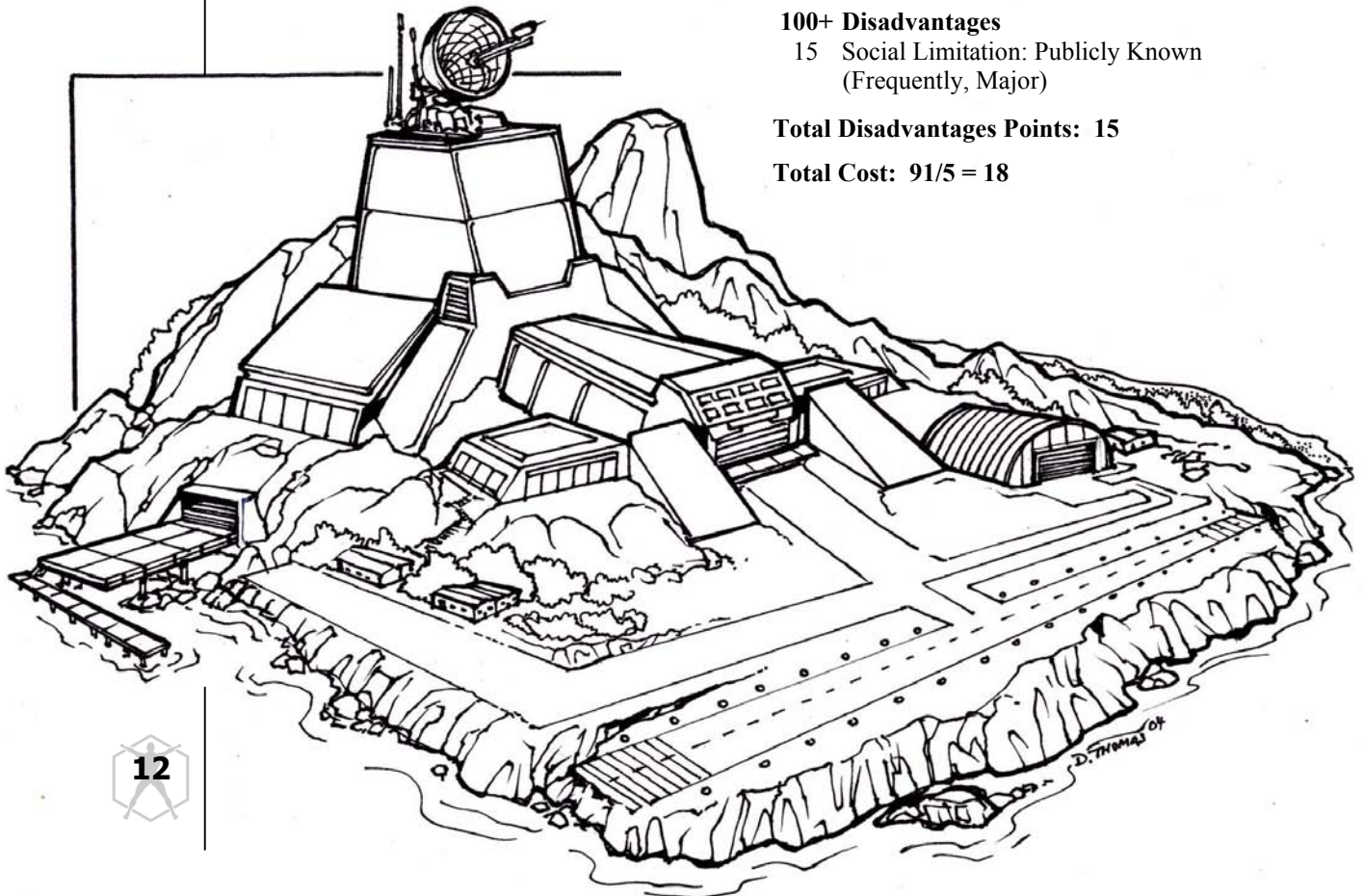
**Total Cost: 106**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Social Limitation: Publicly Known (Frequently, Major)

**Total Disadvantages Points: 15**

**Total Cost: 91/5 = 18**



### Sentinels' Jump-Jet

**Description:** The Sentinels' "Jump-Jet" is a specially-designed VTOL jet similar in shape and design to the Hawker Siddeley Harrier but with a fatter body to accommodate passengers. Unlike the Harrier, the Sentinel's version does not carry missiles or guns, though the bomb-bay does open in flight to allow flying heroes to disembark in midair.

The jump-jet was frequently flown by either Microman or Scarlet Archer. Over the years, they revamped the design several times, and in later days the updated version was usually flown by Diamond.

### Sentinels' Jump-Jet

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
9	SIZE	45	8" x 4"; -9" KB; -6 DCV
55	STR	0	Lift 50 tons; 11d6 HTH [5]
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/ DCV: 5
4	SPD	15	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	DEF	21	
19	BODY	0	

**Movement:** Ground: 6"/12"  
Flight: 30"/120"

**Total Characteristics Cost: 96**

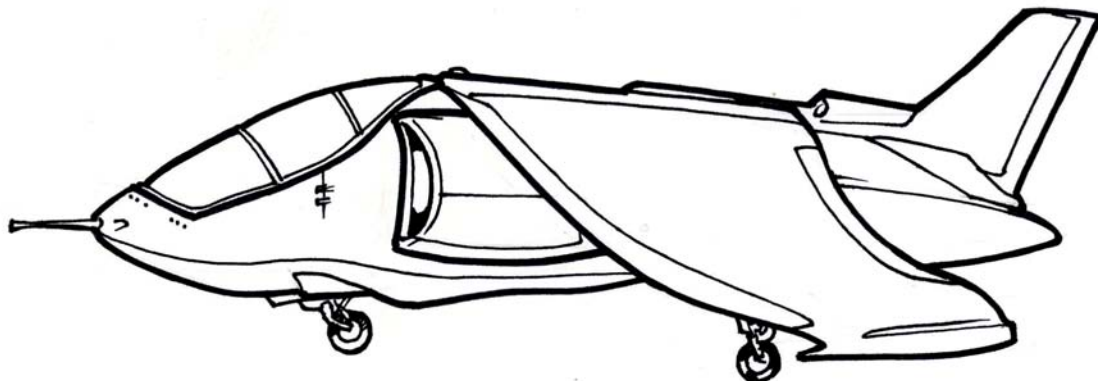
Cost	Powers	END
26	<i>Rocket Engines:</i> Flight 30", x4 Noncombat, 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Day (+0); Side Effects (Occurs Automatically Whenever Power is Used, KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Vehicle; -1½)	[1cc]
14	<i>Radar Systems:</i> Radar (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc Of Perception (360°), Telescopic (+10 versus Range Modifier); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected As Radio and Sight Groups (-½)	0
5	<i>Communications Systems:</i> High Range Radio Perception (Radio Group); OIF Bulky (-1), Affected As Sight and Hearing Groups (-½)	0
15	<i>Sealed Systems:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in High Pressure, Intense Cold, Low Pressure/ Vacuum)	0

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 60**

**Total Cost: 156**

**Total Disadvantages Points: 0**

**Total Cost: 156/5 = 31**



**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

My apologies to the large and undoubtedly quite formidable McClung family for the liberties I have taken with their illustrious (if somewhat infamous) ancestor in my humble attempts to meaningfully shoehorn him into the Champion's Universe Timeline. To the best of my knowledge all of the below mentioned information is true and correct up to the point in which the utterly historical Alexander McClung met the entirely fictional Matthew Ward. From there on out all rambling attempts at pseudo historical documentation are entirely the product of my fevered imagination because, sadly, the real Alexander McClung took his own life in 1855.

# You Gotta Have Charater

by Jason Walters

"Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards" - Kierkegaard

The masked man reached down to feel the pulse of the young woman whose still form lay sprawled out on the cobblestone in front of the tavern. The night was moonless and still with only the sounds of a distant train to interrupt the morning silence. Shaking his head slowly from side to side the man slowly rose before placing his left hand firmly on the butt of the nickel plated Walker revolver which was holstered low on his hip.

"Come out of there McClung," he growled fiercely into the shadows nearby, "it's not as if I can't see you. You know that."

A tall lanky figure dressed in black stepped out from the shadows, his steel toed riding boots and spurs clattering against the pavement. Although his face was largely concealed by a wide brimmed cavalier's hat, a wild bright grin flashed suddenly in the darkness revealing a set of startlingly predatory teeth.

"I never thought you would take it this far Alexander," the masked man said almost sadly, "if I had I would have put an end to your madness years ago. It's not often that I am surprised but you have now managed that at last – much to my sorrow."

The tall man's grin faded only to be replaced with what could only be a look of confusion.

"Why Black Mask whatever could you mean?"

"I mean your murder of this poor woman you wretch!" he snarled angrily, gesturing over his shoulder with a shrug, "I never thought you capable of so vile a crime as to kill an unarmed woman!"

"What? Kill a woman? Unthinkable." McClung's expression of bafflement never wavered. "She looks perfectly fine to me. Actually, quite healthy as well as frankly rather fetching."

Black Mask spun around in alarm to find the young woman standing behind him, slowly unwrapping a thick cloth wrapping from around her wrists. She smiled a bit sheepishly at him.

"Black Mask may I be the first to introduce you to Ms. Claudette Smith-Jacobs, actress extraordinaire and member of the Colonial Theater Company." he called over the masked man's shoulder, "Certain uncouth fellows in this town have a rather ungallant opinion of the character of actresses, but I have always found them to be of an excellent disposition."

Claudette tittered a little bit, offered Black Mask a polite curtsy, and then scampered off down the street.

Scratching his head he turned to face the tall man only to find him flanked on either side by two other men dressed in careworn business suits. One of them, a short round fellow with an unlit cigar planted in his teeth, was busily scribbling on a notepad while the other, a tall morose looking man in a bowler hat, had begun to set up a large tintype camera complete with a series of bulls-eye lanterns so as to better light the area.

"Allow me to introduce you to these two marvelous gentlemen," McClung continued in his irritatingly polite manner, "This is Mr. Wattingly, a reporter for the Boston Sun, and his associate Mr. Edwards who is what I believe they call a 'photographer.' They are here to record this moment for posterity."

"Colonel McClung, how do you respond to Black Mask's allegations of murdering an innocent woman in cold blood?" asked the short reporter.

"Why, it is an insult to my honor, the honor of my family, and the honor of all Southern men of reputable character..."

"Oh for goodness sake Alexander; not again!" Black Mask interrupted making a desperate motion with his arms, "I don't want to fight you! I don't even dislike you!"

"...and as such I am left with no other possible recourse," McClung continued as if he hadn't spoken, "than to challenge the mystery man known as Black Mask with a duel to provide such satisfaction as this insult to my good name requires."

At this point the tall man dramatically flung back his long black



cloak to reveal a small arsenal comprised of two single shot pistols and a short rapier strapped to his waste. He then waggled his fingers eagerly in the air as if eagerly anticipating the chance to lay hands on one of his weapons.

“Black Mask, I Colonel Alexander Keith McClung, better known as the Black Knight of Mississippi, challenge you to a duel in the affairs of gentleman on account of your accusation of murder most foul!”

Black Mask sighed and shook his head.

“You know you fellows really, really shouldn’t encourage him.” he looked pleadingly from newspapermen to the other, “I don’t care how good of a story this makes. He doesn’t need to fight me; he needs a qualified alienist.”

“Hold still gentleman.” called out Edwards. There was a bright flash followed by the smell of black powder. The moment was recorded for history.

Colonel Alexander McClung was known well-known in 1840s America as a duelist of considerable reputation and skill who killed dozens of men in what was then legally sanctioned combat. Yet he was much more than a simple murderer. A melancholy poet with a passion for women, literature, and history, McClung worked as an editor for a prestigious literary magazine while making his living as an attorney. After an infamous duel involving six members of the same family he went into the military, later becoming a hero of the Mexican War and serving as the American ambassador to Bolivia. Sadly, towards the end of his life his mental health began to deteriorate. Ghosts of his past dueling victims seemed to haunt him in terrifying visions which nearly drove him to suicide, until a chance encounter with the legendary hero Black Mask transformed him into a “villain” and member of that hero’s rouges gallery. In the end he died honorably defending the mayor of Boston from an assassin.

## DUELING WEAPONS

Dueling was a stylized, gentlemanly pursuit which called for specialized tools. Thus the *code duello* was extremely specific as to what weapons were considered appropriate for dueling, as well as what distance they could be used from. Swords used for dueling were required to be of the short bladed variety to prevent either combatant from attaining an unfair advantage due to reach. Pistols were either matchlock or percussion cap, used black powder (which provided a dramatic amount of smoke), and were smooth bore rather than rifled to prevent excessive accuracy. The finest dueling pistols were created by London based English gunsmiths such as Charles Moore, although the French, Spanish, and Italians also created perfectly serviceable ones. They were often engraved with fanciful scenes and elaborate designs and stored in handcrafted wooden boxes with all the necessaries including a mold to the exactly sized ball. Most gentlemen of quality owned a set – for the sake of appearances if nothing else.

## DUELING CODES

Although historians by and large consider dueling an archaic and distasteful form of murder, it was widely accepted in its day as a reasonable way for gentlemen to settle their differences. In a simpler, more rustic time when tempers were usually hot, courts often unavailable, and law enforcement practically nonexistent, many educated people saw the duel as a practical alternative to the bloody (and costly) family feuds which plagued many of our frontier ancestors. The duel itself was an extremely stylized ritual with a widely known and accepted set of rules which defined many of its aspects such as allowable weapons, the role of seconds (or assistants), the sending and receiving of challenges, and the number of shots or wounds required for satisfaction of one’s honor.

Like many early American customs, the duel was imported from Europe where the ideals of “judicial combat” between equals had been practiced since the Middle Ages. In 1797 a group of Irishmen cataloged these practices into a document which they named the *Code Duello*, a list of 26 specific rules designed to codify the practice into unofficial (yet generally accepted) law. This document was so widely read that its release was quickly followed by the publication of a French Code, a Spanish Code, and finally an American code in 1838 which was created by none other than South Carolina Governor John Lyde Wilson. Each of these codes attempted to reconcile the ideals of the duel with the laws and

customs of the people to which it was specifically addressed. For example, the American Code justified itself in an introductory essay on the right to self defense while the French Code cited the sanction of “twenty-five general officers, eleven peers of France, and fifty officers of rank” in its index.

Yet although dueling enjoyed wide popularity during the colonial period not all of our nation’s founding fathers approved of it. Benjamin Franklin called duels a “murderous practice... they decide nothing.” George Washington once congratulated one of his officers for refusing a challenge, reasonably noting that “there are few military decisions that are not offensive to one party or another.” By the beginning of the Civil War dueling had begun an irreversible decline. Mocked by such illustrious publications as Harper’s Magazine as an illustration of the idea that “you have wronged me, therefore kill me,” the duel began to be viewed by many people as cold-blooded murder rather than a formal process designed to avoid unnecessary violence. The final blow to the code came in 1874 with the publication of George W. Hooper’s widely read satirical novel *Down the River, or, Practical Lessons Under the Code Duello* which reduced the practice to the level of vicious, antiquated farce.

**INVOCATION TO DEATH**

Swiftly speed o'er the wastes of time,  
 Spirit of Death.  
 In manhood's morn,  
 in youthful prime, I woo thy breath.  
 For the glittering hues of hope are fled  
 Like the dophin's light;  
 And dark are the clouds above my head  
 As the starless night.  
 Oh, vainly the mariner signs for the rest  
 Of the peaceful haven,  
 The pilgrim saint for the shrines of the blest,  
 The calm of heaven;  
 The galley slave for the night wind's breath,  
 At burning noon;  
 But more gladly I'd spring to thy arms,  
 O Death,  
 Come soon, come soon!

— Alexander Keith McClung

**Colonel Alexander Keith McClung (The Black Knight of Mississippi)**

18 STR	8	13-	300 kg; 3½d6 HTH [2]
20 DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18 CON	16	13-	
18 BODY	16	13-	
18 INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
14 EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15 PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16 COM	3	12-	

8 PD	4	Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
8 ED	4	Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
5 SPD	20	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8 REC	0	
36 END	0	
40 STUN	4	

**Total Characteristics Cost: 130**

**Movement:**

Running:	8"/16"
Leaping:	3½"/7"
Swimming:	2"/4"

**Cost Powers END**

5	<i>Charles Moore Dueling Pistol:</i>	RKA 1d6+1; 1 Charge (-2), OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	[1]
5	Second Charles Moore Dueling Pistol		[1]
9	<i>Custom Dueling Rapier:</i>	HKA 1d6+1 (2d6+1 with STR); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	2

**Martial Arts: French Method Fencing (Weapon Element: Blades)**

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5 <i>Ballestra</i>	+2	-2	+4 DC Strike; Half Move Required
4 <i>Ceuto</i>	+0	+0	33 STR to Escape Bind
4 <i>Froissement</i>	-1	+1	28 STR Disarm
5 <i>Slash</i>	-2	+1	+4 DC Strike

**Perks**

24	Follower: Rob Roy (Light Warhorse; see page 169 of <i>HERO System Bestiary</i> )
5	Money: Well Off
2	Reputation: Infamous Duelist (medium-sized group) 8-, +2/+2d6

**Skills**

16	+2 with All Combat
4	+2 with Rapier
6	+3 with Dueling Pistols
3	+2 versus Hit Location Modifiers with Dueling Pistols
3	+2 versus Range Modifier with Dueling Pistols
3	Acting 12-
3	Conversation 12-
3	Deduction 13-
3	Fast Draw 13-
4	Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting) 13-
3	KS: Literature 13-
3	KS: The Military 13-
4	KS: Code Duello 14-
3	Language: French (Conversation; Literate)
3	Language: Spanish (Conversation; Literate)
3	Oratory 12-
3	PS: Lawyer 13-
3	Riding 13-
3	WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms, Flintlocks

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 144**

**Total Cost: 274**

**150+ Disadvantages**

5	Distinctive Features: Eccentric Duelist (Easily Concealed)
5	Physical Limitation: Missing Two Fingers (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Psychological Limitation: Melancholy (Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Obsessive about Dueling (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Psychotic, Sees Vision of Past Dueling Victims (Uncommon, Total)
15	Reputation: Crazy Duelist 11- (Extreme)
10	Rivalry: Professional (Black Mask; As Powerful; Harm or Kill Rival; Rival Aware)
39	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 274**

**Background/History:** Alexander Keith McClung was born in Fauquier County Virginia in 1811, the son of an illustrious southern family which had previously produced a variety of great and noble men. His uncle was John Curtis Marsall, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and the Founder (now considered to be father) of its legislative branch. Yet as every elm must invariably cast a midday shadow, the McClung family tree had found its own dark shade in the person of Alexander, a man destined to be infamous rather than famous.

A moody young man prone to sudden inexplicable fits of violence, Alexander scorned his kindred's traditional clerical vocation in favor of a legal career; a profession to which he was uniquely unsuited. For though he passed his bar exams by becoming thoroughly familiar with elementary jurisprudence during long drinking bouts with his uncle he never once opened a lawbook, preferring instead to read works of science, classical literature, and poetry. He moved to Mississippi where his contemporaries commented that McClung's "argumentative powers, when fully brought forth, were such as to awaken the highest admiration" but that "he never devoted himself arduously to his chosen profession." This may be because of his melancholy preoccupation with gothic poetry had inspired him to undertake a second career as the editor of the well respected *Southern Literary Messenger*. It may also be because Alexander had discovered that he enjoyed killing men more than getting them off of the hook.

A naturally gifted sharpshooter and swordsman, McClung was first challenged to a duel by a jealous lover in 1836. He easily killed the man but soon found himself challenged by his brother, whom he dispatched with a smoothbore pistol at the remarkable distance of 100 feet. An entire series of more and more daring challenges followed, culminating in a remarkable combination duel-and-gambling-opportunity in which he killed a member of the infamously quarrelsome Menifee clan of Kentucky with a long rifle at a distance of 60 yards in full view of a large betting crowd. Soon six more revenge-seeking Menifees followed the first to the grave in a series of six separate famous duels, earning the well dressed the McClung the ironic nickname "The Black Knight of Mississippi."

Feeling the heat from this series of well documented semi-murders Alexander took a commission in the Army just before the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846. He served with bloodthirsty distinction during the invasion of that country, becoming the first man to climb the ramparts of Monterey. As he ran carrying the

American flag in his right hand a shot whizzed by, taking off two of the fingers from his left. After convalescing back in Mississippi, McClung served as the U.S. Charge d' Affairs (a sort of ambassador) to Bolivia from 1849 to 1851. There he contracted a near fatal case of malaria which unbalanced him even further.

