

RIFTS®



The following Design Diary by Sean Patrick Fannon reflects some details from the upcoming *Savage Rifts*®. It isn't final and some details may change before the book is finally sent to print.

MAKING RIFTS® SAVAGE—THE TOMORROW LEGION AND THE TIMELINE

Here's one more Design Diary about the *Savage Rifts*® project for you as we head into the last week or so of the Kickstarter. The first two covered a lot about game mechanics and the decisions behind them. This one focuses more on larger content issues we considered, and the choices we made that would guide how we presented this iteration of the *Rifts*® setting.



THE TOMORROW LEGION

There's a *lot* going on in the world of *Rifts*®. There are many factions, all vying for control of territory, resources, populations, magic, and technology. There are many horrors—man-made, otherworldly, and supernatural—threatening everything from small communities to existence itself. Caught in the middle, people from all over the Megaverse®, human and otherwise, struggle just to survive and make lives for themselves. The world of *Rifts*® is a very dangerous one, to say the least, and sometimes all that stands between destruction and another day is a band of armed and dangerous folks willing to take on whatever may come.

Interestingly, this premise can be found across many *Savage Worlds* settings. The world at large may or may not be aware of the terrible dangers that threaten lives and create chaos, but there are always groups of hardy, talented, and heroic individuals ready to step up with knowledge, special abilities, and guts to face off against danger and push back the darkness. In *Deadlands*, it's the Texas Rangers and the Pinkerton Agency (and the mysterious Twilight Legion), who gather together those who understand the true horrors of the Weird West and do all they can to fight the machinations of the Reckoners. In *Weird War I*

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(and the rest of the *Weird War* series), the Twilight Legion remains a key part of the background story, though there are also the secret agencies of each nation doing more “boots on the ground” efforts against the supernatural horrors of war. The *Rippers* of the setting of the same name fight monsters and madmen for an unknowing world.

Each of these in-game organizations fulfills the role of an “adventuring paradigm” (as Ross Watson describes it); a faction and structure that provides a gaming group an easy mechanism to gather together a group of disparate, interesting characters into a team and give them a purpose to explore the world and fight the threats no one else can face. Early in the planning process, we decided our take on *Rifts*® should follow suit, and after consulting with Kevin Siembieda about adding a new faction to the setting for this purpose (and with his enthusiastic approval), we decided on the name of the Tomorrow Legion.

At once a nod to the Twilight Legion of many other *Savage Worlds* settings and a means of examining the efforts of folks like Erin Tarn and Lord Coake in the canon of *Rifts*®, the Tomorrow Legion represents a renewed effort to build a

better world. Instead of trying to recreate the world of the past, however, the leaders of the Legion now want to take the world they have—with all its glory and horror—and build a better civilization than the one envisioned by factions like the Coalition and the Federation of Magic. More importantly, at least for the Game Master and the players, is the function of exploring the wilderness, finding communities who share their ideals, and protecting innocents from the vast array of dangers that threaten them from all sides.

Yes, this gives a decidedly heroic spin on the whole thing. Instead of mercenaries, wanderers, or bandits, members of the Tomorrow Legion are funded and given a purpose, which is generally to put themselves in the direct line of fire against the endless dangers of *Rifts* Earth. This is very much in line with what most other *Savage Worlds* settings do, and we felt maintaining that consistency not only supported the overall experience of *Savage* fans but added something new and useful to the *Rifts*® setting.

Note, however, that it’s entirely possible to ignore the Tomorrow Legion. You can still make whatever kinds of characters you wish and go



on the kinds of adventures you want. The Game Master is in no way restricted by the existence of the Legion; she can set her campaign anywhere in the world, with whatever premise she chooses, and there's plenty of material right out the gate to support that approach. Most of the adventures, while written with the idea that the group is part of the Tomorrow Legion, will work fine for any other kind of group the players want to form.

109 PA—AFTER THE FALL

The *Siege on Tolkeen* series—six books long, not counting the prequel *Coalition War Campaign* and the sequel *Aftermath*—is one of the most important sets of books and events in the entire *Rifts*® line. In it, the events surrounding the Coalition's decision to pursue all-out war are explained, and the events of the war and the fallout of the defeat of the magical kingdom are covered in great detail. Also covered is the brief war with Free Quebec and the subsequent peace accords between them and Chi-Town.

(*Rifts*® *Aftermath* is an excellent source for anyone wanting a complete picture of the world of *Rifts*® in the era that our products exist within. Find it at www.palladiumbooks.com.)

When we started talking about this project, one of the many conversations Ross and I had was about when we should set things. One option was to “go back to the beginning” and start exactly where the original *Rifts*® RPG book started—101 PA. While it was an interesting thought, we felt fans would really appreciate playing with a lot more of the stuff that came out long after that first release.

At the same time, we didn't think we would be best off trying to start exactly where the current *Rifts*® timeline is. The *Minion War* and *Megaverse*® in *Flames* story seriously upturns the status quo of *Rifts*® continuity. While this is incredibly exciting, and would be a lot of fun to write new material around, we determined that it might be better to have both new and returning players to the setting begin their adventures with more familiar and established canon. In 109 PA, the Coalition States are primarily an antagonist force, especially where D-Bees, magic wielders, and proponents of education are concerned. The

True Federation of Magic is a serious threat to anyone who doesn't want to submit to Dunscon's evil rule. All of the other famous factions—the Black Market, the Pecos Empire, the Apocalyptic Cavalry, the Vampire Kingdoms, Atlantis, and more—are still pretty much as they were, if a bit more involved in maneuvering for advantage in the wake of Tolkeen's fall.

The aftermath of the magic kingdom's destruction also provides a powerful backdrop for constructing an organization like the Tomorrow Legion and a place like Castle Refuge. Additionally, the war and its aftermath is a fantastic hook for many potential player character backgrounds, which was the final element that cemented our choice. Those who fought in the war, or merely survived it, will have meaningful stories to tell from that point forward. A war like that is exactly the kind of thing to motivate heroes to try and make a better world.

Thus, 109 PA, in the wake of the fall of the magic kingdom of Tolkeen, is where we set the current material coming out for *Savage Rifts*®. In time, we may choose to set future products a bit further ahead in the timeline, but we think there's still a great many adventures to experience and tales to tell in the time frame we've chosen.

As of this writing, we've broken the \$300,000 mark on the Kickstarter, which is truly breathtaking and humbling. All of us at Pinnacle, Palladium, and Evil Beagle are very grateful to the incredible community supporting this project, and we really look forward to exploring the world of *Rifts* Earth with you for some time to come.

Sean Patrick Fannon

May 2016

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