Returning home in 1852 Alexander soon found himself caught up in his old routine of killing challengers, writing depressing poetry, and halfheartedly practicing law. Still athletic and vigorous at 39 he became involved with a series of seemingly deliberately doomed romances with much younger women. "He was the gallantest lover that ever knelt at a ladies feet," commented the winsome Virginia Clay-Clopton, "I loved him madly while with him, but feared him when away from him." Years of butchering rivals, editing bad doggerel, and contracting exotic foreign illnesses had clearly driven Alexander mad. Haunted by the ghosts of his victims, McClung would mount his horse Rob Roy and dash to the nearest graveyard where he would throw himself down upon a convenient grave to stare like a lunatic into the sky for hours at a time. By the following year it seemed certain to all that knew him that this melancholy delirium would terminally infuse itself throughout every fiber of McClung's being, driving him to take his own life. Yet just as the Black Knight of Mississippi had all but given in to dementia he had an experience which would forever alter the direction of his life: he got into an altercation with Matthew Ward, the fourth man to bear the name Black Mask.

The fight was a misunderstanding, really. Black Mask had come down from Boston to investigate the theft of a valuable diamond necklace from a well-known socialite. He was in the process of stalking a suspect through the streets of Biloxi late one moonless night when he literally ran into McClung, who mistook the mystery man for a bandit of some sort. The ensuing battle wrecked two small stores and a tavern, ruined Ward's investigation, and left a bruised and bested McClung with a new sense of purpose in life. He would find this enigmatic masked man, challenge him in public, and kill him in a fair yet romantic fight... or die trying. Either way it would cement the Black Knight of Mississippi's reputation as the greatest (or possibly the most tragic) duelist in the country. Alexander would be satisfied with either result.

McClung traveled to Boston to learn more about Black Mask. Always charming and polite, he befriended street people, tavern owners, and newspapermen (who viewed him as an agreeable eccentric) in an attempt to gather information on his seemingly immortal opponent. He practiced incessantly with his pistols and rapier in anticipation of the coming

## BLACK KNIGHT OF MISSISSIPPI PLOT SEEDS

*Champions:* The PCs have been approached by the current Black Mask (Jennifer Anne Ward) with an odd problem. A strange character calling herself the Black Duchess of Vibora Bay (a descendent of Alexander McClung) has been following her everywhere, ruining investigations and generally making a nuisance of herself. She seems to want to engage the hero in some sort of ritual swordfight which involves all sort of archaic conditions. Black Mask doesn't want to hurt this woman but she is in the middle of a very important investigation. Could the PCs please figure out who the Black Duchess is, what she wants exactly, and get her to possibly go away?

*Western Hero:* Black Mask has vanished! The year is 1853 and the PCs have been approached by an extremely distraught Alexander McClung a.k.a. the Black Knight of Mississippi. It's been months since Black Mask (Matthew

Ward) has been spotted on the streets of Boston and his would-be killer is terrified that something has bad happened to the heroic mystery man. He offers to hire the PCs to track down, rescue, and return the missing hero to his beloved city so that McClung can then kill him in a fair fight.

*Victorian Hero:* As the War Between the States draws daily nearer the mysterious duelist, diplomat, and adventurer Colonel Alexander McClung approaches the PCs with a desperate plan to save their country from bloody civil conflict... by provoking another war with England! Will they go along with his mad plan or will they try to stop him?

battle. Finally, when he felt prepared, he issued a formal *code duello* challenge to the Yankee mystery man by taking out a full page add in several local newspapers. Ward failed to reply in kind. Frustrated, the Black Knight of Mississippi began to stage elaborate robberies in an attempt to get his adversary's attention. As McClung viewed thievery with considerable disdain, none of these crimes were intended to be fruitful; on the one occasion that he actually succeeded he returned the stolen item, along with a formal letter of apology, shortly thereafter. But they did lure Black Mask into a half-dozen indecisive (but well covered) rumbles through the streets of the city, during which Alexander recited poems, lectured the hapless hero on codes of honor, and generally played to whatever crowd of onlookers their fight had gathered. Beloved by the press for his colorful and largely harmless villainy, the Black Knight of Mississippi had inadvertently become the first well-known "costumed" villain in American history, setting a standard to which many later day scoundrels have tried (and generally failed) to live up to.

In the spring of 1855 McClung was planning another one of his nefarious capers when he stumbled upon evidence of a plot to assassinate Boston mayor Frederick Cooke. Unable to contact Black Mask in time to tip him off Alexander moved to prevent the assassination, which was to take place during a banquet in the mayor's honor, by himself. In a desperate attempt to protect Cooke from what he viewed as a cowardly and contemptible attack, the Black Knight flung himself into the path of the would-be murder's bullet and was slain instantly. Although considered an eccentric, a villain, and a murderer by many, he died a hero to the citizens of Boston. His well-attended funeral was the largest in that city's history; a line of mourners stretched for six city blocks down Cambridge Street to the Old West Methodist church where his services were held. Black Mask, who had arrived back in town shortly after his old nemesis' death, presented the eulogy himself.

**Personality/Motivation:** As if it weren't plainly obvious Alexander McClung is, well, a bit touched in the head. Not possessing the most stable of characters to start with, his war experiences and bout with malaria have contributed to a further deterioration of his senses. Which doesn't mean that he is unintelligent; Alexander has shown himself to be cunningly ingenious on many, many occasions. Rather, his madness has caused his priorities to become distinctively askew without robbing him of any of the intellectual capacity necessary to carry them out.

The Black Knight of Mississippi loves the already ethically questionable institution of dueling with fervor unusual even for a Southerner of his day. He adores the ritual of the challenge, the resulting display of martial skill, and finally the bloodthirsty satisfaction of the kill. Yet oddly this ferocity is tempered by the sentimental poet's soul which dwells within his breast, a condition which makes McClung feel increasingly guilty about the lives he has taken. On many occasions he has found himself so bitten by remorse over his murderous deeds that he has contemplated suicide as a way of escaping his feelings of guilt. Still, his melancholy predisposition has not slowed him down when it comes to the ultimate challenge of defeating Black Mask, the one man in the world whom he has ever failed to best in single combat.

**Quote:** "Accept my challenge like a gentleman, Black Mask. For the sooner you are dispatched to join the company of heavenly cherubim the sooner I can get back my melancholy affairs of self destruction."

**Powers/Tactics:** Alexander McClung is an entirely formidable and, when he wishes to be, rather dangerous man. A crack shot, master swordsman, and experienced horseman with years of military and diplomatic experience, he eagerly seeks out tough adversaries whom he feels to be worthy of his skills. His preferred method of confrontation is to challenge his opponent to a duel. If this challenge is accepted he will adhere to the American *code duello* (which he has completely memorized) down to the finest detail, including allowing his opponent to choose both of their weapons (a situation Black Mask has used to his advantage). If an opponent wishes to forgo this ritual in favor of a less restrictive (or potentially lethal) form of combat the Black Knight will usually oblige him, though he won't consider the matter as serious.

In addition to his combat skills Alexander speaks three languages, writes fairly sophisticated poetry, and is an orator of some considerable skill. A member of the Mississippi Bar he is a somewhat lazy – yet nonetheless effective – attorney with considerable experience manipulating juries. He is also rather handy with the ladies, so to speak.

**Campaign Use:** Although the fourth Black Mask fought several considerably more dangerous opponents during his tenure of the family mantle (the Fiendish Doctor Faust and the Ripper of Boston both spring to mind), none is more fondly remembered by fans of super history than the Black Knight of Mississippi. Colorful, gregarious, oddly honorable, and prone to rambling soliloquies, McClung could easily

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have been an early “super” hero if only his deteriorating mental state had allowed it. Thus he is presented as a potential member of a PC’s rogues’ gallery suitable for any Champions, Western Hero, Victorian Hero, or Pulp Hero game which is run on a 250 or higher point basis.

McClung could also be made less powerful so that he fits better into a 150-point heroic level campaign. Remove his fencing martial art and step down all of his combat skill levels by one. Then remove the Perk *Follower: Rob Roy*. Or he could be stepped up to the Standard 350-point superheroic level by adding the powers *Tough Guy: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%, Padded Costume: Armor (5 PD/2 ED) IIF (-1/4)*, and *Lady Killer: +20 PRE (20 Active Points); Power Only Works Against Women (-1) plus +10 COM (5 Active Points) Power Only Works On Women (-1), Linked (-1/2)*.

**Appearance:** Alexander Keith McClung is a tall, thin man with a swooping jet black moustachio that matches his equally dark hair. He has wild, unhinged looking brown eyes which seem wander about of their own accord only to snap back to attention at the slightest sign of danger. His hands are large, steady, and quite strong looking even though he is missing two fingers from his left one. He wears a gallant looking black cavalryman’s hat which is festooned with three colored feathers which are green, red, and white respectively (to symbolize his heroism in the Mexican War). Much of his lean frame is covered by an ankle-length ebony riding cloak which is worn to conceal the twin smooth bore percussion cap pistols which are tucked into the velvet sash he wears around his waist... not to mention the wicked-looking rapier he wears on his side. When challenged to a fight, he whips this mantle back dramatically to reveal his arsenal before delivering a melodramatic oration of indeterminate length.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE**

No matter how much we try to fit it all inside, every now and then, Hero Games runs out of pages in its books, and has to drop some material. But that's good news for our subscribers, since these "leftover" pages are collected from the cutting room floor and presented here in the pages of *Digital Hero*.

**Leftover Hero** by Steven S. Long**Griffin Bear**

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### Griffin Bear

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	1600 kg; 6d6 HTH [3]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
22	CON	24	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
10	EGO	0	10-	ECV: 3
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
12	PD	6		Total: 12 PD (3 rPD)
10	ED	5		Total: 10 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
11	REC	0		
44	END	0		
46	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 130 (+30 w/ NCM)**

**Movement:**

Running:	6"/12"
Leaping:	1"/2"
Swimming:	2"/4"
Flight:	4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
20	<i>Eagle's Beak:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (2½d6 with STR)	2
20	<i>Claws:</i> HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	2
4	<i>Caw-Growl:</i> +10 PRE; Only For Fear-Based Presence Attacks (-1), Incantations (must growl or roar; -¼)	0
3	<i>Thick Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (3 PD/3 ED)	0
6	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"	0
5	<i>Eagle's Wings:</i> Flight 4"; Restrainable (-½)	2

#### Skills

10	+2 with Hand-to-Hand
0	ES: Climbing 8-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 68**

**Total Cost: 198**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

15	Physical Limitation: Animal Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly)
15	Physical Limitation: Hibernates in Winter (Infrequently, Fully)
5	Physical Limitation: Large (up to 3.5m, 800 kg; -2 DCV, +2 to PER to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly)
5	Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, can only leap 1" (Infrequently, Slightly)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly)
68	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 198**

**Ecology:** Griffin-bears are much like their ursine half in many ways. They can consume nearly any type of food, though they strongly prefer meat and will go to great length to get it; for some reason, they seem to have a strong preference for dwarven flesh. They tend to hibernate in winter, though griffin-bears in warmer climes, or ones trained as guardian beasts, may never hibernate. However, unlike bears, it's not unknown for them to congregate in "flocks" of as many as half a dozen creatures.

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations, tinged with a seeming malevolence and strange ferocity and temper.

**Powers/Tactics:** Griffin-bears use their size and strength in combat. They rear to full height, then rain blows down on their foes with their talons, or stoop to bite with their large, sharp beaks. They can also fly, though slowly and somewhat clumsily; sometimes they use this ability to swoop down on their foes, crushing them by landing on them, or to overcome obstacles. There are reliable reports of trained flocks of griffin-bears soaring over city walls to attack people inside.

**Campaign Use:** The griffin-bear shows what can happen when wizards turn their power to evil or foolish ends. Instead of just making it another foe for your PCs to fight, if you plan the situation right you can plant an intriguing moral message, or perhaps even insert a moral dilemma into the game.

**Appearance:** The product, it is believed, of some mad wizard's experiments long ago, the griffin-bear blends the features of griffin and bear. Its chest, forelimbs, and head are those of a griffin (and it has two smallish griffin's wings protruding from its back); its bottom half that of a large bear. It walks semi-erect on its rear limbs, using its wings for balance and stability; it rears to full height in battle.

**Chekuru Sting-Vine**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll: 11-
8	EGO	-4	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
				Total: 6 PD (2 rPD)
6	PD	4		
				Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
4	ED	0		
				Phases: 4, 8, 12
3	SPD	5		
6	REC	0		
40	END	0		
25	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 37**

**Movement:** Running: 0"/0"  
 Leaping: 0"/0"  
 Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>Stinging Needle:</i> HKA 1 point (1 point with STR), Penetrating (+½)	1
33	<i>Needle-Venom:</i> Drain CON 3d6, Delayed Return Rate (5 per Hour; +1), NND (LS [Immunity]; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼); 4 Charges (-1), Stinging Needle Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 5 Minutes after victim is sting; -2), Gradual Effect (15 Minutes; 1d6/5 Minutes; -¾) <b>plus</b> RKA 2d6, NND (LS [Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), 4 Charges (-1), Stinging Needle Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 5 Minutes after victim is bitten; -2), Gradual Effect (10 Minutes; 1d6/5 minutes; -¾), Linked (-½)	[4]
1	<i>Tough Vine:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/0 ED)	0
24	<i>Wrapped Around A Tree:</i> Knockback Resistance -12"	0
10	<i>Unperturbed:</i> +20 PRE; Only To Resist Presence Attacks (-1)	0
-12	<i>Can't Move:</i> Running -6" (0" Total)	0
-2	<i>Can't Move:</i> Swimming -2" (0" Total)	0
39	<i>Sense Vibrations:</i> Detect Physical Vibrations 13- (Touch Group), Analyze, Discriminatory, Range, Sense, Targeting 0	
9	<i>Reach:</i> Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	0

**Skills**

12 +4 OCV with Stinging Needle

4 *Look Like an Ordinary Vine:* Concealment 14-; Only To Look Like a Normal Vine (-1)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 125**

**Total Cost: 162**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Physical Limitation: Near-Human Intelligence (Frequently, Slightly)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Poor Eyesight, suffers -2 to all Sight PER Rolls (Frequently, Greatly)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Poor Hearing, suffers -2 to all Hearing PER Rolls (Frequently, Slightly)
- 6 Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, cannot leap (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 46 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 162**

**Ecology:** Native to the Chekuru Jungle of Vornakkia (but sometimes transplanted to other tropical environments as guardian creatures by wizards and the like), the sting-vine is a carnivorous plant. It uses its sting (see below) to poison creatures, then sucks out their blood and bodily fluids to nourish itself. Most of its prey are small animals, creatures it feels sure it can kill with one good sting (or at most two), but it's not averse to going after larger prey if it thinks it can win (or if it's been trained to do so).

**Personality/Motivation:** Normal animal motivations.

**Powers/Tactics:** The sting-vine has only one attack – a thorny needle on its tip, sharp and strong enough to pierce armor. It waits until prey comes near, unaware that the seemingly-innocent vine is in truth a deadly predator, then lashes out with its sting.

**Campaign Use:** The sting-vine is a good "nuisance monster," able to surprise the party and perhaps slow it down for a while, but not inflict significant harm most of the time. However, a lucky sting – and the creature is quite good at hiding and ambushing – may seriously harm or kill a PC, so choose your victims carefully.

**Appearance:** The Chekuru sting-vine looks like an ordinary, woody vine, as thick as a man's wrist at its base, but closer to the thickness of a thumb for most of its length. At its very tip is the sting-needle described above; it keeps the sting-needle concealed until it's ready to strike.



# The Grand Melee

by Michael Surbrook

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
And monarchs to behold the swelling  
scene!

— *The Life of King Henry V*  
William Shakespeare

## Running a Medieval Tournament in Your *Fantasy Hero* Campaign

In the Middle Ages there was little to no organized sport as we know it. Oh, there were sports and games aplenty, and any time traveler could go back and find the distant (or not so distant) ancestors of such modern games as field hockey, soccer, lawn bowling, and even baseball. But there were no real regulated sports – except one. The one exception was the tournament, a martial sport performed by the nobility, of the nobility, and for the nobility. They were often planned well in advance, featured a great deal of pomp and spectacle, and later period tournaments had carefully spelled out rules for what would be (and would not be) allowed. Best of all, a tournament might last for a week or more, and would bring a great influx of people and money to whatever town was lucky enough to have one held nearby. Thus, a medieval tourney makes for an excellent *Fantasy Hero* scenario, and can feature all the action and adventure the GM and his players may wish for – even if no one is actually fighting in the tournament itself!

This article will take a somewhat simplified look at the origins and history of the medieval tournament, and will give suggestions on how you can run different types of tournaments as part of your *Fantasy Hero* campaign. It will also have several tournament-related scenarios and briefly describe tournament-specific weapons and armor.

### What is a Tournament?

**Adhemar:** Your armor sir.

**William:** What about it?

**Adhemar:** How stylish of you to joust in an antique, you'll start a new fashion if you win. My grandfather will be able to wear his in public again, and a shield, how quaint. Some of these poor country knights, little better than peasants.

— *A Knight's Tale*

No one knows exactly when or where the idea of the tournament first came about. In fact, no one is exactly sure of the origins of the word “tournament” in the first place. One 16<sup>th</sup> Century suggestion says it comes from the word “*par*

*tour*,” referring to how knights would make their runs at the quintain (a practice target used to develop mounted combat skills) “by turn.” It also might come from an attempt to describe how mounted knights and men-at-arms would circle around each other before beginning combat. As for the tournaments themselves, it is highly likely they were an offshoot of various military games practiced by many European cultures as a way of keeping one’s battle skills sharpened. For example, the Romans held what they called *ludus Troiae*, or the “Troy Game,” while various Germanic tribes were known to fight mock battles and the like.

Jousting came about in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, after the establishment of the mounted cavalry man and the introduction of the massed charge with lances leveled. These tournaments were fairly primitive affairs (at least when compared to the jousts of the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century) and deaths were common, resulting in the Church speaking out against the sport and attempting to ban it (a scene that would be repeated time and time again over the next 600 years).

As time passed, tournaments became more and more involved and complex in size and style. New types of tournaments were developed, such as the *pas d’armes*, which might incorporate both combat on foot and horse, while the joust became so refined it eventually evolved into almost a form of public spectacle rather than any true test of skill. The next section of this article will look at some of these tournament forms, and how you can present them in a *HERO System* fantasy campaign.

### STYLES OF TOURNAMENT

Once you’ve decided to incorporate a tournament into your campaign, you next need to decide exactly what kind of tournament it will be. This section will describe several variations, along with suggestions on how to set them up. The terms used to describe the different tournaments are for convenience, only loosely based on historical naming conventions.

**The Mass Mêlée:** The mass mêlée is the earliest and simplest form of tournament. It is held in a large region of open countryside with no real boundaries, although certain areas are usually declared refuges, where knights can rest and rearm as needed. The tournament itself is fought between groups of armored men on horseback using standard weapons of war. There are little to no rules to such a tournament, aside from the idea that a participant is supposed to capture his foe, not kill him.

### TOURNAMENT OR JOUST?

In this article, the term “tourney” or “tournament” will refer to any organized event of hand-to-hand combat, either on horse or on foot, between either a group or a single set of participants. The word “joust” refers to mounted combat with lances between two opponents. For those wishing a more period term to describe such an event, you can use the term “*hastiludia*” (or *hastiludium*, or “*hastilude*”), meaning “spear play.”

## THE QUINTAIN

A quintain is a rotating target set atop a tall pole. The typical arrangement is for a shield-shaped target on one side of the crossbar and a bag of sand on the other. The shield is struck with the lance, spinning the quintain around. Anyone who comes in too slowly (or who hesitates) will be struck by the bag of sand (and possibly unhorsed).

Running such a tournament is a fairly simple matter. All you need to do is lay out a rough map of several square miles of land, mark any major landmarks, a few refuges, and let everyone have at it. Anyone knocked from his horse or who surrenders is out of the game, and is now a prisoner of whoever has captured him. To make matters easy, you should have two or three knight “templates” prepared, such as one for a novice, another for average-grade knight, and another for a veteran. Characters may fight either singly or in groups, and having several knights gang up on a lone participant wasn’t unheard of. Combat-wise, participants shouldn’t go around using their STR to push the damage of their weapons (which isn’t to say such things didn’t happen...), and disarming or dismounting your opponent should be the preferred tactic. However, there is nothing stopping the people involved from getting into a full-scale fight, and historical records show some such tournaments devolving into little more than brawls.

**The Joust:** The joust is probably *the* classic form of tournament, and certainly the form most readers will be familiar with. It can have any number of participants, but only two will be involved at any one time. The joust itself will have two knights in full armor, mounted on horses (which may be armored as well), charge at each other down the length of a long barrier. The winner is the one who strikes his foe’s shield and/or breaks his lance.

However, a joust can be more than two knights charging at each other with lowered lances. A joust could consist of knights taking turns to strike a quintain or to thread the point of their lance through a hanging ring. In any case, the joust is a fairly well-regulated form of tournament, in which skill is highly prized and the winner is often determined by a scored total.

The rules for jousting can be found on page 187 of *Fantasy Hero*. In most jousts, the objective was to strike your opponent’s shield and/or helm with sufficient force to break your own lance (and the closer the lance broke to your grip the better). Simply striking your opponent’s shield was worth a set number of points, or “lances”, while striking other parts of your foe’s body was worth less. Breaking your lance might score double. A miss was just a miss, while striking the horse would cost you points. In a worst case scenario, a knight might crash into the tilt barrier, run his lance into the ground, or manage to unhorse *himself*. Rolling an 18 on an Attack Roll (or having several dice of Unluck) might be sufficient grounds for you, as GM, to decide just such an event has occurred. Conversely, rolling a 3 to-hit should be declared as a clean hit and a successful lance breakage.

The size of a jousting field (or “list”) is often very great, and one record gives the following dimensions: 370 feet long, 250 feet wide, with a double fence surrounding it. King Henry VIII’s Field of the Cloth of Gold tourney, the field measured 400 by 200 paces, with lists 150 paces long (roughly 2000 feet by 1000 feet, with 750 foot lists).

**The Pas d’Armes:** A *pas* is any tourney in which a single defender (or group of defenders) accepts challenges from all comers. A *pas* could range from the very simple (a single knight places himself at a crossroads or at a bridge) to elaborate affairs with complex staging, costumes, props, and stories. The *pas* was very popular from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century onward and eventually evolved into a form of tourney called a “triumph,” which featured even more fantastic costumes, scripted parts and acting, mechanical devices, and so on.

A common feature of the *pas* was a set of shields, emblazoned with the defender’s arms, or with various charges indicating different forms of combat. A herald, or the knight himself, would touch a shield, indicating the form of combat to take place. For example, a shield tree might have four shields on it, emblazoned with: crossed lances, crossed spears, crossed axes, and crossed swords. Touching a particular shield would indicate what type of combat the challenger desires, at which point the defenders select one of their own to receive the challenge. In some cases, the way the shield is touched may indicate the exact type of combat. For example, touching the shield with crossed swords with the hilt of the sword might indicate combat *à plaisance* (with rebated or blunted weapons), while a touch with the blade would indicate combat *à outrance* (combat with sharpened weapons of war).

When running a *pas d’armes*, you need to have a small location set aside as the list. This can be two areas, one for jousts, and another for foot combat. If the *pas* is set at a specific location (like a crossroads), often the defender is there as part of a vow (such as “to remain for 40 days” or “to stay until I have fought one dozen knights”), and may charge anyone he defeats to match his deeds or perform some specific task. You should have character sheets for each defender if it is a small group (say 3-4), or simply use the generic ones described under The Mass Mêlée if there are more than that.

**The Grand Tournament:** A grand tournament is one combining all the elements of the previously described tourneys. A multi-day affair (and possibly even multi-week!), a grand tournament will feature jousts, foot combat, and mass mêlées on horseback. Such events were often months in planning and were announced

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weeks ahead of time, with challenges sent out to desired parties via heralds. They featured a great deal of pageantry, and were as much for the spectators as the participants. Such tourneys were often used to mark special occasions, such as weddings or coronations. The tournament book of King René of Anjou (see the Bibliography) describes how to host just such an event.

Running such a tourney as a scenario can (and should) be a multipart adventure. There will be daily contests of military skill, followed by feasts and dancing in the evening. There may be speeches, weddings, knightings, daily prizes awarded, and so on. Fairs and festivals may be held as well, and people from all over will travel long distances to attend. Aside from such basic necessities as a map of the lists and templates for various knights and men-at-arms to be met in combat, you will need to create numerous NPCs for the PCs to meet and interact with (a possibly daunting task). For more information on Grand Tournaments, see the section “Setting Up The Tournament” below.

### STYLES OF COMBAT

Now that you’ve selected the type of tournament you’ll be presenting in your game, you need to decide on how combat will be handled. Will it be with bladed weapons or blunted? Will certain weapons be disallowed? Or just specific strikes? Or will it simply be a free-for-all? This section will look at this subject in depth by first defining the two main types of tournament combat: *à plaisance* and *à outrance*.

**À Plaisance:** As the tournament was usually a form of entertainment, the typical form of tournament combat was one in which weapons were blunted (or “rebated”), with edges dulled and points removed. This was known as combat *à plaisance*. Combat *à plaisance* should use Normal Damage weapons, with such weapons either being metal ones with the edges ground down, or wooden (or whalebone) weapons made specifically for the tournament. This may result in certain weapons or weapon maneuvers being disallowed in a combat *à plaisance*.

**À Outrance:** This is a tournament combat fought with edged weapons. Combat *à outrance* is very dangerous, and it is quite possible to suffer serious injury (or even death) while participating in it. Thus, it is a rare form of tourney combat, and usually only seen if there is a personal grudge to be settled. Combat *à outrance* uses standard Killing Damage weapons.

**Barrier Combat:** One form of foot combat was fighting at the barrier. The barrier in question was usually a sturdy rail fence about three feet in height, set across the list field.

Participants would fight across the top of the barrier, usually using matched weapons (spears and polearms were popular choices).

A barrier fight can occur between just two people, or a whole group. There are period accounts of barrier combats being held during sieges, with bored knights challenging the defenders to a test of arms at a secured gate or doorway. Illustrations of just such a combat show men in full harness, armed with spears, fighting on either side of the barrier, with spear thrusts going both over the fence and *through* the open rails. If running a barrier combat as part of a tourney, the GM should disallow blows to the legs unless the attack is a thrust (and even then you need a long weapon to make the attempt). Striking through the fence should incur a penalty of -1 due to the restricted range of movement, while attacks over the barrier are at -2 OCV due to the reduced target area. However, any blows that do land take hit location rolls of 2d6+1.

**Counted Blows:** To reduce the lethality of a specific combat (either *à plaisance* or *à outrance*), it may be fought using only a certain number of blows or until a certain number of hits has been recorded. For example, two knights may agree to meet on the field and exchange 12 strokes with the ax, 12 strokes with the sword, and 12 thrusts with the spear. Or, these same two knights may agree to fight until one has landed three (or five, or whatever number they choose) good, solid blows on his opponent.

When running a counted blow combat, the characters are limited to the agreed upon number of blows, no more, no less. Thus, if the characters have agreed to exchange 12 strokes with the ax, then they are only allowed 12 Attack Rolls, regardless of outcome of these rolls (*i.e.* a miss still counts as one of your 12 strokes). Counting the number of hits is a little trickier, although a good rule of thumb is to only count attacks that do STUN damage to the target (after defenses), defining anything else as having struck with too little force to actually have been felt.

**Disallowed Blows And/Or Weapons:** As part of the rules for a tournament, certain weapons and/or blows may not be allowed. Thrusts, for example, may be disallowed in a combat fought *à outrance* as the chance for a deep (and deadly) wound is too great. For similar, daggers may not be allowed, or axes, or any poleweapon topped with a long thrusting spike. Records show the *estoc*, a thrust up under the ribs into the heart and lungs, to be forbidden in tournaments as it was purely a killing blow. In game terms, the GM may state characters should not use certain martial maneuvers (if they have them), or may not allow characters to use weapons with the Armor Piercing advantage.

### SETTING UP A TOURNAMENT KING RENÉ STYLE

In the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, King René of Anjou wrote an extended treatise on the tournament as it existed in France, Germany, and the surrounding area. In it he described how to properly set up and hold a tournament, simplified as follows.

When a noble decides to hold a tournament, he calls his chief herald to him and has the herald present a rebated sword to another noble, thus challenging him to a tournament. If he accepts, then four judges are selected (two from the defendant’s lands and two from elsewhere), who will oversee the tournament.

Invitations are then passed out, and the tourney is announced at various places across the land.

On the day of the tournament (which lasts for a week or more), all the participants process into town, and their crested helmets are placed on display. Noble ladies then view the helms, and may strike down from display any who belong to a knight of ill-repute. They also select the knight of honor, who will carry a white “kerchief of plaisance,” which he lowers over any

participant who is endangered. Until he lifts the kerchief, the participant cannot be attacked. Finally, all participants ride onto the tourney field raise their right hand and swear to the rules of the tournament. Only then is the actually fighting allowed to start.

The tournament will last for several days, and often feature a style of combat each day (or days). For example, there may be three days of courses with the lance, three days of combat with the sword, three with the ax, and so on. After each day's combats, the participants will gather for feasting and dancing, rising the next day to repeat the process.

## Setting Up and Running the Tournament

**Arthur:** Move aside! This is the king's road – and the knights you joined arms against were his very own!

**Lancelot:** I await the king himself. His knights are in need of training.

— *Excalibur*

So you've decided to include a tournament in your campaign? Good for you! Now you need to start thinking about such elements as who is behind it, who is part of it, and how to win.

### WHO IS PUTTING IT ON?

Probably the most important question to be answered about a tournament set in your fantasy campaign is: "Who's putting it on?" In fact, this question is probably more important than one about what sort of tournament you'd like to run in your game, as the latter will be heavily decided by the former. For example, a lone knight challenging all comers at the side of the road will certainly hold a *pas d'armes*, while a king might sponsor a joust, and a wedding celebration may see a grand tournament.

Determining who is holding the tourney will also help you decide how to work the players into the scenario. Using the previous examples, the PCs would probably meet the lone knight while traveling from town to town, while a PC who is a well-known knight himself might be personally invited by the king to attend, and the wedding celebration may include an open invitation to all "knights, squires, and men-at-arms of renown" to come and be part of the festivities. Historically, any large tournament would start preparations well in advance, with invitations sent out to notable princes, dukes, counts, and knights the sponsors wished to see attend. You can do the same, thus setting up the idea of a tournament several sessions in advance.

The question of who is behind the tournament will also help you decide how big it is. Once again, to use the initial examples, a lone knight means a small field, with perhaps a squire and a herald in attendance. You will need to create the knight, of course, but everyone else is just window-dressing. In the case of the king, his tourney might involve knights from all over the kingdom, as well as those of several neighboring ones (or even the kings themselves!). The participants could number in the hundreds, each with a retinue of squires, men-at-arms, pages, and the like. Character sheets for all these characters would be time-consuming and pointless, so you're better off creating a number of templates instead. The wedding celebration would fall somewhere in between the two, but could still involve dozens of participants. As

with the joust, you'd probably want to use a simple template for most of these characters.

### CONDUCTING THE TOURNAMENT

A tournament can be as long or as short as you want or need. It can be over in a single fight (at least for one participant), or last for days. When including a tournament in your campaign, you should select and develop a format that fits your needs as well as the attention span of your players. Having fought in several Society for Creative Anachronism *pas d'armes*, I can tell you that running an entire afternoon of bouts for just a single knight using the *HERO System* combat rules is probably going to be more trouble than it's worth. Running an entire melee with two dozen or so knights on a side might just be flat-out impossible. More importantly, odds are only one or two PCs will actually be involved in the fighting, so you need to make sure everyone has something to do. So, how do you resolve this dilemma?

First you need to decide how the tournament will be fought. Is it a joust, where knights will take turns tilting at the lists? If so, then you will have a lot of down time in which your PCs can interact with each other and fellow participants. In addition, a joust takes only a two or three die rolls, so you can resolve a series of them quickly. If it's a *pas d'armes*, then the bout may be at an arranged time (Such as 3:00 PM this afternoon, or 10:00 AM the next day, or even later that week!), allowing a lot of lead time before the actual fight (and plenty of time for the other PCs to get into mischief). A grand tournament may have a series of contests, some of which your PC fighters may not participate in, thus allowing you to gloss over certain events.

Second, once you know what the fighting is going to be like, you need to let the PCs know, so they can decide who is going to be fighting and how. As an example, let's look at Drudaryon's Legion from *Fantasy Hero*. If we presume they are attending a grand tournament, odds are Drudaryon will participate in any jousts and others forms of mounted combat, while Halfreda will fight on foot (matched axes at the barrier anyone?). Finally, Tarina could participate in such martial sports as an archery contest (a logical addition to such an event). Of course, this leaves Valerius and Drago out of the action, but Valerius could easily hobnob with fellow wizards (such an event is sure to attract some) or simply wander about with his harp. Drago, meanwhile will have to contend with the lure of riches on all sides and wrestle with Drudaryon's request he not filch anything....

Third, now that you've determined who is doing what, you can pace the adventure (and the tournament) accordingly. If Drudaryon isn't due to joust for a day, then you can describe in

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passing in impact of lance on shield, the shattering of the same lances, and the occasional crash of a knight to the earth. It's only when Drudaryon is actually in the saddle (or Halfreda is at the barrier) will you need to roll dice and keep track of Phases, Stun, and Endurance.

An important thing to keep in mind when running a tournament, especially a large one, is that you don't need to dice out anything but what directly concerns the PCs. Thus, if you want a specific character to meet a PC knight in the lists, then naturally he will win his bouts (or, at least, avoid injury) until it becomes time to meet said PC in battle. Conversely, if you want someone to be injured, simply declare it (especially if a PC healer is on hand to help!). Don't worry about random results tables for jousts and fights the PCs are not part of, these elements are under your total control, and you can do with them as you wish.

**Scheduling Tournament Events:** A few quick words about setting up the tournament itself. Deciding what fighting will happen when depends greatly on what sort of tournament will be taking place. If it is a mass *mêlée* then all you have to worry about is a starting time. After that, it's every man for himself for the rest of the afternoon. With a *pas d'armes* the challenger needs to make his desire to fight known and the defender(s) will then decide how to respond. A joust will have several passes an hour over several hours, and may take place over several days. A grand tournament may be spaced over the course of a week, with specific events scheduled for certain days (*i.e.* one day of jousts, one day of foot combat with spears, then one with swords, then one with axes, and so on, with the last day reserved for a mounted *mêlée* with weapons *à plaisance*). A triumph might feature theater and extensive roleplay, with the actual fighting tacked on almost as an afterthought.

### WINNING THE TOURNAMENT

At some point the tournament will end and a winner will be declared. In a mass *mêlée* determining a winner is easy: it's anyone who wasn't captured (although the knights involved may gather and vote one of their number an "overall" winner). In a joust it might be the person who broke the most lances, while in a *pas* the winner would be the person who struck the first solid (or "telling") blow. A grand tournament often had judges, who awarded prizes to those they thought showed valor and prowess. This also allows you to make a PC the victor without requiring you to fudge die rolls and the like. Just as long as the PC fights "well" (*i.e.* with honor, skill, and distinction) then he can be declared the winner. However, for those who wish a somewhat more complex method, you can try scoring the tourney.

**Scoring:** If you plan to make a joust the focal point of your tourney and/or have a great number of PCs participating in the joust proper, you can keep track of the results of each joust and award the prize accordingly. An English ordinance drawn up in 1466 shows the following prize-winning feats, ranked according to preferred result.

- ⊙ Unseating your opponent with the lance, or bearing both horse and rider to the ground.
- ⊙ Striking your opponent's coronel twice.
- ⊙ Striking the sight of the helm three times.
- ⊙ Correctly breaking the most lances.
- ⊙ Staying on the field the longest and remaining helmed, and having run the fairest course and given the greatest strokes, or being the best with the lance.

One can lose a prize by striking your opponent's horse, striking the tilt barrier three times, or by striking a man in the back (either if he has turned or been disarmed). You can also lose your prize by unhelming *yourself* twice.

When counting broken lances, one is awarded if the lance broke after impacting anywhere between the saddle and the helmet. Three lances are awarded if the lance broke upon dismounting a foe or in disarming him. Hitting your opponent's saddle loses a lance from your score, while two are lost if you strike the tilt barrier, and three if you do it a third time. In order to count as "broken" the lance had to snap more than foot from the coronel, and the further down the shaft, the better.

**Prizes:** Once you've decided who has won the tourney, then it is time to award the prize (or prizes). In period the prize depended greatly on the style of tournament. For example in a mass *mêlée* anyone captured by another participant might have to surrender a ransom in order to be released. This ransom might be money, armor, horses, harness, and other baggage. In a roadside *pas d'armes*, the victor, if a challenger may be given a simple token, such as a gold ring or silver badge, to show they fought at such-and-such place. In larger, more organized tournaments the prizes could be most anything, but usually it was of a certain value. Gems and jewelry, bolts of cloth (such as silk or velvet), a belt set with silver ornaments, a scabbard set with gems, and so on and so forth (period sources show a 6' pike [not the weapon but the fish!] being awarded in one tournament). The author has seen the following prizes awarded in Society for Creative Anachronism tournaments: a mail hauberk, a gorget of leather and plate, a small box of coins, a fine Spanish sword (he won this one himself), assorted pieces of armor, bolts of cloth, fine drinking vessels, books, liquor, trim (for

### DRESSING UP YOUR TOURNAMENT

Don't forget that almost any tournament was an excuse for pageantry and display. It wasn't uncommon to see participants come in costumes, or for the tourney to have a theme (especially a *pas d'armes*). Period examples include having a knight known for his prowess come dressed as an old man (and ask if he may be allowed to try his skill), having a group come as the Seven Deadly Sins (popular for allegorical tournaments), or as the fabled Nine Worthies (Alexander the Great, King Arthur, King Charlemagne, King David, Godfrey of Bouillon, Hector, Joshua, Judas Macchabeus, and Julius Caesar). In a fantasy setting participants can dress as gods (hopefully the gods won't mind), monsters, or as knights from other lands and/or races (such as a human costumed to appear as an elven warrior – or, more appropriately, what he *thinks* an elven warrior would look like!).

clothing), articles of clothing, and so on. In your campaign you could award fine weapons, suits of armor, a new horse, a castle and lands, and the ever popular hand of the princess in marriage.

### Working the PCs (and NPCs) into the Action

If you plan to have any sort of large multi-day tournament as part of your campaign, then you'll need to give the other PCs something to do. You could, of course, have the other players run various knights and squires in any of the large-scale *mêlées*, but that only helps to move gameplay along, and really only benefits the PC fighters who are involved in the tournament itself (and besides, some of the players may not be much interested in combat to begin with). So, you need to let the other PCs (and their players) have fun too. The following section gives some suggestions and ideas for things different character could do, using the professional package deal listings found on pages 54 to 78 of *Fantasy Hero*.

**Priests:** Historically, the Catholic church was set against the idea of tournaments and often preached against them. It found tourneys to be wasteful, both in money and lives, and a source of excess, greed, and envy (three of the Deadly Sins). In some ways they had a point, as people died with some regularity during tournaments, and the preparations for a new tournament could cost a staggering sum (not to mention the “one-upmanship” factor as nobles competed to hold bigger and more spectacular *pas d'armes*).

In a *Fantasy Hero* setting a Contemplative Priest may follow historical precedent and preach out against a locally held tourney, denouncing it as a source of debauchery, decadence, wrath, sloth, and so on. Or, he may be called in to bless the knights about to take part in the tournament and/or administer last rites to any slain by accident. On the other hand, a Crusading Priest may actually participate in just such a tourney, especially if the priest serves a warlike god and sees the tourney as a way to test his skill and/or prove the might of his god. If highly dedicated to his goal, however, he too might denounce such an event as a waste of resources and time in the fight against heresy. A Druid would likely avoid or ignore a tournament for the most part as the goings on for most city folk are little to no concern of theirs. A Shaman might do the same, or he might preside over the tournament, provided the tourney was held by his people and/or tribe.

**Rogues:** A tournament should have as much appeal to the average Rogue as it would to a knight in armor. The influx of people the typical tourney brings allows the Rogue an unprecedented chance for riches. Burglars could sneak into rented tavern rooms while the owner is away, pilfering anything small and easy to carry. Cutpurses can have a field day on the crowded streets, especially with so many people intently watching the action. An Explorer won't find much to interest him (provided he normally restricts his thieving to tombs and the like), although he could always make new contacts and listen to rumors of new treasures to be found in the crowded inns and alehouses. A Mountebank could easily set up various games of “chance” and entice passers by to try their luck (3-Card Monty anyone?). As for a Spy? Well... Exactly how many times will you have so many nobles and knights in one place at one time? An Assassin could easily attend a tourney as part of his mission, with an instant plot point having one of the nobles or knights in attendance be one of his targets. A Bandit *wouldn't* attend a tourney, but might waylay travelers going to or from event. A Bard can find plenty of work. He might be hired to (literally) sing the praises of a participant, serve as a temporary herald, provide music for the nightly celebrations, or simply wander the streets providing entertainment for a coin or two. Finally, the Bounty Hunter may attend for the same reason as the Assassin; his target is also in attendance.

**Warriors:** The tournament is an event for and by Warriors and is geared to their needs and wants. Technically, virtually all period knights, squires, and men-at-arms were Heavy Warriors, and are natural tournament participants (provided their rank and status allows entry, of course). Light Fighters wouldn't participate in the forms of tourney listed in this article, instead they had their own tournament styles later in period. Of course, you could run both types of tournament as part of the same event – Queen Elizabeth's reign in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century saw both armored jousts and rapier prizefights. An Archer can get into the action as well. A target shooting contest could easily fit into the whole martial theme of a tourney. Barbarians, on the other hand, are out of luck. Not only do their primitive and uncultured origins usually end up barring them from the proceedings, the classic fantasy barbarian attitude looks upon the whole affair as a sure sign of the weakness of civilized men. The chance for Commanders to participate often depends on their status. The Commander of a unit of mercenaries may not be well-born enough to be allowed in, while the Commander of a unit of knights is a natural. Knights, of course, are the mainstay of any period tourney, and should be

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the primary component of any fantasy event as well. Martial Artists often hold separate tournaments of their own. Of course, an unarmed exhibition match could be made part of a more regular tourney. A Paladin, as a cross between a Knight and a Crusading Priest, can either participate or not, depending on his vows, the demands of his church and god, and his own nature. As a rule, the classical fantasy Paladin would not, seeing a tourney as too worldly and distracting from his holy mission. As for Rangers are much like Druids, spending most of their time out in the wilderness, with little need for a tournament.

**Wizards:** The role of a wizard in a tourney greatly depends on the role of magic in your campaign. In a low-magic setting they may be so rare as to never appear, while in an ultra high-magic setting, wizards may be so powerful as to not bother with such mundane trivialities. The relationship between magic and religion will play a part as well. If magic is held in suspicion by the local religion(s) then odds are any wizard won't go out as such in public, while if the two go hand-in-hand then wizards may be a common sight.

A Conjuror could be called on to summon up fantastic riding beasts to make the tourney more interesting. An Elementalist, if he is of the Air school, might be asked to keep the weather clear, while a Water elemental might work to ensure nothing burns down. The Fire elemental, on the other hand, might be asked to provide nighttime fireworks as part of the festivities. Finally, the Earth elemental could help create the list fields in the first place. An Enchanter might be the person creating the prize for the tourney. In addition, he could also magically repair damaged armor and weapons if needed. A Loremaster might come to watch, and if learned in martial matters, might be a judge. A Necromancer, at least a classic fantasy Necromancer, would be persona non grata at a tourney. One who functions as more of a "healer" and/or undertaker may attend "just in case." Participants may attend a local Oracle to see who will win (or ask who to invite in the first place). A Psi-mage may be asked to look out for those with cheating on their mind. Finally, a Wild Talent can attend for any of the reasons listed or for none at all!

Depending on the setting, an Alchemist may be a popular stopping point, as knights and squires purchase assorted strength- and endurance-enhancing potions. Participants may also want healing potions, hangover cures, and oils to clean all the rust off of their armor. If such things get out of hand, then the holders of the tourney may then have a Loremaster around to look for signs of magical augmentation among

the assembled fighters (leading to a fantasy version of modern-day drug testing among athletes...). As a last note, a Witch may be shunned or another popular stopping point (the attitude depending on how witchcraft is viewed in the campaign, of course). If witches are viewed positively, then one might be consulted for a good luck charm. An evil one would be avoided, unless, of course, an unscrupulous participant wanted to curse one of his competitors....

**Miscellaneous Characters:** Craftsmen will be in high demand, both before and during a tourney. Before the main event, carpenters will be hired to build stages and viewing stands, erect fences, and set up assorted wooden structures. During (and after) the event, blacksmiths will be asked to sharpen swords and other weapons, and may be asked to get the dents out of armor. A leatherworker may be asked to repair torn straps and lacings. Cooks, of course, will be in great demands to prepare feasts each night, while innkeepers will have their hands full with all the guests who have come into town.

A Mariner is limited in his options, as few tourneys will require his services. A Merchant, on the other hand, should see a tournament as a chance to sell his wares. A shopkeeper may simply try and take advantage of the large crowds, while a caravan leader (or ship's captain) may try and bring in assorted trade goods he thinks will prove popular.

Traditionally, tournaments were put on for and held by, Nobles. Thus, although listed last, the Nobles are possibly the more important figures related to the tournament. Any of the previously mentioned character types, if of the nobility, may be invited as guests, especially if having them appear would enhance the sponsor's own prestige. A Noble may attend a tourney as a participant (in which case he is probably also a knight), as a judge, to simply view the action (if a guest), or to get ideas on how to hold his *own* tourney. He could also use the tourney as the cover for a romantic liaison, a clandestine meeting with a spy, as a chance for intrigue (and murder!), or to simply get away from it all.

As you can see, there are a lot of things your PCs (and NPCs) could do. Of course, odds are, any PC you have will want to do none of this, and go off in a totally separate direction. This is fine. Don't try and pigeonhole the PCs into set activities, just simply make sure they all have the chance to do *something*, even if it is simply "watching the tourney." And if they want to do something more active, then by all means, encourage them. You can't ask for better roleplaying opportunities.

## Scenarios

**Lord Farquaad:** Some of you *may* die, but it's a sacrifice *I'm* willing to make.

— *Shrek*

Although a medieval tournament can be a scenario in and of itself you might want to include additional elements or change the nature of the tourney beyond mere entertainment. These three scenario seeds allow you to do just that, and also allow you to expand the scope of a tourney.

**None Shall Pass:** The PCs come across a single knight guarding a bridge, ford, gate, or other narrow obstruction in the roadway, and he's not letting anyone through unless they fight him. Actually, as the knight is only interested in proving himself against his peers, he will only challenge those he perceives to be worthy of testing his skill against. Thus, anyone in armor, or who has the look of a warrior about them, will be barred from passing, while everyone else will be let on through (what's the point of fighting a farmer?).

For this scenario to work, the knight in question needs to be guarding a point in the road that cannot be easily bypassed. For example, the only bridge over a fairly deep and fast moving stream, or a gate in the middle of a fairly high (and long) wall. Of course, no *true* knight would willfully ignore such a challenge in the first place, especially if to bypass it meant accusations of cowardice and a loss of honor.

The duel doesn't have to be to the death, and could be fought in any way you please. For example, the knight could keep a matched set of axes on hand, or might have a pair of wooden tourney maces. The bout could be for a set number of blows, first blood, or even death (a popular option for those "black" knights of literary fame). If beaten, the knight may reward the victor a gift of some sort, or may join the party for a time, especially if he feels that anyone who can beat him is worthy of being his master.

**"The one who kills the ogre will be named champion!":** A tournament is being held for the purpose of finding someone brave and strong enough to accomplish a specific task. This task could be just about anything, but usually involves a great deal of danger. Examples include slaying a dragon, rescuing the fair princess (and slaying the dragon), finding a slaying a terrible monster (other than a dragon), or stopping an entire army (dragons are optional).

Okay, all kidding aside, this scenario is serious business. The threat to the people should be real, and the participants should only be involved because they *want* to be there... unless the tourney has been rigged in an attempt to get rid of an unwanted participant. You can play this either way, with brave and noble knights trying to prove their courage and prowess, or with the scholarly prince forced into armor and sent out to fight (a conspiracy by the king's advisor perhaps?). To entice participants the victor may be given enchanted (or, at least, new) weapons and armor to assist him in his quest. He may also be promised such rewards as the throne, half the kingdom, or the princess' hand in marriage. If the tourney is a setup, then the "winner" may be just given a pat on the back and pointed towards the city gates.

The PCs can be involved in a variety of ways. A knight PC may win the tourney and thus be tasked with defeating some great evil. The rest of the party may accompany him as squires, men-at-arms, and/or as part of his baggage train. Or, the PCs may come across the winner and agree to accompany him on his quest (especially if the winner has already met the threat and is currently wounded and unable to continue). In the setup scenario, the PCs may wonder at the knight in the battered armor and ask what he's doing out in the wilderness all alone. To make matters even more interesting, make "he" a "she." In this version the princess may have been sent out in order to get rid of her and clear the line to the throne for a younger male sibling (in this scenario the king *and* his advisors may be working together). As you can see, the possibilities are endless.

**"The pellet with the poison's in the flagon with the dragon.":** The PCs have learned that someone is trying to fix the tourney by eliminating a rival (or two). This sort of scenario is the perfect way to involve the entire party in a tournament. As the fighter(s) of the party do battle on the field of honor, the rest of the group must determine who is the guilty party attempting to do in his rivals, who are the potential victims, and how to stop it. To make matters worse, you should either have one of the PCs framed as the poisoner, or make one of them a potential victim (or both!). This scenario has the benefit of something for everyone, with both combat and investigation in equal amounts.



## Appendix A: Sample Knights

The following character briefs can be used to represent knights of differing experience and skill levels in tournaments of all sorts. They were built by combining the various levels of normals

### NOVICE KNIGHT (OR SQUIRE)

13 STR	12 DEX	13 CON	10 BODY
10 INT	11 EGO	13 PRE	10 COM
4 PD	3 ED	3 SPD	
5 REC	26 END	24 STUN	

**Abilities:** Fringe Benefit: Knight, +1 Hand-To-Hand, +1 OCV with Sword, +2 OCV versus Mounted Combat Penalties with all attacks, Gambling (chess) 11-, High Society 12-, KS: Heraldry 11-, KS: Knights 11-, Riding 13-, Tactics 8-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Lance

**50+ Disadvantages:** Distinctive Features: Coat Of Arms, Psychological Limitation: Code Of Chivalry, Social Limitation: Subject To Liege Lord's Orders

**Notes:** This represents a newly-dubbed knight or a squire of some skill and experience. It can also be used for a generic man-at-arms, although an experienced soldier may have many more Skill Levels than the ones shown.

### AVERAGE KNIGHT

13 STR	14 DEX	13 CON	11 BODY
13 INT	12 EGO	15 PRE	10 COM
5 PD	4 ED	3 SPD	
6 REC	26 END	25 STUN	

**Abilities:** Fringe Benefit: Knight, +2 Hand-To-Hand, +1 OCV with Sword, +2 OCV versus Mounted Combat Penalties with all attacks, Gambling (chess) 12-, High Society 12-, KS: Heraldry 11-, KS: Knights 12-, Riding 14-, Tactics 12-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Lance

**75+ Disadvantages:** DNPC: Squire 11- (Normal, Useful Skills), Distinctive Features: Coat Of Arms, Psychological Limitation: Code Of Chivalry, Social Limitation: Subject To Liege Lord's Orders

**Notes:** The average knight is a well-trained fighting machine and could have the Weapons Combat martial art see on page 60 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*. You could even go so far as to give some knights martial arts packages with different weapons. For example: weapon and shield, great sword, pole weapon, spear, and so on. However, for the most part, hand-to-hand skill levels and the Weapons Combat package will suffice.

from the *HERO System Rulebook* with the Knight template from *Fantasy Hero*. Naturally, you can further customize these briefs as you see fit.

### VETERAN KNIGHT

15 STR	15 DEX	15 CON	12 BODY
13 INT	13 EGO	16 PRE	10 COM
5 PD	4 ED	3 SPD	
6 REC	30 END	30 STUN	

**Abilities:** Fringe Benefit: Knight, +3 Hand-To-Hand, +2 OCV versus Mounted Combat Penalties with all attacks, Gambling (chess) 12-, High Society 12-, KS: Heraldry 12-, KS: Knights 12-, Riding 14-, Tactics 13-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Lance

**75+ Disadvantages:** DNPC: Squire(s) 11- (Normal, Useful Skills), Distinctive Features: Coat Of Arms, Psychological Limitation: Code Of Chivalry, Social Limitation: Subject To Liege Lord's Orders

**Notes:** Veteran knights have seen service both in battle and the tourney field and should have skills reflecting such. They also should have wealth, in both gold and land, Contacts with other knights (and the king), a squire or two (or more), and a band of Followers (men-at-arms). Defeating a veteran knight at a tourney shouldn't be an easy task.

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: COAT OF ARMS

The middle ages were known for their heraldic display. All knights were entitled to bear a coat of arms (also known as a device), created in accordance to certain rules laid down by the heralds. The ins and outs of these rules go far beyond the scope of this article, but any major library should have sufficient resources for the interested researcher. As for the coat of arms itself, it serves as both an identifier and a badge of ownership. A knight would but his device on his shield, on his surcoat, on the trappings of his horse, his banner, his clothing, his dinner plates, and so on. His squires would wear his badge (a smaller version of his entire device), as would his men-at-arms and other followers. This allowed anyone who saw it to instantly identify who he was, or who his men belonged to. While useful at times, it also broadcast his identity to any potential enemies, and while the rich knight with well-known arms may be captured rather than killed in battle, it also meant enemy knights (and men-at-arms) would seek him out specifically to do just that.

## Appendix B: Tournament Armor and Weapons

For the most part tournaments were fought using the standard weapons of the day. There were, however, some weapons developed specifically for the tourney, as well as forms of armor that only saw use in tournaments.

**Armor:** Tourneys were fought in the armor of the day up until around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. King René mentions heavily quilted coats (four fingers thick at the shoulder), leather armor soaked in oil and/or wax (with holes cut in it to make it lighter), wooden strips added as reinforcement to arm and leg harness, and so on. This armor offered plenty of protection from the wooden weapons used in the tournaments he wrote about, but were also quite bulky. Such armor should offer a resistant PD and ED of 3 (the same as cuir-boulli) with an additional nonresistant PD and ED of 3. Anyone dressed in such armor will suffer a -3 to their DCV and any DEX Rolls (period sources mention people dressed in such armor being unable to turn in the saddle!). The helmet was a standard steel basinet, with a great helm over this. The arrangement will give a DEF of 8 to location 3-5.

Later period tourneys and jousts saw heavy plates bolted on to more conventional field armor. This plates added upwards of 1 to 2 DEF to DEF 8 plate armor (in some cases the armor was over an inch thick on the front!), but at the cost of mobility. The plates were usually only bolted to the left side of the armor, as that was where the lance would be impacting. In some later period cases the wearer couldn't move (much) and was only able to aim his horse and lance. This form of armor has no practical combat use and was only used in tourney. Characters wearing such armor will have to deal with extensive DCV and DEX penalties, as well as Long-Term END issues.

**Weapons:** Aside from the normal edged weapons used in some forms of the tournament participants also used rebated weapons, wooden weapons, and even weapons made from whalebone. Those GMs wishing for a little more granularity among the choice of weapons could consider the following options:

Edged weapons do Killing damage.

Rebated weapons do Normal damage.

However, because the impact area is so narrow (being the blunted edge of a sword or ax), this damage is considered Armor-Piercing.

Wooden and whalebone weapons do Normal Damage.

For the most part, the only wooden weapons allowed (or, used in period anyway) would be swords and maces. Whalebone (*i.e.* baleen) was used to make swords. These latter items were often covered in silvered parchment as well. A

wooden sword's length allows for greater leverage, thus it should do around 5d6 of Normal damage. A wooden mace is shorter than a sword, but very well balanced, so should have a +1 OCV.

## Appendix C: Glossary

The definitions used here have been simplified for ease of use in a game.

*À outrance:* Combat with edged weapons.

*À plaisance:* Combat with blunted or wooden weapons.

**Course:** Any combat, with either lance or other weapon, between two opponents. A course with the lance would be a single pass, a course with hand-to-hand weapons could last until a certain numbers of blows were thrown, or until a single telling blow had been struck.

**Feat Of Arms:** A display of skill at combat, both mounted and on foot.

**Hastilude:** Lit. "spear play." A generic term for the tourney, but usually used in relation to combats with the lance.

**Joust:** Mounted combat between two opponents using lances.

**List:** The area designated for the use of combats, both mounted and on foot.

**Mêlée:** Open combat between two teams, either mounted or on foot.

**Pas d'armes:** A form of tournament in which a single defender (or a group) would accept challenges from all comers. *Pas* are noted for their pageantry.

**Rebated:** A weapon with its edge blunted or removed.

**Tenant:** The defender in a *pas*. The one who intends to hold the field against all comers.

**Tilt:** A joust.

**Tilting At The Lists:** To joust. Specifically, jousting in an enclosed and/or marked list field.

**Tournament:** A combat between knights, squires, and men-at-arms, held according to specific rules and at a specific place.

**Triumph:** A later-period tournament in which the actual fighting takes second place to pageantry and performance.

**Venant:** The challenger in a *pas*. The one who comes to meet the *tenant* in combat.

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# The Enemy of My Enemy

by Jason Walters

“Me against my brother, my brother and I against my cousin, and my brother my cousin and I against the world.”

– ancient Arab proverb

“[The Enemy of My Enemy is] a very fun scenario and great way to kick off a campaign....”

– Allen Thomas, author of *Alien Wars*

## Introduction

### GM’s Introduction

The Enemy of My Enemy is a six-player adventure for the HERO System’s Star Hero genre. It takes place in the *Alien Wars* setting on the world of Sigma Caeruleus III, a backwater colony planet with some rather unique social problems. It can be used either as a solo adventure suitable for convention play or as the beginning point for a “Life Will Never Be the Same Again” campaign (see *Alien Wars* page 177). To play this scenario the GM needs the following books: *Alien Wars*, *Hero System Bestiary*, *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*, and *The Ultimate Vehicle*.

It is strongly recommended the players use the six PCs included with this adventure instead of ones they create themselves as these characters represent a careful balance of the various feuding factions which inhabit Sigma Caeruleus III. This could change once the players have grown familiar with the basic themes behind the scenario. For example, if the GM wishes to use this adventure as a beginning point for an *Alien Wars* campaign, the creation of additional PCs may become appropriate due to attrition, plot twists, and so forth. While none of these PCs are technically military personnel, they’re all hardened combatants of a violent civil war with useful abilities, skills, and equipment that should enable them to successfully fight their Xenovore adversaries. Each of the provided PCs is built as a 150-point or more standard heroic character type.

*The Enemy of My Enemy* is a “character driven” adventure which attempts to combine serious roleplaying with fast-paced action. Each of the provided PCs either hates, distrusts, dislikes, or otherwise has some sort of problem with many of the others, sometimes even those within their own group. Yet they must overcome their history of violence and distrust if they are to band together to fight the Xenovores, a terrible alien race literally bent on consuming humanity. If the PCs are successful in doing so, they will have taken those first hesitant steps that lead to the formation of the Resistance Alliance of Sigma Caeruleus III (see *Alien Wars*, page 47),

an organization that in later, more enlightened times will be regarded as one of first real examples of human/alien unity. The GM should feel free to guide these fractious personalities into agreement by judiciously inserting hostile Xenovore forces as the plot demands.

Some of the information below is general knowledge available to all the PCs, while other information is available only to the members of each group. This is due to the fact that each group has held the other two in contempt for generations. Correspondingly each has failed to learn everything that is possible about the other two. The only exception to this rule is Doctor Yezmond Maronesy as she was educated on Kinzaereth before launching her idealistic crusade to unite her kinfolk with their alien antagonists. As a result she has acquired a great deal of knowledge about the Zarr. Each PC has an individual introduction which details his character’s actions in the hours previous to the Xenovore invasion. This, along with a set of goals unique to that character, is to be made known only to that character’s player. Please ask each player to carefully and privately review their characters before the game starts.

### Player’s Introduction

The year is 2332. Unopposed by any force more determined than itself, Mankind has burst forth from its home solar system to colonize hundreds of worlds across a 10,000 light year swath of the Milky Way Galaxy in age of unprecedented exploration and expansion. Energetic and arrogant, Man now commands an interstellar domain which could scarcely have been imagined by even his 21<sup>st</sup> Century ancestors. Yet not all is well in this seemingly golden age. Long-standing political tensions between the newly wealthy worlds of the Spinward Union and the slowly decaying central government of United Earth has recently erupted into open warfare. In the ensuing confusion system after system has either declared its political autonomy or pledged hollow loyalty to the UE’s fractured Senate. Thinking himself safely enfolded in a comfortably empty void surrounded only by easily subdued primitive peoples, mankind turns upon itself in an orgy of fraternal squabbling. More fearful of one another than any outside threats, ambitious men whose ends are best served by weakness and divisiveness rather than unity of strength allow the United Earth’s federated military to deteriorate into a shadow of its former self.

artwork by Dave Schraeder  
cartography by Ryan Wolfe

And while brother falls upon brother hungry alien eyes are watching and waiting, coldly looking for the right moment to strike.

### **SIGMA CAERULEUS III**

All of the action in this scenario takes place in the New Tapinagi District of Sigma Caeruleus III, a colony world controlled by the mini-empire of the oppressive Kinzareth. Though much of the pre-human recorded history of this world has been lost due to the destruction of its long-standing urban areas, all of the players know a certain amount about its geography, biology, and inhabitants. Read this introduction to the entire group before game play begins to help them grasp the general, non-race-specific history of the planet.

### **PLANET TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE**

Sigma Caeruleus III is an arid Earth-like planet which orbits a blue white-star from about the same distance away as Mars is from Sol. It is a primarily a mountainous world with only a few small shallow oceans near the equator to break up the seemingly endless monotony of rolling hills, broad grassy plains, and “high sierra” type wastes. While rainfall is a comparatively rare phenomenon, light mists blow across much of its surface at both sunrise as well as sunset providing sufficient moisture for its hardy plant life. Rainbows are an extremely common phenomenon on this planet, which is known as Noah’s World to its Yezidi settlers and *Xrathnu Nan* (or Beam of Light) to its native Zarr population.

Sigma Caeruleus III is home to a stunning variety of grazing native herd animals as well as cattle, deer, horses, and camels which were introduced by early settlers and explorers. These beasts migrate in a westward direction year round as the planet’s plant life has evolved somewhat differently from that of most known worlds, with some grasses blooming in the warm months and others in the cold depending on the nitrogen content of the soil. Fortunately these odd grasses possess the necessary “right-handed” amino acid genetic structures which make them fit for consumption by earthborn herbivorous species. The planet’s more mountainous regions are host to a variety of treelike species which most closely resemble aspens, though considerably larger. Yezidi settlers have successfully cultivated grapes, olives, dates, everfruit, and other desert-friendly plants in the planet’s high valleys.

### **NATIVE INTELLIGENT LIFE**

A single intelligent humanoid species arose on Sigma Caeruleus III some two hundred thousand years ago. Known as the Zarr, they are descended from a nomadic cheetah-like creature which hunted the native herd animals during their eternal circumambulating of the planet. Aggressive, territorial, and militaristic the Zarr rapidly evolved opposable thumbs, vocal cords, and a complex social structure which allowed them to move from their stone to bronze age in a brief period of time. They stand some seven feet high when fully erect, though their posture is more commonly semierect, and have feline features.

At the time of the arrival of the first Kinzareth Imperial survey ship in 2231 the Zarr had achieved a fairly sophisticated technological level (UTES 8) which included solar power, laser weapons, and the creation of several interplanetary spacecraft. Quickly sizing up the situation, the Kinzareth dispatched their battle fleet to destroy all Zarr space vehicles and aircraft then hit the planet’s dozen political centers with low-yield nuclear weapons. An invasion of ground troops and tanks with air support quickly followed. Within a matter of days these proud people had been reduced to the status of vassals on their own planet. For now killing the Yezidi settlers is the only form of revenge they can exact upon humanity in the face of overwhelming force.

### **YEZIDI SETTLERS**

The Yezidi are a non-Muslim Kurdish group who originally made their home in northern portions of Iraq. Proud, tough, and warlike they have endured hundreds of years of active genocide by their non-Kurdish Islamic neighbors. The word Yezidi itself is derived from the Arabic word for angel, as their complex religion revolves around the worship of divine beings, especially Melek Taus the “Peacock Angel,” or Lucifer as he is known in other religions. Lucifer does not occupy the same position in the Yezidi faith as he does in most traditions, however, and is believed to be reconciled with God.

Having suffered a great deal of persecution over the last millennium, the Yezidi are grateful to have at last a homeworld of their own. They have proven to be admirable settlers: hardworking, industrious, and self-sufficient. Their treatment at the hands of the Kinzareth Imperium has been abominable, however, and their relations with their Zarr neighbors so poor that an undeclared war has raged for decades. While some believe the time has come to reconcile with their feline foes, others harbor a deep suspicion born from years of killing.

## Player Characters

There are three distinct player character groups present on the world of Sigma Caeruleus III: the Zarr, the Yezidi, and the Kinzareth. While it is possible that members of other human ethnic groups, such as human rights observers from United Earth or the crews of trading vessels, may land on the planet from time to time they are

certainly not present in any great numbers. Package deals are provided for each of these three main groups in case the GM wants to create NPCs or allow players to create their own unique characters. A unique history is provided for each group which should be made exclusively available to members of that group before game play starts.

### THE KINZARETH

#### Imperior Professional Package Deal

Skills	Cost
+1 with Handguns	2
Bribery 11-	3
Bureaucracies 11-	3
Interrogation 11-	3
KS: Kinzareth Imperial Law 11-	2
PS: Policeman 11-	2
Persuasion 11-	3
TF: Wheeled Military Vehicles	1
WF: Handguns, Small Arms, Blades, Vehicle Weapons	2
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealable)	-5
Rivalry: Professional (Other Imperiors)	-5
<b>Total Cost of Package:</b>	<b>11</b>

### THE KINZARETH IMPERIUM (KINZARETH PLAYER ONLY)

The Kinzareth Imperium is a neo-socialist police state which rules over some five colony worlds located on the outskirts of human occupied space. Founded by a cabal of wealthy western European administrative officials fleeing the political aftermath of the Second Holocaust, its government is a bureaucratic autocracy which places an extreme emphasis on conformity, ethnic purity, and central authoritarian control. It has been historically considered one of the most oppressive regimes to enjoy a senatorial seat in the United Earth government. The Imperium's notable greed, cruelty, and expansionist tendencies were often cited by the federalist political faction of United Earth as an example of why strong interplanetary government had become necessary in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Century. Nevertheless Kinzareth remained loyal to the United Earth government during the Spinward Secession of 2329 because of the greater threat of Xenovore invasion.

#### Government Structure

Although he is technically answerable to the United Earth Senate, the unquestioned ruler of Kinzareth is Emperor Charles II. He is one of the

least-loved rulers in all of human space, renowned for his brutal treatment of colonists, nonhuman alien species, and imperial citizens alike. Charles II is assisted in the running of his state by a cabinet of twenty ministers each of whom is assigned a different portion of the all-controlling imperial government, such as Housing, Agriculture, Internal Security, Entertainment, and so forth. Each of these is in turn assisted by seven powerful assistant-ministers, each of whom is assigned to coordinate their ministry's activities on Kinzareth, a colony world, or in space respectively. These assistant-ministers are themselves served by a bewildering pyramid of subservient bureaucrats. Collectively, the various functionaries of these twenty ministries control nearly every aspect of imperial life, save on those worlds too resource poor and problematic (like Sigma Caeruleus III) to be worth collectivizing. Promotion comes largely through assassination of both the physical as well as the professional varieties.

#### Police and the Underclass

The backbone of the Kinzareth police state is its Imperiors, law enforcement officials charged with implementing the state's many rules and regulations. In heavily populated areas Imperiors are "gestapo" like in their behavior and tactics, while in rural areas they tend to be more like the wandering lawmen of the American old west... albeit of a cynical, corrupt sort. Drawn from the ranks of the children of the Kinzareth ruling class, most Imperiors view their career in their government's police force to be a logical stepping stone on the way to successful position in one of the twenty imperial ministries. They have a reputation for corruption, indolence, and indifferent cruelty. Few of them even have a good grasp of the laws they are trying to enforce.

Human colonists are considered the dregs of Kinzareth society, while nonhuman natives are considered even lower than that (when they are even considered at all). The most common punishment for a criminal, a political agitator, or an unwanted minority group is banishment to a semi-habitable colony world. There the unfortunate individual or group is put to the lash stripping whatever natural resources the colony world has to offer as quickly and cheaply as humanly possible.

## Imperior Hirem Saladde

“Sigma Caeruleus III Imperial Command to all Imperiors, this is a code red emergency situation.” A worried voice blurts out of the video screen on the battered dashboard of your battered M212 armored assault vehicle, interrupting your mid-afternoon siesta “We repeat a code red situation. Please stand by for emergency transmission from her Lordship Cynthiana Van Hartman, Planetary Autocrat. I repeat stand by for transmission.”

Rubbing your unshaved chin you pull a battered flask out of your hip pocket and take a long hard pull, wincing as the month-old corn whiskey shoots down your dry throat. You’ve been expecting this alert for months now. Although the government has done its level best to keep it a secret, you’ve known for some time that the mysterious Xenovores have paralyzed the United Earth Defense Fleet. Your father on Kinzareth sent you a letter via the UEPS warning you to get off of the planet, but for some reason you’ve stayed. Maybe it’s because you’ve actually grown to care about the people in the New Tapinagi district, or maybe it’s because you suspect that there really isn’t anywhere to run. Or maybe years spent patrolling a sniper-filled wasteland have made you indifferent to your own life.

The harried looking face of Van Harman appears on your screen. Normally a handsome woman, she is haggard and worn down looking. Her normally crisp black imperial uniform is in soiled disarray.

“Imperiors of Kinzareth, I bring you grave news. I have just received word that Fleet Admiral Lok Li had died in battle attempting to prevent a Xenovore Dreadnought-class ship from entering the Sigma Caeruleus system. I have dispatched the light gunships KIS *Luxembourg* and the KIS *Brussels* to intercept the warship in the hope that the United Earth forces have damaged it enough to make it vulnerable. When—I mean *if* that fails, I will move our satellite command station out of its orbit to engage the enemy directly before they can make landfall on the planet. As this is likely to be my last transmission and these my final orders, please pay close attention to these words.”

Although you are generally quite cynical about any sort of dramatics from your higher-ups in the Imperium’s bureaucracy, you find yourself almost snapping to attention. You wipe a bit of dust of your dashboard viewing screen so that you can look upon this brave woman for what may indeed be the last time.

“For many years this planet has been torn by strife. Human has been pitted against Zarr, rebel against authority, and men against one another. It may very well be that we of the Kinzareth Imperium bear the blame for much of this, or it may be that we have been but instruments in the hands of some divine plan. A great deal of blood has been shed. Many of us have grown to hate one another.”

She takes a deep breath.

“None of that matters any longer. I fear that we face an evil greater than any we have ever before imagined, an alien horror so terrible that it will make our petty feuds look like the games of preschool children. Imperiors I give you a final order, the most important one you will ever receive: you must at all cost organize an alliance between man and native to resist these intruders. If you do not, all is lost not just for this planet, not just for the Imperium, but for all of mankind. Good luck and godspeed, Van Harman out.”

As your screen goes dead, you know what you must do. Starting up the engine of your M12, you head down the dusty desert road toward the farm of Murid Maronesy, local headman of the Yezidi colonists and father of Abdulkadar Maronesy, the rebel better known as The Wind of the Plains.

### Imperior Hirem Saladde

**Background/History:** Imperior Hirem Saladde was born on the planet of Kinzareth in 2290. The son of an Imperial Party official, he was raised by strict parents to be an obedient servant of his majesty the Emperor Charles II. Dispatched to Sigma Caeruleus III as an Imperial Police Officer in 2325, he has been put in charge of maintaining the “peace” between Kurdish Yezidi colonists and the Zarr in the sparsely populated New Tapinagi district. He does this by administering the occasional execution of a troublesome settler or restless native while dodging constant ambushes, sniper fire, and political intrigues from his fellow Imperiors.

**Personality/Motivation:** If there’s one thing that Saladde hates more than the catlike Zarr it’s the Yezidi colonists who are perpetually feuding with them, him, and each other. Although not cruel by temperament, years of enforcing a government mandated apartheid between the two groups (and ducking sniper fire all the while) has made him extremely callous, not to mention violent, paranoid, and unfriendly. He frankly doesn’t care what his ancestors did to everybody else’s ancestors over a century ago. As far as Hirem can tell *everybody* on Sigma Caeruleus III is completely insane. All he wants to do is survive his ten-year term as police officer so that he can retire to a pleasant desk job on Kinzareth.

And now that hope is all but gone.

**Quote:** “Shut up you stinking Yez before I ventilate you! You too, cat-boy! I swear we should just nuke the daylights out of this planet and be done with it!”

**Personal Goals:** Unite Yezidi and Zarr into an alliance which can resist the invading Xenovores.

**Powers/Tactics:** Saladde maintains order (such as it is) by patrolling the New Tapinagi district in his battered M12 Armored Personnel Carrier (or APC), which is basically a six-wheeled armored truck with a turret-mounted 25mm Autocannon on its roof. He carries a K-2 automatic pistol on his right hip and keeps a K-16 Assault Rifle within easy reach on the M12’s driver side seat.

**Appearance:** Hirem Saladde is a tall dark man with sinister good looks and a mane of unkempt blackish-grey hair. He wears the “gestapo” style leather clothing of an Imperior with an earth manufactured nylon armor vest under his uniform. Hirem is nearly always coated in dust.

### NOTES ON KINZARETH FIREARMS

At the time of the Xenovore attack on the Sigma Caeruleus system human small arms technology hadn’t risen above the level of slugthrowers as far as most citizens of the UE were concerned (see *Alien Wars*, page 104). While experimental military lasers had been around for some centuries, they had never been successfully turned into single person weapons suitable for mass military applications. But even if they had, personal laser rifles still would have been too expensive for the impoverished inhabitants of *Xrathnu Nan*.

The Kinzareth Imperium has a thriving weapons industry which produces a wide variety of models suitable for police, military, and civilian applications. The most common of these is the KZ model 47, a sturdy semiautomatic sport utility rifle which has become popular on Imperium colony worlds due to its light weight and durability. On Sigma Caeruleus III it is the favored weapon of both the Zarr and Yezidi (who usually modify its simple action to fire three round bursts) while Imperial

policemen tend to favor "K" series firearms such as the K-2 SemiAuto Pistol which fires armor piercing rounds. All Kinzareth manufactured weapons come standard equipped with integral laser sights and holographic computer enhanced scopes.

## Imperior Hirem Saladde



DAVID STRADER 4/26/04



## DIGITAL HERO #20

### Imperior Hirem Saladde

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 20 PD (12 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 20 ED (12 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	2		
38	END	1		
35	STUN	6		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 100**

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
Leaping: 2½"/5"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

#### Cost Perks

2 Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers

#### Skills

- 10 +2 with Ranged Combat
- 2 +1 with Handguns
- 4 +2 Range Levels with Ranged Attacks
- 3 Bribery 13-
- 3 Bureaucratics 13-
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 3 Fast Draw 12-
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 4 KS: Kinzareth Imperial Law 13-
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 PS: Policeman 12-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 0 TF: Wheeled Military Vehicles
- 4 WF: Handguns, Small Arms, Blades, Vehicle Weapons

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 50**

**Total Cost: 150**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Imperior (Easily Concealed)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Zarr (Very Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Yezidi (Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Subject to Orders (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (Other Imperiors)
- 15 Reputation: Cruel Imperior, 11- (Extreme)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 150**

### EQUIPMENT

**1) K-2 Semi-Automatic Pistol:** RKA 2d6+1, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Armor Piercing (+½) (61 Active Points); OAF(-1), 10 Charges (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 22 points) **plus** +1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points) **plus** +1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 25 points.

**2) K-16 Assault Rifle:** RKA 2½d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 60 Charges (+½) (80 Active Points); OAF(-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 29 points) **plus** +2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** +2 versus Range Modifier (4 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 35 points.

**3) Armor Vest:** Armor (12 PD/12 ED) (36 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 9- (Only Protects Hit Locations 11-13; -1½). Total cost: 10 points.

**M12 Armored Personnel Carrier**

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
7	Size	35	Length 5", Width 2½", Area 12½", 12 tons, KB -7"
45	STR	0	Lift 12 tons; 9d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 1
20	BODY	3	
7	DEF	15	
4	SPD	12	

**Total Characteristics Cost: 87**

**Movement:** Ground: 20"/80"  
Swimming: 0"/0"

**Abilities & Equipment**

Cost	Power	END
70	<i>25mm Autocannon:</i> RKA 4d6+1, Increased STUN Multiplier +1 (+¼), Autofire (10 shots; +1), 1000 Charges (+1); OIF Immobile (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼), Beam (-¼) [1000]	
7	<i>Armored Section:</i> Armor (3 PD/3 ED); Limited Coverage (Not on Windshield, Windows, or Engine Cowling, -¼)	0
4	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -2" (total of -9")	0
13	<i>Motorized Wheeled Vehicle:</i> Running +14" (20" Total), 4x Noncombat, 1 Continuing Charge (hydrogen) lasting 6 Hours (+0); OAF (-1), Only on Appropriate Terrain (Smooth Surfaces, -¼), Limited Maneuverability (Only 2 Turns per Phase at Combat Speed; 1 per Phase at Noncombat Speed, -¼) [1cc]	
5	<i>Reinforced Tires:</i> Armor (5 PD/5 ED); Limited Coverage (-1½), OIF (-½)	0
2	<i>Six Wheels:</i> +2 Wheels (total of 6)	0
4	<i>Video Screen:</i> Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OAF Bulky (-1½)	0

**Total Abilities and Equipment Cost: 105**

**Total Vehicle Cost: 192**

**Value Disadvantages**

20 Distinctive Features: Armored Imperium APC (Not Concealable, Major Reaction [fear and hatred])

**Total Disadvantage Points: 20**

**Total Cost: 172/5 = 32**

**M12 Armored Personnel Carrier**

**Description:** The M12 Armored Personnel Carrier is a six-wheeled armored truck with a turret-mounted 25mm Autocannon bolted onto its roof. Powered by a hydrogen fueled internal combustion engine it is large, heavy, and surprisingly maneuverable for a vehicle about the size of a school bus. Its one weak point is its armor, which is light even by the standards of one of its 20<sup>th</sup> Century ancestors. This is primarily because the M12 was designed for transportation, crowd control, and anti-personnel functions rather than combat. All models come equipped with dashboard-mounted communications console which can link to orbital command satellites, multiple firing slits located along its sides, and a rear door which lowers vertically to become a ramp from controls at both the front as well as the back of the vehicle. It can carry two dozen passengers along with its crew of four.

The SC3 variant of the M12 has been equipped with living quarters to allow its reduced crew of two (or more often one) to dwell in the vehicle for extended periods of time. Like the basic model it moves along briskly on dirt or gravel roads but rapidly loses speed and maneuverability when driven on other surfaces. If the M12 SC3 is taken onto typical off-road terrain it can only attain a combat velocity of 10" and suffers Control Roll penalties (see *Ultimate Vehicle*, page 170).

## The Yezidi

THE YEZIDI	
<b>Yezidi Cultural Package Deal</b>	
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Cost</b>
+1 with Ranged Weapon	2
+1 with HTH Weapon	2
KS: Local Area 11-	2
Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Desert, Temperate/Subtropical Plains) 11-	4
Tracking 11-	3
WF: One HTH, One Ranged	2
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Distinctive Feature: Yezidi (Not Concealable, Not Distinctive in Some Cultures)	-10
Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Common, Moderate)	-10
Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Zarr (Common, Moderate)	-10
<b>Total Cost of Package:</b>	<b>-15</b>

### The Yezidi (Yezidi Players Only)

The Yezidi are a dissenting religious sect who still practice the traditional pre-Islamic faith of the Kurdish people. Like other Kurdish groups they are native to the mountainous areas of northern Iraq and southern Turkey. Having endured centuries of persecution, genocide, and statelessness the Yezidi have become a particularly closely knit tribe of people, wary of outsiders, and highly resistant to change. After barely surviving the widespread ethnic cleansing which followed the establishment of the Second Caliphate in 2095, the Yezidi were anxious to leave earth and try their hand at settling an uninhabited colony world somewhere far from the mainstream of United Earth society. For half a century they drifted around the edge of human space on the massive converted cargo ship *Khalwa*, a refugee people taking whatever work the anti-spinward world governments gave them.

Finally in 2245 it seemed that the Yezidi had finally realized their dreams. The Kinzareth Imperium, who had recently declared the third planet of the Sigma Caeruleus system open to human colonization, approached the wandering Kurdish clan with a proposition. In exchange for an oath of allegiance to the Imperium they would be allowed to claim that world for their own. The Yezidi accepted and swore a loyalty oath to the Emperor but when they arrived at their destination the Kinzareth navy seized and then destroyed the *Khalwa*, forever marooning the tribe on their new planet. They were then put to work alongside the conquered Zarr as miners, farmers, and herdsman. Many Yezidi have since escaped the clutches of the Imperium. They have fanned out across the face of the world, establishing fortified towns, villages, and homesteads wherever they go.

## RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Yezidi religion is a complicated blend of Islamic and Zoroastrian beliefs mixed with ancient Gnostic, Jewish, and shamanistic elements. Although they consider themselves a monotheistic people, their worship centers around several “angels” the most important of which is named Melek Taus the Peacock Angel, also known as Lucifer. Lucifer plays a very different role in Yezidism than in Christianity or Islam, however. In Yezidi belief he is no longer a fallen angel or the adversary of God but instead the angel responsible for the material creation of the Universe. In this complex cosmology the Supreme Deity created a pearl which became broken after forty thousand years had passed. His beloved assistant, Melek Taus, used the remains of this divine pearl to create the material world in which we live, but did so without permission. As punishment for this act the Supreme Deity cast his prodigy from heaven, bringing into being the remaining angels to take his place. Yet as time passed Yezidi theology indicates that God forgave the Peacock Angel his transgressions, allowing him to return to heaven and proclaiming those who revere him the spiritual elect of humanity. It is forbidden for the Yezidi to refer to Melek Taus as Satan.

The Yezidi have an intricate system of dietary laws which prohibit the consumption of fish, the meat of gazelles, beans, or cabbage. They are forbidden to wear blue clothing of any sort. Yezidi worship twice a day at dawn and dusk by praying in the direction of the sun. They believe themselves to be direct biological descendants of Noah’s family, an idea which is not utterly outrageous when one considers their geographical origin near Mount Arat. The peacock is revered by the Yezidi as the sacred symbol of Melek Taus, the original founder of their tribe. It is so venerated as a sacred animal that the Yezidi carried frozen embryonic samples of the species on the *Khalwa* for over half a century so that they could introduce it to their new home upon arrival.

Rulership of the Yezidi people is hereditary through seven “priestly” lines of hereditary rulers. The spiritual needs of the average Yezidi are served in various ways by Pirs (priests), Kawals (traveling preachers), Kocheks (ecstatics and soothsayers), and Murids (laymen who give financial support). Each fortified Yezidi village or settlement on Sigma Caeruleus III has at least a single Murid who serves as a mayor, sage, and judge all rolled up into one. In most cases the local Imperiors are more than happy to leave the day-to-day work of the government to these traditional tribal headmen.

## Yezmond Maronesy

Curse The Satan: you are out of goats' milk again! As you look around the orphanage at the hungry little faces of the children you have come to think of as your own, you sigh inwardly. As little as you want to, you know that you're going to make the long trek over to your father's farm for some fresh milk. Your own animals just can't keep up the pace. This eternal pointless feuding between Yezidi and Zarr has produced more parentless children than you can feed every day.

Telling the older children to keep an eye on the younger one you strap on your armored vest, sling your medigun over your shoulder, and throw the small barrels you use to transport milk over the back of your trusty (if irritable) donkey Murid, which you've named in honor of your trusty if irritable *pater familia*. Thinking about the stoic old man brings a chuckle to your throat. As much as he refuses to admit it, you know that he's proud of you.

As an afterthought you toss your medical bag on the sturdy little animal's back as well. You might as well give your half-sister her monthly checkup while you are there. Waving goodbye to the assembled youngsters at the Interspecies Orphanage you and Murid head off over the hill to make the three-hour trip to your father's rustic homestead. The day is pleasant and warm. Large duck-like birds swoop low overhead on their way west. A small herd of horses runs across your path, intent on whatever inscrutable migration that their kind has adopted on this alien world.

After a few hours the two of you crest a low rise and begin to make your way down toward the familiar adobe buildings which make up the home of Murid Maronesy and his wife. It is then that you notice a familiar vehicle speeding at an incredible rate down the road which leads to that little island of man nestled into the great sea of grass which is Mohammed's Plain. It's the local Emperor's armored car. In an instant your normally pleasant and comely face transforms itself into a snarl of hatred. Tying the donkey's tether to a rock, you unsling your medigun before making your way down the hill. You don't know what it is that has Hirem Saladde in a big hurry, but you know that it can't be good.

## Yezmond Maronesy

**Background:** Yezmond Maronesy is the daughter of Yezidi village elder and wiseman Murid Maronesy. After losing her beloved mother in a pointless battle with Zarr native tribesmen then having to endure her younger brother's descent into madness and would-be martyrdom, Yezmond became determined to heal the wounds which had pulled the two races apart. An extremely brilliant student, she managed to secure permission from the planetary authorities to travel to Kinzareth for medical training. After receiving her degree she returned to her home planet to establish the Interspecies Orphanage, a facility dedicated to raising the orphaned children of Yezidi and Zarr alike in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. Doctor Maronesy is viewed as a cultural menace by the Zarr and an apostate heretic by the Yezidi for her beliefs.

**Powers/Tactics:** Yezmond is a medical doctor by training. She also has some limited skills in the areas of animal husbandry and xenobiology, specifically in reference to creatures native to Sigma Caeruleus III. She is extremely adept with a Kinzareth device known as the "medigun" which shoots barbed darts containing any number of poisons, sedatives, and tranquilizers. She wears a military issue armor vest for protection when out of the plains.

**Quote:** "Infinite is the mercy of Melek Taus the Peacock King. We are all his children: Zarr and Yezidi alike."

**Personal Goals:** Protect the orphaned children while promoting Zarr and Yezidi unity

**Personality/Motivation:** Doctor Yezmond is the polar opposite of her brother in temperament. Calm, cool, collected, and without a trace of hatred for the race of people who murdered her mother, she had dedicated her life to healing rather than killing. She is determined to bring the two races of Sigma Caeruleus III together in friendship no matter what either group thinks.

That said, Yezmond has no great love for the Kinzareth planetary authorities.

**Description:** Doctor Yezmond Maronesy is a small Kurdish woman in her early 30s. Light-skinned like her mother, she is far more delicately featured than either her brother or father. While she wears the traditional Yezidi woman's headgear, Yezmond wears desert camouflaged robes over the rest of her body. She keeps her medigun slung over one shoulder.

Yezmond Maronesy



**Yezmond Maronesy**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	6		Total: 20 PD (12 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 20 ED (12 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
36	END	0		
44	STUN	14		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 104**

Movement:	Running:	7"/14"
	Leaping:	2"/4"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

**Cost Skills**

8	+4 with Medigun
3	+2 vs. Range Modifier with Medigun
3	AK: New Tapinagi District 13-
5	Animal Handler (Bovines, Equines) 12-
5	Combat Driving 13-
3	KS: Pediatrics 13-
3	KS: The Kinzareth 13-
3	KS: The Zarr 13-
4	PS: Physician 14-
5	Paramedics 14-
3	SS: Medicine 13-
0	TF: Large Motorized Ground Vehicles
1	WF: Medigun

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 46****Total Cost: 150****75+ Disadvantages**

25	DNPC: Multi Racial Orphans 8- (Incompetent; x4 DNPCs)
10	Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Common, Moderate)
20	Psychological Limitation: Refuses to Hate the Zarr (Common, Total)
20	Reputation: Crazy Doctor, 14- (Extreme)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75****EQUIPMENT****1) Kinzareth Experimental Medigun:**

Multipower, 60-point reserve (60 Active Points); all slots OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4), Limited Range (-1/4) (total cost: 24) **plus** +1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-1/4) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 26 points.

**A) Deadly Poison:** RKA 4d6 (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-3/4), Real Weapon (-1/4). Total cost: 2u.

**B) Sleeping Poison:** Energy Blast 6d6, No Normal Defense (defense is Life Support: Does Not Sleep, +1) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-3/4), Real Weapon (-1/4). Total cost: 2u.

**C) Muscle Relaxant:** Drain STR 4d6, Ranged (+1/2) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-3/4), Real Weapon (-1/4). Total cost: 2u.

**2) Armor Vest:** Armor (12 PD/12 ED) (36 Active Points); OIF (-1/2), Activation Roll 9- (Only Protects Hit Locations 11-13; -1/2). Total cost: 12 points.

**3) Little Black Bag:** Contents include syringes, thread, scissors, scalpels, a dozen nanobot deployment patches, little bottles of fluid, and pills. There are six doses of the following drugs: Quickjuice, Morphine, Grit, and Brawn Serum. Please see pages 103 and 109 of *Alien Wars* for further details on these drugs and medical supplies.

## Murid Maronesy

The blue-white sun of Sigma Caeruleus beats down upon your aging brow. Wiping the sweat from your face with the hem of your headdress, you stand up from your work to admire the small domain you have hewn out of the plains over the last decade. Your adobe house and barn have been recently patched after a long winter, giving them a sort of “spotty” look which seems very appropriate out here in the mottled grasses of Noah’s World. The quick growing hybrid olive trees you planted eight years ago have begun to develop again. You have no reason to expect anything other than an exceptional crop in the fall. Your vines have come back to life again after their long hibernation, requiring the sort of systematic attention which only hour upon hour of back-breaking toil can give them. Toil which is currently being supplied by an old man pretending once again to be a young one.

Setting down her homemade broom, your wife Sophia waves to you from the shade of your front porch. Your three-year-old daughter clings to her back like some sort of scurrying creature. She has been the best thing which has happened to you since your first wife (may the angels protect her) was slain, driving your poor son mad with hatred. You don’t like to think about Rosilyn very often, though. It is a far better thing to set one’s eyes and prayers toward the rising of the new sun than the setting of the old one. You wave back.

Suddenly in the distance you notice a cloud of dust coming from the road which leads to your homestead. Whatever it is it’s moving very fast... and no Yezidi has the wealth to buy a motorized vehicle. You immediately drop your pruning shears and walk toward the house.

“What’s wrong,” asks Sophia, looking concerned. She follows you into the main room of the house.

“Take Jezebel and lock yourself in the root cellar.” You tell her while shouldering your rifle and strapping on your sword, “It’s probably just Saladde snooping around in search of my son, but you never know with the Kinzareth.”

She nods knowingly at you before disappearing into the back room with your child. Slowly you walk out of the house, holding your trusty old KZ-47 at a nonaggressive angle. Yes, it’s definitely the Imperator’s armored police vehicle barreling toward your house like The Satan has set fire to his backside. You smile at the thought. If The Oppressor wants to talk, then he can have words. If he wants to fight... well, then he will get to meet Melek Taus sooner than his appointed hour.

## Murid Maronesy

**Background:** Murid Maronesy is a Yezidi village elder and wiseman who has known more than a little suffering in his life. After losing his beloved first wife to a stray bullet during a fight with Zarr partisans he then had to endure watching his son, the man now known as The Wind of the Plains, go slowly insane with hatred before becoming a *Tranta Shun* fanatic upon reaching adulthood. The irony is not lost upon Murid, for it was he along with other Yezidi and Zarr elders who helped to create that cult as a way of cutting down upon the devastating civilian casualties which had plagued both sides since the *Vnalla Ar* so many long years ago. Thus the tragedy which inspired one man to help save others inspired his son to further acts of violence.

Murid now lives with his new wife and young daughter in an isolated homestead on the edge of Mohammed’s Plain where he grows olives and grapes. His insolent apostate daughter, the infamous Doctor Yezmond Maronesy, runs the Interspecies Orphanage in a cluster of adobe buildings several miles away. He speaks to her as little as possible. Occasionally (and very much to his dismay) the local Imperior has been known to ruin his day by stopping by to ask for advice.

**Powers/Tactics:** Murid is extremely adept with the use of his reliable (if careworn) KZ-47 assault rifle. If attacked, he will lay down suppressive fire in three round bursts. Should he run out of ammunition he will revert to using the trusty scimitar which has served his family well for generations, but generally Murid prefers to use his firearm. He wears a Kinzareth military-issue armored vest under his robes for protection.

**Quote:** “Many are the mysteries of Melek Taus. Understand them if you would find peace in this life and a home in the next.”

**Personal Goals:** Protect wife and daughters.

**Personality/Motivation:** Though the blood of hatred still flows very strongly through his veins, Murid Maronesy has lived long enough to know that the Yezidi’s eternal fight with the Zarr isn’t getting either race anywhere. He is certain that they would be better off combining their forces against the Imperium, but like almost everyone else he is too filled with bitterness over the past to reach out in any meaningful way. All the same he helps supply the Interspecies Orphanage with food, though he condemns it (as well as his daughter) at the same time.

**Description:** Murid Maronesy is a tall Kurdish man in his mid 40s who possesses a natural air of command. He has a large aquiline nose, a long face, and a bushy mustache which sprouts from beneath his nose like a small broom. He wears the traditional flowing striped robes of a Kurdish farmer.

## THE CULT OF TRANTA SHUN

The year 2310 saw a marked upswing in tensions between the native Zarr and Yezidi human settlers on Sigma Caeruleus III. While this resulted in part from an increased competition for fertile grazing lands between the two groups on the massive planes north of the Great Southern Lake, it was primarily due to various mechanization by the Kinzareth planetary government. Unsure of her power in the face of Imperial rivals as well as a weak but almost planet-wide rebellion, recently appointed Planetary Autocrat Cynthiana Van Hartman rather cynically concluded that if both groups were occupied with fighting one another they would be less likely to fight their Kinzareth masters. It took relatively little effort to stir up trouble between settlers and natives. Van Hartman instructed her Imperiors to massacre several small Zarr villages as well as destroying a number of Yezidi homesteads. Within a month each group had begun to make increasingly vicious reprisals against the other, a situation which quickly escalated into a brief period of out-and-out war. Known as the *Urdu Val*, or

the Killing Time, this period saw thousands of innocents killed in a desperate orgy of revenge.

To stop this continuing cycle of violence religious and political leaders from both sides met on the shores of the Great Southern Lake at a location now considered neutral holy ground. Desperate to prevent the further killing of civilians but recognizing that too much blood had been spilled to find a true peace, these leaders decided to create a new religion which would help to channel and curtail the hatred of their young men. Weaving together Yezidism with several of the native Zarr faiths they created the cult of *Tranta Shun*, which roughly translates into The Ancestor's War in Yezidi. By taking the oath of *Tranta Shun* young men (and occasionally women) became a part of a special dueling society which is bound by a strict code of honor that precludes the use of modern weapons or armor, forbids the killing of Yezidi and Zarr non oath-takers, and demands that they wage a constant guerrilla war against that most hated of foes, the Kinzareth.

For the most part the establishment of the *Tranta Shun* has

## Murid Maronesy

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
13	CON	6	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
				Total: 19 PD (12 rPD)
				Total: 17 ED (12 rED)
				Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	PD	4		
5	ED	2		
4	SPD	12		
7	REC	2		
26	END	0		
42	STUN	13		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 90**

**Movement:** Running: 7"/14"  
Leaping: 2"/4"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

### Cost Perks

- 4 Reputation: Wise Yezidi Elder (Large Group) 11-, +2/+2d6
- 4 *Tribal Elder*: Local Police Powers, Member of the Lower Nobility

### Skills

- 2 +1 with Scimitar
- 4 +2 with KZ-47
- 3 +2 vs. Hit Location modifiers with KZ-47
- 5 +3 vs. Range Modifier with KZ-47
- 3 Bureaucratics 12-
- 3 Combat Driving 13-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 3 KS: Vineyard 12-
- 3 KS: Wine Making 12-
- 3 PS: Farmer 12-
- 5 Rapid Autofire
- 4 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Plains, Desert, Temperate/Subtropical Plains) 12-
- 2 TF: Camels, Equines, Large Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 3 WF: Assault Rifles/LMGs, Blades, Bows

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 60**

**Total Cost: 150**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 25 DNPC: Wife and Young Daughters 8- (Incompetent; Group DNPC: x4 DNPCs)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Very Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Zarr (Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Known Leader of Yezidi (Frequently, Major, Not Limiting in Some Cultures)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75**

## EQUIPMENT

- 1) **KZ-47 Assault Rifle:** RKA 2d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 4 clips of 32 Charges (+½) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 10 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 22 points) **plus** +2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** +1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 26 points.
- 2) **Scimitar:** HKA 1½d6 (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 11 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 9 points.
- 3) **Armor Vest:** Armor (12 PD/12 ED) (36 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 9- (Only Protects Hit Locations 11-13; -1 ½). Total cost: 12 points.



DIGITAL HERO #20

Murid Maronesy

The Wind of the Plains  
(Abdulkadar Maronesy)



DAVID SGRADER 4/27/04



DAVID SGRADER 4/27/04

had the desired effect. There hasn't been an eruption of violence between the Zarr and Yezidi on par with the Killing Time since its creation. But in the end both groups are still at war; the cult has simply reduced the violence to the level of acceptable background noise. It has also drained both cultures of several generations of capable young men. Lured away from hearth and home by the promise of glory, thousands of them each year drift off into the wilderness after taking their religious vows. There they live as eccentric wandering warrior hermits, fighting each other while also pitting themselves against the heavily armed Imperiors who also wander the planet's surface. In the end everyone on Sigma Caeruleus III is still locked in a grinding cycle of violence.

## The Wind of the Plains (Abdulkadar Maronesy)

It has been a long two weeks. Intent upon the task at hand, you haven't even taken time out to hunt or sleep in days. Having tracked your prey all the way from the Mountain of the Covenant to Mohammed's Plain, you are beginning to grow weary of the Zarr-and-mouse game of ambushing, sniping, and setting deadly traps that you and he have been playing upon one another. Not that it hasn't been entertaining, but at this point it's time either to fight or to find another *Tranta Shun* oath-taker to sport with.

Shading your eyes with your hand, you peer down at your father's farm in the valley below. With its earthy wad-and-dabble buildings, olive groves, and rows of ripening grapes it is the very picture of tranquility. It may also be the perfect spot to trap your opponent unawares! With a sinister chuckle you rise from your squatting position, take a quick glance around, and silently vanish into the softly ripening grain.

Melek Taus willing, Whisper in the Grass will never know what hit him.

## The Wind of the Plains (Abdulkadar Maronesy)

**Background:** Abdulkadar Maronesy, better known as The Wind of the Plains, is the son of Yezidi headman Murid Maronesy. Born during a time of particularly vicious feuding with both the local Zarr population as well as the Kinzareth planetary government, Abdulkadar's entire life has been shaped by strife, violence, and vengeance. At the age of three his mother was killed before his eyes in a firefight between his father and a Zarr rival, an experience from which the young man has never truly recovered from. He killed his first Zarr warrior from an ambush when was only nine. By the time he was a teenager Abdulkadar was leading bloody raids against fortified enemy *Nrrullia Hull* (or clan) positions in the mountains of the New Tapinagi district.

Upon reaching 19, the Yezidi age of adulthood, the young Kurd participated in the annual *Tranta Shun* ceremony on the neutral shores of the Great Southern Lake. The *Tranta Shun* is the only religious festival in which both Yezidi and Zarr participate. Upon the conclusion of the event Abdulkadar, along with dozens of other young male humans and Zarr, took the binding oaths of antiquity which transformed them into sacred fighters. He swore to never again touch modern weapons or clothing, to always follow the warriors' path of his ancestors, and to spend the rest of his life fighting one-on-one with enemy oath-takers (and, of course, the Imperium). The Zarr elders and Yezidi Kocheks gifted him with a new name with reflected his

reputation for deadly speed: The Wind in the Plains.

He has been killing ever since.

**Powers/Tactics:** The Wind in the Plains is a master of his chosen traditional weapons, the massive two-handed scimitar and the powerful Kurdish bone and wood composite bow. He is absolutely deadly with his sword dealing out massive amounts of damage in lightning fast maneuvers taught to him by his father. Fast and deadly with his bow, The Wind in the Plains is able to shoot twice as fast as a normal archer. In combat he will attempt to "soften up" his opponents with several phases' worth of arrows before charging in to attack hand-to-hand. He wears a traditional Middle Eastern suit of bone "lamellar" armor beneath his robes for protection.

Abdulkadar is a stealthy and patient man who will stalk his intended victim for days before attacking them from an ambush. An accomplished survivalist, he can live for months in the plains and deserts of Sigma Caeruleus III without any sorts of supplies.

**Quote:** "By the grace of Melek Taus the Peacock King all of mine enemies will join the company of holy angels in the bosom of eternity!"

**Personal Goals:** Kill Whisper In the Grass

**Personality/Motivation:** The Wind in the Plains is a man whose soul is filled with hatred. He despises the Kinzareth for tricking them into colonizing this world and impoverishing his people, and he detests the Zarr for killing his mother. Since taking the sacred oath of *Tranta Shun*, however, he has primarily restricted his activities to ambushing Imperial police officers and killing other oath-takers in ritualistic duels. He is honorable (if narrowly focused), aggressive, and completely dedicated to his rebel way of life.

**Description:** The Wind in the Plains looks like something out of a child's fairytale book... or one of their nightmares. He dresses from head to toe in the black flowing burka of a medieval arab assassin, complete with a veil. He wears his massive sword strapped to his back along with his always-strung bow, a quiver of arrows, and a narrow bedroll. Abdulkadar is a tall man with a long aquiline nose and sinister black eyes which glare malevolently out from beneath his headdress.

## DIGITAL HERO #20

### The Wind of the Plains (Abdulkadar Maronesy)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
17	STR	7	12-	Lift 265 kg; 3d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
18	CON	16	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 13 PD (5 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 13 ED (5 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
40	STUN	7		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 96**

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
Leaping: 3"/6"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

#### Cost Perks

- 4 Reputation: Mighty (and crazy) Rebel Warrior (large group) 11-, +2/+2d6

#### Talents

- 14 Deadly Blow: +2d6 with Two-Handed Scimitar
- 7 Deadly Blow: +1d6 with Great Bow
- 4 Rapid Archery

#### Skills

- 4 +2 with Great Bow
- 4 +2 with Two-Handed Scimitar
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 4 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Plains, Desert, Temperate/Subtropical Plains) 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 2 WF: Bows, Two-Handed Weapons

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 54**

**Total Cost: 150**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: Kinzareth Imperiors 8- (Mo Pow, Limited Geographical Area)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Very Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Zarr (Very Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Tranta Shun Honor Code (Common, Total)
- 15 Reputation: Crazy Rebel Warrior, 11- (Extreme)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75**

#### EQUIPMENT

##### 1) Great Bow with Brass Quilled Arrows:

RKA 2d6, 24 Charges (+0) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 17 (-¾), Real Weapon (-¼), Range Based On Strength (-¼) (total cost: 9 points) **plus** +1 vs. Range Modifier with Great Bow (total cost: 2 points) **plus** Brass Quilled Arrows: +2 vs. Range Modifier with Great Bow (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 14 points.

##### 2) Two-Handed Scimitar:

HKA 2d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 17 (-¾), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 10 points) **plus** +1 OCV (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 12 points.

3) Lamellar Armor: Armor (5 PD/5 ED); OIF (-½). Total cost: 10 points.

## The Zarr

### THE ZARR

#### Zarr Racial Package Deal

Ability	Cost
+3 STR	3
+2 DEX	6
+1 CON	2
+1 PD	1
+1 ED	1
+2 PER with Smell/Taste Group and Normal Sight	6
Clinging; Physical Manifestation (-1/4)	8
Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Only in Tall Grass of Sigma Caeruleus III (- 1 1/2)	12
HKA 1 Pip (1/2d6 w/STR)	5
Running +2" (8" total)	1
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
Distinctive Features: Zarr (Not Concealable, Not Distinctive in Some Cultures)	-10
Psychological Limitation: Protective of Young (Uncommon, Total)	-15
Psychological Limitation: Territorial (Common, Moderate)	-10
<b>Total Cost of Package</b>	<b>10</b>

### The Zarr (Zarr Players Only)

The Zarr are a race of feline humanoids native to the planet of Sigma Caeruleus III. Fast and aggressive, they evolved from a species of cheetah-like predators that became sentient some 200,000 years ago. By the time the Kinzareth Imperium discovered them in 2231 they had become sophisticated enough to achieve interplanetary spaceflight, nuclear power, and a complex worldwide communications network. Their other accomplishments included a functioning planetary government of twenty loosely confederated city-states, a series of biannual international sporting events, and six separate sophisticated religious faiths. One year and several dozen low-yield nuclear explosions later, the Imperium had reduced this once-promising and proud race to the status of slaves, refugees, and rebels.

### BIOLOGY AND CULTURE

The Zarr are a feline species who evolved from a nomadic "big cat" ancestor that preyed upon the many herd animals native to Sigma Caeruleus III. Because of this they have many advantageous characteristics which are unusual for a humanoid species. These include kneecaps which bend backwards for increased speed, sensitive whiskers which provide an improved sense of smell, and retractable claws for climbing.

They also have sharp fangs, keen eyesight, and a spotted coat which blends in almost perfectly with the natural landscape of the planet.

The Zarr are an aggressively territorial species with an established warrior tradition that stretches millennia into their past. They are quick to anger, slow to forgive, and have a predisposition for feuding and holding grudges. That said, the Zarr are generally rather amusing companions when one is on their good side, with a quirky sense of humor that appeals to most human beings. It's just that they are deadly serious when matters of honor, war, and revenge. The sexes are largely equal in size and strength, with the males tending toward military or business pursuits and the females tending toward the arts and sciences (although there many exceptions). Before the coming of the Imperium, an event they refer to as *Vnalla Ar* or The Catastrophe, the Zarr expressed their creative sides through an art form which involved holographic images projected onto perfume emitting wooden sculptures, but this is no longer practiced.

The traditional Zarr family structure is a patriarchal polygamous unit which consists of an adult male, somewhere between six and ten adult females, several dozen children, and perhaps an elderly relative or two. Known as a *Yrandla Un*, these units tend to specialize in particular crafts or professions which are passed from parent to child each generation along with various sorts of family specific traditions and stories. These extended families are very close as Zarr tend to be extremely protective of their children. A *Nrrulia Hull* is a tribal and political unit consisting of somewhere between fifty and two thousand *Yrandla Uns* which occupies a very specific established geographical area of Sigma Caeruleus III. Each *Nrrulia Hull* strives to be as economically and socially independent as possible, actively recruiting as many *Yrandla Uns* with different skill sets as is possible. Over time those large areas which supported several hundred to a thousand *Nrrulia Hulls* required the construction of centralized urban centers to enable trade, arranged marriages, and the exchange of ideas. These urban areas slowly grew into large cities which eventually gave rise to the "city-states" that were the Zarr's largest genuine political grouping by the time of the Imperium's arrival (their planetary government was both weak as well as new). It was the *Nrrulia Hull* tribal structure, with its emphasis on economic and social independence, that allowed the Zarr to maintain some semblance of their former society after the *Vnalla Ar*. Most free Zarr now live in fortified valleys located high in Sigma Caeruleus III's mountain ranges or have reverted to the nomadic ways of their ancestors, hunting large herd animals across the planet's seemingly endless open plains.

## Penthar Nul

For the last two weeks you have followed your insane oath-bound *Tranta Shun* cousin up and down mountainsides with nothing to show for it but badly blistered paws. You have no idea why the elders of your *Nrrulia Hull* insisted that you keep an eye on your idiot relative, anyhow. Oath takers both human and Zarr kill each other off with predictable regularity every year. It doesn't generally require an audience to do it either.

You could have bumped that sword-wielding, pajama-wearing monkey off at any time with a single bullet without taking the risk that he might get lucky with an arrow or drop a boulder on your head. But instead you and your medieval in-law have spent valuable time laying ambushes for him, taken shots at him with (of all crazy things) spears, and setting pit traps for him with absolutely nothing to show for it. The hairless little warrior actually seems to be getting stronger the more you run him to ground.

Your keen eyes quickly spy a small Yezidi farm nestled between a couple of hillocks down below. It is teeming with alien plant and animal life, the look and smell of which offends your delicate sense of smell. Still, you haven't let the little bugger rest in days so that must be where he's headed. Your cousin motions to you with a quick irritated gesture, then vanishes into the tall grass. With a sigh you shoulder your rifle and follow him into the valley below.

The Elders willing Whisper in the Grass will kill the poor bastard so you can go home and get some real sleep!

## Penthar Nul

**Background:** Penthar Nul is an adult male Zarr who was born into a *Yrandla Un* whose specialties are hunting and soldiering. Raised by a loving father and mothers, he took over responsibility for the family's welfare after his father died of a mysterious disease during a particularly harsh winter. He also serves as a member of his *Nrrulia Hull's* defense force.

**Powers/Tactics:** Penthar is extremely adept with the use of his trusty if careworn KZ-47 assault rifle. If attacked he will lay down suppressive fire in three round bursts. Should he run out of ammunition he will revert to using his tulwar, but generally Penthar prefers to use his firearm. He wears a salvaged Kinzareth military issue armored vest for protection.

**Quote:** "Look, your problem is that you don't sleep enough. All this activity bad for your constitution."

**Personal Goals:** Stay alive while keeping Whisper in the Grass from getting himself killed.

**Personality/Motivation:** Although Penthar Nul was born during a time of particularly vicious feuding with both the human settler population as well as their oppressive planetary government, he hasn't allowed it to overshadow his life. He is far more interested in hunting, sleeping, playing with his children, and adding new mates to his *Yrandla Un* than pursuing eternal vengeance against the human beings which now infest his world. Not that he particularly likes them, but there are just better things to do in life.

In short, Penthar is surprisingly psychologically healthy when compared to his cousin Ragnar Nul.

**Description:** Tall and feline like all Zarr, Penthar Nul wears a tattered vest of Kinzareth military armor over his torso for protection. He wears his tulwar strapped to his upper left leg.

## THE ZARR LANGUAGE

The Zarr language contains some interesting semantic features which are completely unique, especially when they are compared to other United Earth languages. The entire basis of Zarr (a name given to the planet's dominant feline species by the original Kinzareth exploration team) is the modified noun. For example, the name of the indigenous ostrich-like bird known as the *Avriel Gau* literally translates into "long-legged edible bird" as the word *Gau* (or tall) modifies the word *Avriel* (or bird) to produce the additional concept of edibility. To make matters more confusing there are no verbs of any sort in spoken Zarr. Instead nouns which have been modified by adjectives and adverbs are pronounced in roughly a hundred different ways which, when you combine them with other modified nouns, infer the existence of verbs. In the written version of the language these different forms of modifying pronunciation are represented by numbers. For example, the sentence "We had better catch that long legged edible bird if we want to eat tonight" translates into 52

*Avriel Gau* 16  
*Travsnu Irv.* The modified group imperative inflection (represented by the number 52) when combined with “long-legged edible bird” additionally produces the verb “to hunt.” When this is combined with the group stipulation imperative inflection (number 16) as it pertains to the modified noun “evening feast” it produces the verb “to want” which then completes the sentence.

Needless to say, very few human beings have ever become completely fluent in Zarr.

**Penthar Nul**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll: 11-/13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
9	PD	6		Total: 21 PD (12 rPD)
9	ED	6		Total: 21 ED (12 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
31	END	1		
40	STUN	9		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 84**

**Movement:** Running: 8”/16”  
 Leaping: 3½”/7”  
 Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
8	<i>Zarr Claws:</i> Clinging; Physical Manifestation (-¼)	1
12	<i>Zarr Coat:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only in Tall Grasses of Sigma Caeruleus III (-1½)	0
5	<i>Zarr Fangs:</i> HKA 1 Pip (½d6 w/STR)	1
8	<i>Zarr Senses:</i> +2 PER with Smell/Taste Group and Sight Group	0
4	<i>Zarr Speed:</i> Running +2” (8” total)	1

**Skills**

- 4 +2 with Tulwar
- 6 +3 with KZ-47
- 2 +1 vs. Hit Location modifiers with KZ-47
- 3 +2 vs. Range Modifier with KZ-47
- 5 Rapid Autofire
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 5 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Forests, Desert, Mountain) 11-
- 2 WF: Assault Rifles/LMGs, Blades

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 67**

**Total Cost: 150**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Distinctive Features: Zarr (Not Concealable, Not Distinctive in Some Cultures)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Young (Uncommon, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Territorial (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Yezidi (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Zarr (Frequently, Major, Not Limiting in Some Cultures)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 150**

**EQUIPMENT**

- 1) KZ-47 Assault Rifle:** RKA 2d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Autofire (3 shots; +¼), 4 clips of 32 Charges (+½) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 10 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 22 points) **plus** +2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** +1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 1 point). Total Cost: 26 points.
- 2) Tulwar:** HKA 1½d6 (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 11 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 9 points.
- 3) Armor Vest:** Armor (12 PD/12 ED) (36 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 9- (Only Protects Hit Locations 11-13; -1 ½). Total cost: 12 points.

Ragnar Nul

Penthar Nul



## Ragnar Nul

For the last two weeks you have tracked that skulking human oath-taker from mountain to plain with little to show for it. With your infernally cheerful cousin seemingly always at your side you've laid ambushes for him, taken shots at him with your spears, and set pit traps for him: but nothing has worked. The pajama wearing monkey still breathes the sweet air of *Xrathnu Nan* as you peer down into the fertile valley below. But not for long.

Your keen eyes quickly spy a small Yezidi farm nestled between a couple of hillocks down below. It is teeming with alien plant and animal life, the look and smell of which offends your delicate sense of smell. Still, you haven't let your prey rest in days so that must be where he is heading. Motioning to your cousin with a quick irritated gesture, you begin to slink invisibly through the tall grass toward the homestead below.

The Elders willing Wind of the Plains will never know what hit him.

## Ragnar Nul

**Background:** Ragnar Nul, better known as The Whisper in the Grass, was born during a time of particularly vicious three way feuding between the Zarr, the human settler population, and the oppressive Kinzareth planetary government. Exposed to conflict in his tender years, Ragnar's entire life has been shaped by violence, hardship, and the thirst for revenge. At the age of seven his older brother was slain before his eyes during a punitive raid by the Yezidi interlopers, an experience from which he has never truly recovered. He killed his first human from an ambush when he was only eleven. By the time he had become an adolescent Ragnar was leading bloody raids against fortified enemy settlements on the fertile plains of what the humans call the New Tapinagi district.

Upon reaching 17, the Zarr age of adulthood, Ragnar Nul participated in the annual *Tranta Shun* ceremony of the neutral shores of the Great Southern Lake. The *Tranta Shun* is the only religious festival in which both Yezidi and Zarr participate. Upon the conclusion of the event Ragnar, along with dozens of other young male humans and Zarr, took the binding oaths of antiquity which transformed them into sacred fighters. He swore to never again touch modern weapons or clothing, to always follow the warrior's path of his ancestors, and to spend the rest of his life fighting one-on-one with enemy oath-takers (and, of course, the Imperium). The Zarr elders and Yezidi Kockeks gifted him with a new name to reflect his reputation for stealth: The Whisper in the Grass.

He has been killing ever since.

**Powers/ Tactics:** The Whisper in the Grass is a master of his chosen traditional weapons, the heavy scimitar-like tulwar and the long wood and iron Zarr throwing spear. An accurate and deadly marksman with this primitive throwing weapon, Ragnar will attempt to "soften up" his opponents with several phases of rapidly cast spears (he can throw two a phase) before charging in to attack hand-to-hand with his tulwar. He wears a traditional Zarr suit of heavy leather armor. Known as *Skragg Qua*, it is made from the hide of a rhinoceros-like animal which has been boiled, shaped into hard sections, and then strapped onto various portions of the body.

Ragnar Nul is a stealthy and patient male who will stalk his intended victim for days before attacking him from an ambush. An accomplished survivalist, he can live for months in the plains and deserts of Sigma Caeruleus III without any sort of supplies.

**Quote:** "I vow this upon the grave of every noble Zarr who has been slain by the human invaders: all men who come to my hand will perish."

**Personal Goals:** Kill Wind of the Plains.

**Personality/Motivation:** The Whisper in the Grass' ears ring with the song of revenge. He despises the Kinzareth for enslaving his people and he detests the Yezidi for killing his brother. Since taking the sacred oath of *Tranta Shun*, however, he has primarily restricted his activities to ambushing Imperial police officers and killing other oath-takers in ritualistic duels. He is honorable (if narrowly focused), aggressive, and completely dedicated to his traditional way of life.

**Description:** Tall and feline like all Zarr, Whisper in the Grass wears a suit of *Skragg Qua* armor which has been specifically colored to match his naturally camouflaged coat. His spears are likewise carried in a special identically adorned leather container which is strapped to his back by a harness. He wears his tulwar strapped to his upper left leg.



## DIGITAL HERO #20

### Ragnar Nul

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-/13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
12	COM	1	11-	
9	PD	6		Total: 13 PD (4 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 12 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
33	END	2		
46	STUN	13		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 90**

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
Leaping: 3½"/7"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
8	<i>Zarr Claws:</i> Clinging; Physical Manifestation (-¼)	1
12	<i>Zarr Coat:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only in Tall Grasses of Sigma Caeruleus III (-1½)	0
5	<i>Zarr Fangs:</i> HKA 1 Pip (½d6 w/STR)	1
8	<i>Zarr Senses:</i> +2 PER with Smell/Taste Group and Sight Group	0
4	<i>Zarr Speed:</i> Running +2" (8" total)	1

#### Talents

- 4 Rapid Spear Throwing
- 7 Deadly Blow: +1d6 (with Spears)
- 7 Deadly Blow: +1d6 (with Tulwar)

#### Skills

- 2 +1 with Tulwar
- 4 +2 with Zarr Spears
- 3 +2 vs. Hit Location modifiers with Spears
- 3 +2 vs. Range Modifier with Spears
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 5 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Forests, Desert, Mountain) 11-
- 2 WF: Blades, Polearms and Spears
- 3 Tracking 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 81**

**Total Cost: 170**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Zarr (Not Concealable, Not Distinctive In Some Cultures)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Protective of Young (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Kinzareth (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred of Yezidi (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Zarr (Frequently, Major, Not Limiting In Some Cultures)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Tranta Shun Honor Code (Common, Total)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 170**

#### EQUIPMENT

**1) Zarr Spears:** HKA 1½d6, Ranged (+½) (37 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 10 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 13 Charges (-¼). Total cost: 12 points.

**2) Tulwar:** HKA 1½d6 (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum 11 (-½), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 9 points.

**3) Heavy Hide Armor:** Armor (4 PD/4 ED) (12 Active Points); OIF (-½). Total cost: 8 points.

## The Xenovores

The Xenovores are an aggressive, scientifically advanced species from beyond the boundaries of charted human space. Vaguely reptilian, they rely on a biologically-based technology completely different from the mechanical one used by humans and all other known alien species. First encountered in 2303 they are widely believed to be a civilization of well-organized pirates and slavers who kidnap other species for the purpose of providing labor on their homeworlds. Though little is definitely known about the species, continuing rumors about Xenovore consumption of human flesh persist amongst colonial authorities, though these are not taken seriously by scientific experts. For more information on the biology, social structure, and motivations of this race please consult *Alien Wars*.

Provide the above information to Hirem's player; the other characters, kept in the dark about threats to Kinzareth as a part of the Imperium's propaganda, know little or nothing about the Xenovore threat.

## Xenovore Tactics

Sigma Caeruleus III is one of the very first worlds attacked by the Xenovores after the destruction of the United Earth's Defense Fleet in 2331. Previous to this conflict these alien aggressors had launched only a single expeditionary force into the Republic of Beldana V. There they encountered little in the way of opposition from the peaceful miners, farmers, and scientists who had settled such picturesque worlds as Chabrabdrah's Gift and Paco's Retreat. The aliens only encountered serious opposition upon reaching the Senate World of Beldana V where, with a great deal of effort, human forces managed to blunt their attack. Based on this information the Xenovores have come to the logical (yet not totally correct) conclusion that humanity is soft, disorganized, and ripe for conquest. They have no reason to suspect that the small arid planet they have selected as one of their first targets is any different.

They could not have been more wrong.



## DIGITAL HERO #20

For most civilized people in the 24<sup>th</sup> Century Noah's World is an unthinkable, almost unbelievable nightmare. It is 21<sup>st</sup> Century Somalia spread out over an entire planet. While most of United Earth's colony worlds lack an experienced military or an armed civilian population, almost every adult of any race on Noah's World is an assault weapon wielding veteran of fratricidal feuding... and its Kinzareth Imperiors are even more heavily armed than that. Every city, town, inhabited mountain valley, and homestead is built with defense in mind. Armored cars with roof-mounted 25mm Autocannons are the world's primary means of transportation. Minefields, unexploded cluster bombs, pit traps, weapons caches, hidden bunkers, and barbed wire are a constant feature of almost every habitable portion of the planet. Children learn to field strip rifles before they know how to read or write. Ambushing is more of a popular sport than a military maneuver.

Of all the inhabited worlds in the Antispinward portion of human space Sigma Caeruleus III is probably the single worst place to invade. Unaware of the situation on the ground and fairly indifferent to their opponent's psychology, the Xenovores are executing an invasion plan which would *seem* to be foolproof.

First they destroy whatever space-based defenses the planet has. This happens shortly before the actual game play of *The Enemy of My Enemy* begins and is quite effective, although of the PCs only Hirem Saladde knows it. Then they plan on hitting several major population and communication centers with low-yield nuclear warheads, presumably neutralizing all organized planetary resistance. This has some limited success in the sense that it disrupts communications, but proves ineffective at killing the ever-paranoid Kinzareth who either bunker down in lead-lined subterranean vaults or spread out across the planet's face in their huge APCs. Then the Xenovores land 98 separate drop ships at key locations on the planet's surface where their Dreadnaught's sensors have detected large concentrations of large warm-blooded life forms. After emerging from their ships the Xenovore soldiers have orders to capture the native human population (the Zarr have thus far gone unnoticed), herd them back aboard their vessels under guard, and then transfer them to the Dreadnaught for the long trip to Throneworld Alpha. This, however, proves bafflingly ineffective as the most commonly encountered large animals on *Xrathnu Nan* are not humans or Zarr but large grazing mammals. In several cases the Xenovore invaders emerge from their dropships only to be trampled into unconsciousness by stampedes of frightened alien buffalo. In those instances where the initial wave of dropships land successfully near Yezidi

freeholds, Kinzareth police stations, and Zarr tribal gatherings the Xenovores found neither unarmed miners nor frightened agricultural scientists but something very, very different.

What happens after that, well, that's up to the PCs to determine for themselves.

### DROPSHIP LANDING RULES

Since they can only travel straight up and down, the landing trajectories of Xenovore dropships are extremely inexact. To determine the exact location where a dropship will land, first select the hex that the dropship captain would ideally like to land in – this is the target hex. Then roll 1d6 to determine which side of the target hex the dropship is likely to land on with the topmost hex (in other words, the hex at or nearest 12 o'clock) representing a result of 1 and counting clockwise around the hex. Roll a second 1d6 to determine out far out from the ideal hex the ship lands. A one on the second die roll indicates that the dropship has landed on the intended hex. For other rolls count outwards in the direction indicated by the first roll with the target hex counting as one.

The Game Master should remember that Xenovore dropship captains generally take their crude crafts down as quick and hard as possible (it's their only defense). A dropship plunges at a noncombat speed of 160" per Turn for most of its journey downwards, giving it an effective DCV of 6. The captain begins firing his breaking jets at a about 280" above the planet's surface so that the craft is only going 10" by its final landing phase. This breaking process takes about three turns during which the craft's DCV gets progressively worse as the dropship slows down: 6 on the first deceleration Turn, 5 on the second, then finally 3 on Segment 6 of the third and final Turn. By Segment 12 of the third Turn the dropship is no longer traveling at noncombat speed so its DCV actually goes up to 4. For most *Alien Wars* PCs this is when the craft comes into range at some 30" or less above their heads. It lands on Segment 6 of the following Turn.

### Xenovore Combat Units on Sigma Caeruleus III

Three separate varieties of combat units have been selected for deployment by Xenovore Polemarch Url! Hre'ung (Spreader of Woe) based on information gathered during the Beldana Offensive. These are common Xenovore soldiers, warhounds, and battlebirds. The job of the war beasts is to destroy whatever armed resistance remains after the destruction of the planet's urban centers while the soldiers have been instructed to gather up the remaining human survivors. For additional information on Xenovore war beasts please consult pages 212 and 213 of *The HERO System Bestiary*.

**"First Wave" Xenovore Soldier**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 HTH [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	10	12-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
				Total: 7 PD (4 rPD)
				Total: 5 ED (2 rED)
				Phases: 6, 12
3	PD	0		
3	ED	0		
2	SPD	0		
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
28	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristic Cost: 28**

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
 Leaping: 3"/6"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
9	<i>Xenovore Skin:</i> Armor (4 PD/2 ED)	0
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0
10	<i>Xenovore Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)	1
15	<i>Xenovore Sting:</i> HKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½); No STR Bonus (-½)	2
1	<i>Xenovore Digestion:</i> Life Support (Can Digest Any Type of Protein)	0
4	<i>Xenovore Swiftness:</i> Running +2" (8" Total)	1

**Skills**

- 2 +1 with Gauss Assault Rifle
- 1 AK: Sigma Caeruleus III 8-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 47**

**Total Cost: 75**

**50+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Distinctive Features: Xenovore (Not Concealable, Major Reaction, Not Distinctive In Some Cultures)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Contempt for Other Sentient Species (Uncommon, Strong)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 25**

**Description:** For the initial assault upon human occupied space the Xenovore Breeders saw little reason to extensively modify their common Xenovore soldiers. The 1900 soldiers initially dropped onto Sigma Caeruleus III are slightly faster and tougher than the Xenovore average, largely due to the fact that the Polemarch in charge of the invasion wanted the civilian population rounded up for transportation in record time. The Xenovores are armed with the standard "Kin'Kala" Gauss Assault Rifle detailed on page 163 of *Alien Wars*.

**GM Notes:** Although they are in most ways superior to the average untrained human being, the first wave Xenovore soldiers dropped onto *Xrathnu Nan* are, one-on-one, no match for the fiendishly tough locals they initially encounter. Their only tactical advantage lies in numbers. Unfortunately for the Xenovores their ingrained superiority complex and general rage at being thwarted by their food prevents them from launching coordinated attacks against their opponents. They simply select a target and charge with their guns blazing. Also, the Xenovores are vulnerable when they emerge from their dropships. Pushing through the vessel's outer membrane and dropping to the ground takes an entire Phase, during which they have a 0 DCV. The dropships themselves are fairly vulnerable; smart PCs target them with their weapons when they come into range.

## The Scenario

At its heart *The Enemy of My Enemy* is an extremely linear scenario which transpires in three distinct acts. The PCs all either know, or know of, one another. They all meet up at Murid's Freehold by purpose or accident a short time before Uri! Hre'ung launches his invasion of their planet's surface. By the time the Xenovores arrive the PCs are all bickering (or possibly fighting) with each other. They must then decide whether or not they have the courage to set aside their long-standing differences (and psychological limitations) in the face of a much greater threat. This act of moral courage, or perhaps lack thereof, is the very soul of the game. As Benjamin Franklin one wisely stated "If we do not all hang together we will surely hang separately." The GM should freely encourage the players to agonize over this ethical quandary to whatever extent they are comfortable with as roleplaying gamers because *that*, and not the subsequent action sequences, are the main point of *The Enemy of My Enemy*.

Assuming the PCs manage to set aside their differences they are faced with a relatively straightforward set of objectives dictated by a combination of common sense and personal goals. The first is survival. Xenovore soldiers don't take kindly to their food fighting back and definitely try to kill anyone that resists them. Secondly the characters need to protect their DNPCs by evacuating them. While Murid's Freehold and Yezmond's Orphanage have been constructed to withstand Zarr raids they are not sturdy enough to stand up to a full invasion. After the PCs defeat the initial wave of Xenovores Murid's player should insist that his wife and daughter be evacuated by Hirem in his APC. Yezmond, Ragnar, and Penthar player's should likewise insist that the Zarr and human children be evacuated from the orphanage several miles north of their current location. If for some reason none of this occurs to the PCs Murid's wife Sophia can suggest it to them.

A single road leads from the Freehold to the Orphanage. It is the fastest as well as the most obvious way of getting from one location to the other. With dropships falling from the sky like the mutated tears of an alien god, time is of essence. While it is possible to drive to the Orphanage without using the road the APC's movement are halved by doing so, making the entire journey pointless. The PCs have to make a wild dash down that road, encountering two dropships which have already landed on or by it as a third begins to slow on its landing approach. They have already disgorged a total of ten Xenovore soldiers. The PCs must fight their way past these obstacles before they can reach the Orphanage.

When the assorted humans and Zarr finally arrive at their destination they find that a single dropship has landed. Ten Xenovore soldiers have already emerged, rounded up the children, and are herding them in the direction of their ship. The PCs must defeat the Xenovores, get the orphans inside the APC, and take off before any more enemy soldiers show up. The PCs must then ask themselves the frightening yet all important question, "What do we do now?"

### Short Zarr Dictionary

- Avriel Gau* A species of long legged flightless fowl which is commonly hunted by the Zarr.
- Nrrulia Hull* A tribal and political unit consisting of somewhere between fifty and two thousand *Yrandla Uns* which occupies a very specific established geographical area.
- Skragg Qua* Hide armor made from the skin of a native rhinoceros-like animal.
- Tranta Shun* A warrior's cult born of the blending of Yezidism with several native Zarr religions.
- Travsnu Irv* The Evening Meal or "dinner."
- Xrathnu Nan* Sigma Caeruleus III or Noah's World.
- Vnalla Ar* The Catastrophe. A term referring to the Kinzareth invasion of Sigma Caeruleus III.
- Yrandla Un* The traditional Zarr family structure and basic economic unit. The *Yrandla Un* is a patriarchal polygamy which consists of an adult male, somewhere between six and ten adult females, several dozen children, and any elderly relatives who are otherwise unattached.

## Act One: Murid Maronesy's Freehold

The homestead of Murid, Sophia, and Jezebel Maronesy is located 120 miles north of the city of New Tapinagi in the vast swath of grassland known as Mohammed's Plain. An L-shaped cluster of squat adobe rooms surrounded by 40 acres of olive trees and wine grapes, it has been cut directly out of the mottled four foot tall grasses which dominate most of the flat temperate portions of the planet. A single hard-packed dirt road links it and the neighboring Interspecies Orphanage to the provincial capital. The freehold's water is supplied by a deep well powered by a crude but functional windmill which is visible from some distance away.

The PCs are introduced into play in increments during this portion of the scenario. Their actions and behavior will generally fall within the parameters presented below (although players are nothing if not surprising).

The first to encounter one another are Murid and Hirem, who has very likely brought his APC to a halt in the open area next to Murid's home. Give those two a few moments to interact with each other before any of the other PCs arrive. Presumably Hirem attempts to convince Murid that the planet is under attack, possibly by playing a recording of Van Hartman's final speech from the APC's memory.

After roughly five minutes of game time Yezmond should walk out of the olive groves to the south of Hirem's APC. Assuming she doesn't open fire on Hirem Saladde with her medigun the first chance she gets, give the three of them another five minutes of game time to interact with one another before Abdulkadar quietly emerges from the grasses on the north side of the freehold. In all likelihood he slips into the vineyard using its tall wooden racks as cover as he (presumably) prepares to ambush Ragnar.

Several moments later Penthar and Ragnar arrive at the edge of the sea of grass which is Mohammed's Plain at exactly the spot where Abdulkadar previously emerged. Have Murid, Hirem, and Yezmond make PER Rolls versus these characters' Stealth to notice this activity.

The PCs now have another five minutes of game time to interact before several very serious things transpire. It is very likely that Abdulkadar Maronesy and Ragnar Nul attempt to attack each other, although a timely intercession by Murid Maronesy might prevent this. If the three humans attempt to work out some sort of agreement with their native counterparts the Zarr PCs are more likely to listen to Abdulkadar, Murid, or Yezmond than to Hirem Saladde.

At the end of this period there is a tremendous and sudden explosion. The ground shakes, various birds take off from the fields in

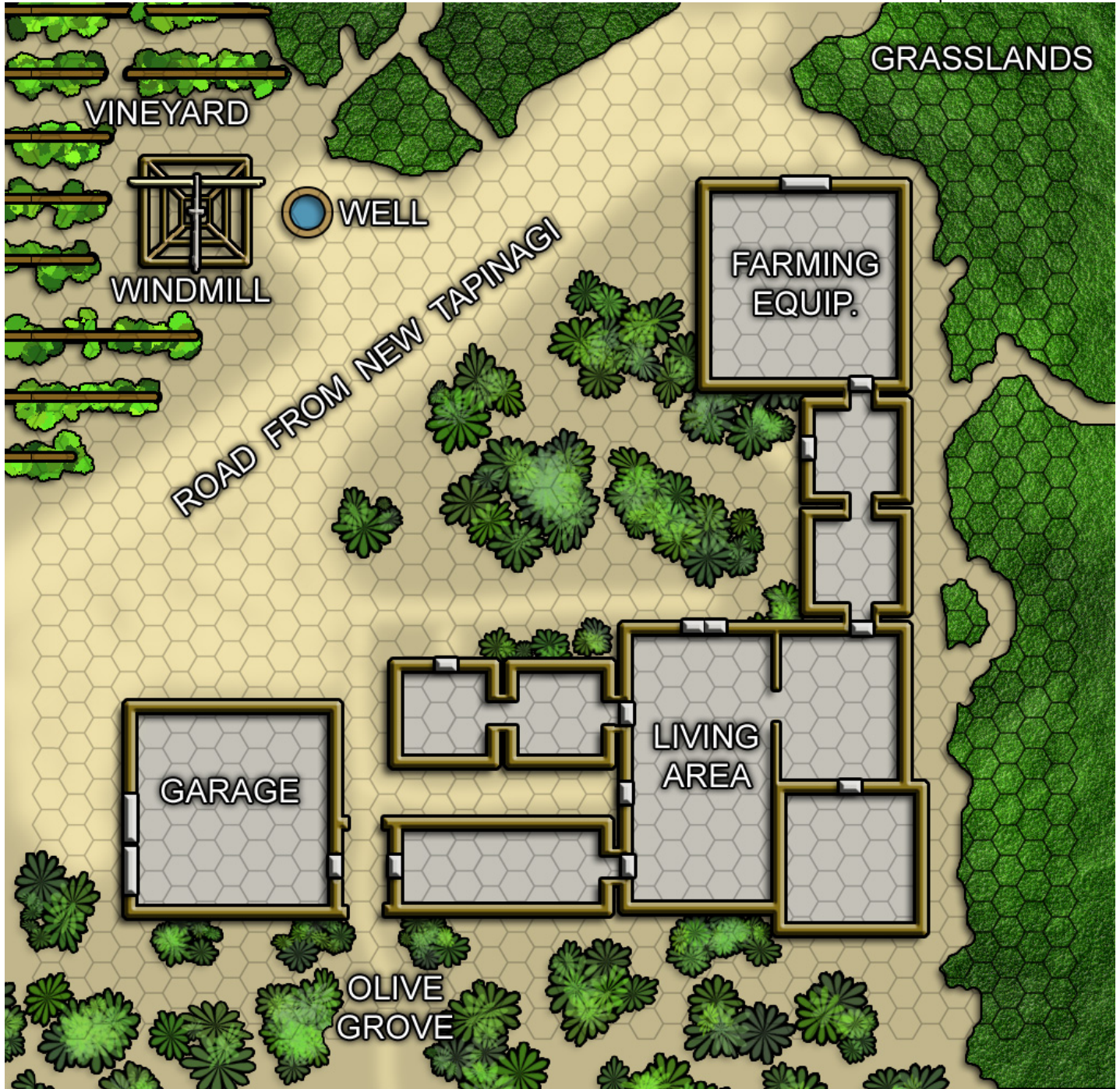
terror, and a mushroom cloud looms over the horizon from the direction of New Tapinagi. Several moments later there are a series of sonic booms as Xenovore dropships begin to hit the atmosphere and descend toward the planet's surface. Unbeknownst to the PCs, however, the Xenovore Polemarch Ur! Hre'ung dispatched one fifth of his planetary invasion army in advance to act as an expeditionary force. Landing quietly in out of the way places such as Mohammed's Plain, these dropships carried a cargo of battlebirds and warhounds which have already been released in squads of five with instructions to fan out across the planet's surface in search of humanoid prey.

One of these squads stumbles across Murid's freehold right as the main force of Xenovore dropships begins to tumble from the sky. On Segment 12 two battlebirds fly in from the south side of the homestead and immediately dive to the attack, targeting Murid and Hirem respectively. The three warhounds emerge from the tall grass on northwestern portion of the property and charge Ragnar Nul, Penthar Nul, and Abdulkadar. At the end of Segment 12 there is a tremendous (but entirely Zero Phase) roar of jet engines as a dropship begins its descent directly into the homestead's olive fields. It will be some 30' off of the ground by Segment 6 of the next Turn finally landing on Segment 12. It contains the standard contingent of 20 first wave Xenovore soldiers who will push their way through its organic surface on Segment 6 of the Turn after that in groups of five. This is a Full Phase action during which they can do nothing else.

Assuming that the PCs triumph they should be given a few moments to consider their next course of action. Dropships are still hurtling out off the sky all around them; staying where they are is obviously a bad idea. Murid, who will want to protect his wife and both of his daughters, very likely asks Hirem to evacuate them to a safer location in his APC. Yezmond should be fairly desperate to rescue the children in her orphanage. The two Zarr should be fairly emphatic about rescuing the young of their species, although Penthar may feel that warning their settlement is more important. Abdulkadar probably wants to keep an eye on Ragnar... who will also want to keep an eye on him. Hirem is very likely game for anything that involves uniting the races together to fight the Xenovores. After all, the more forces the Xenovores must dedicate to holding down Sigma Caeruleus III the fewer they can deploy against the rest of the Imperium.

Odds are very good that the PCs choose to make a break toward the Orphanage. Even if they don't, throw the next act at them anyhow.

Act One: Murid Maronesy's Freehold



## Act Two: Dirt Road of Death

A nine-mile-long stretch of gravel and dirt surrounded on all sides by tall, mottled grass separates the Maronesy homestead from the Interspecies Orphanage. As the APC's speed is halved when traveling over grass it represents the most direct route between the two places. If the PCs chose another route (something Yezmond's player should strenuously object to), they find that the Orphanage has been burned to the ground and the children abducted. Likewise, the APC must survive the trip moving at near top speed or they encounter the same results.

As the PCs come over a low hill they suddenly find that two Xenovore dropships have landed directly on the road in front of them. Each has disgorged a cargo of five soldiers who are standing around their respective landing craft in a circle. An additional dropship is slowly descending; it will be some 30' above the ground on Segment 6 of the following Turn.

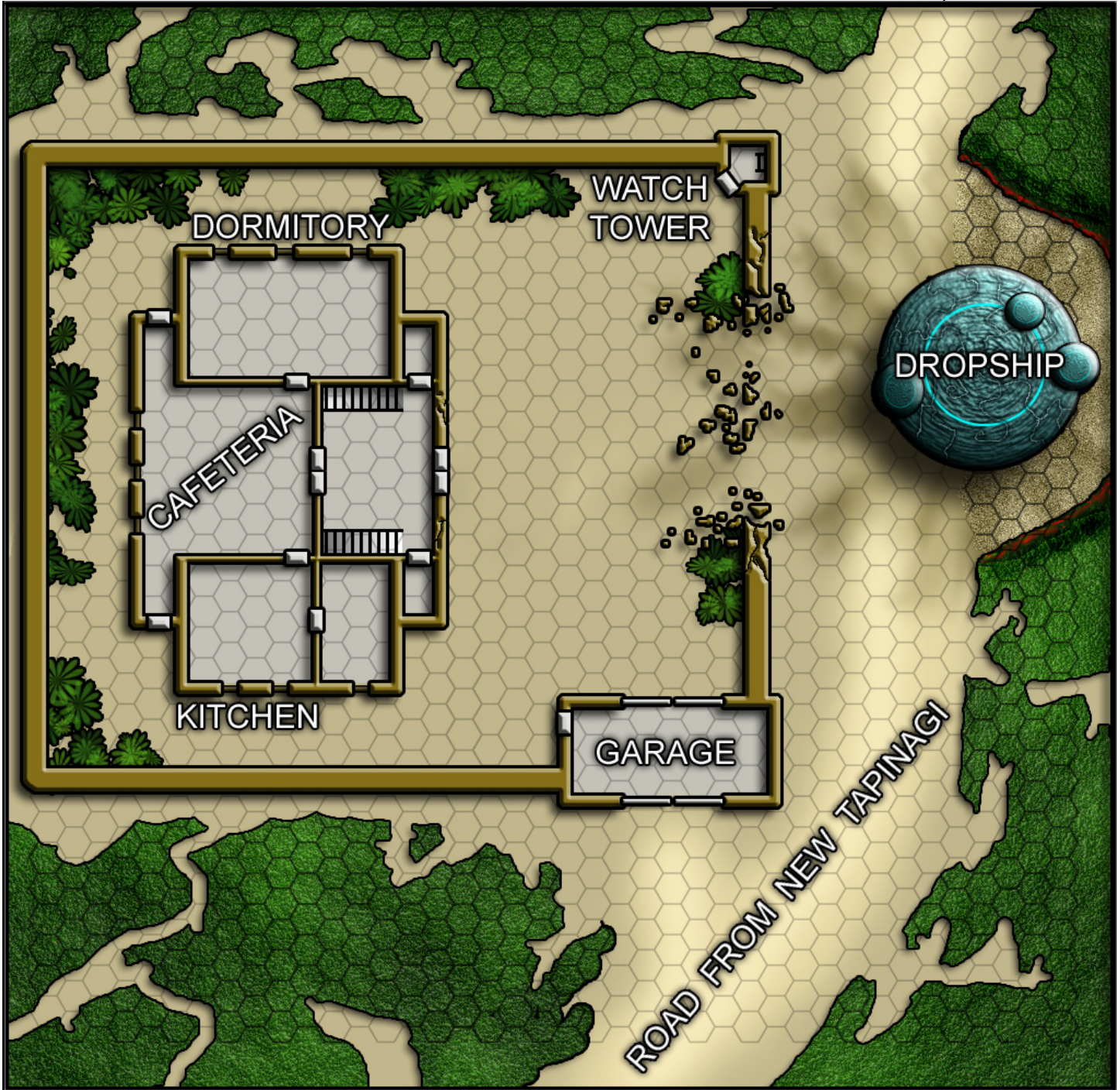
The players are tactically holding all the cards as the action begins on the first Segment 12. They can easily shoot (or throw or slash as the case may be) at their alien opponents from the comparative safety of the APC through the numerous sliding metal firing ports along its body – while at the same time enjoying the protection of its armor and velocity! The M12's 25mm Autocannon is an awesome weapon which is capable of chewing through carnivorous alien and cadaverous ships alike with respectable rapidity. The PCs should be able to sweep the road clean using it... or they can also simply run over the Xenovores with their APC. Few living things can survive being hit by a school bus covered in iron plates moving forty miles per hour. If they allow themselves to be slowed or stopped, however, they are likely swarmed under or shot to pieces by their Xenovore opponents.

Speed equals survival out on the open plain.





Act Three: The Interspecies Orphanage



### Act Three: The Interspecies Orphanage

After battling their way through the dropships and alien soldiers, the PCs see an ominous black cloud in the direction of the orphanage. Should they slow down or otherwise dally, they shortly see a Xenovore dropship ascending on a column of flame toward the heavens... but if they charge ahead they come upon a ghastly (yet infinitely preferable) scene.

The adobe walls of the orphanage have been heated with Gauss rifle fire until its roofing beams ignited, forcing the children to flee in all directions through its wooden shuttered windows or face suffocating in the smoke. Unarmed and blinded by the smoke, the Xenovore soldiers have had little trouble capturing them. The unfortunate orphans have been herded together in preparation for loading them onto the dropship. In the excitement of the chase several of the Xenovore soldiers seem to have gone slightly mad with hunger; they have killed several of the orphans then partially consumed the dead children. Their grisly remains are all too visible to the PCs as their APC slides to a halt in front of the smoldering building.

There are ten first wave Xenovore soldiers still outside of the dropship forming a half circle around the weeping children (the rest have already gone back inside the ship). Intent upon their work, they are surprised by the arrival of the PCs and miss their first Actions on Segment 12. New soldiers can also emerge five at a time from the drop ship on Segment 6 of the following Turn (there are a total of ten inside). But the real challenge of this final act isn't killing the alien intruders, but doing it without hitting any of the two dozen children whom they surround. The children do have the good sense to throw themselves flat at the first sign of danger, however.

### Conclusion

With the orphans, the PCs, and Murid's family either packed safely into the APC or retreating together through the tall grass amidst the chaos of the Xenovore invasion they have every reason to congratulate themselves. Yet their real work has only begun.

With their beloved *Xrathmu Nan* in flames, these hearty survivors – as well as thousands just like them – flee into the high mountains. Yet there is happiness amidst this holocaust. Joining up with bands of roving Zarr, revenge crazed *Tranta Shun* warriors, and heavily armed Imperiors, these refugees form the backbone of rebellion which will plague the Xenovore intruders for the next twenty years. In the fullness of time Murid Maronesy will be remembered as a great spiritual leader to all the people's of Noah's World. Although he is never free to hunt or frolic in the carefree manner of his youth, Penthar Nul becomes forever famous the rebellion's greatest and best-loved general. After losing two limbs in a vicious firefight in 2339, Hirem Saladde becomes the rebellion's most talented instructor responsible for teaching guerrilla tactics to thousands of young human and Zarr soldiers. Abdulkadar Maronesy and Ragnar Nul become fast friends as well as legendary warriors, finally perishing together at the bottom of a heap of dead Xenovore soldiers in 2344 after sneaking their way on board an orbiting Dreadnaught... which then exploded a short time later. In 2357, three years after Admiral Zhukov's UE Navy liberated *Xrthanthu Nan* from the grip of the Xenovore menace and twenty five years since the first alien dropship had touched the surface of her planet, the popularly elected Planetary President Yezmond Maronesy exhaled deeply, sighed, and let herself relax for the first time in several decades. Kinzareth, Yezidi, and Zarr had become one people.

For they are the Resistance Alliance of Sigma Caeruleus III and this is their story.

