

SHARK BYTES

THE UNOFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS FANZINE



VOL 4, ISSUE #1!!

SHARK BYTES ANT
DEAD, SUCKER!
AND HE NEVER
WILL BE!!!

**NECESSARY EVIL
ISSUE!!!**

SPINE-TINGLING
RESOURCES FOR YOUR
NECESSARY EVIL
CAMPAIGN!!



Volume 4, Issue #1

Spring, 2008

THE *NECESSARY EVIL* ISSUE!!

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Shark Bytes is an unofficial, not-for-profit fanzine produced by and for fans of *"Savage Worlds"*—Pinnacle Entertainment's role-playing game of fast, furious fun. Pinnacle is in no way associated with the publishers of this fanzine and should not be held responsible for its contents. *"Savage Worlds"*, *Smiling Jack*, and any other associated trademarks or logos remain the property of PEG, Inc. and are used here with permission. Everything contained herein is considered unofficial unless explicitly stated otherwise. All artwork appearing in this issue of *Shark Bytes* is the property of the Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc. or from the public domain, unless noted otherwise, and is used herein with permission. All articles and artwork remain the property of their copyright holders.

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A big special thanks to Storn Cook, who graciously allowed us to use many of his images for this issue. Check out his website at <http://www.stornart.com/>

Opening Salvo

A New Era Begins

*I watch the ripples change their size
But never leave the stream
Of warm impermanence and
So the days float through my eyes
But still the days seem the same
—“Changes,” David Bowie*

Things are about to change.

Due to my new job as a Pinnacle freelancer, my continuing day job, and my fatherly duties (my lovely wife and I are expecting twins in September), this issue marks the end of my tenure as Editor-in-Chief. It's been a fun time, a wild ride, and a lot of work...and I'd do it all over again.

Taking the reins as Editor-in-Chief is Marc "Lord Inar" Gacy, our indefatigable layout man extraordinaire. He'll handle incoming submissions, distribute work to the Contributing Editors, and generally ensure that the issues keep coming. Congratulations, Marc!

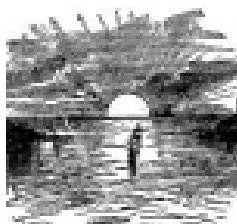
Also joining our staff as a Contributing Editor is Norm ("No relation") Hensley, Jr., known as "boldfist" on the PEG boards. When Evil Mike and Chaos Steve need their pre-gen stats checked for accuracy, they send 'em to Norm. Now Norm's going to put his talent for stat blocks to work for us, making sure all the crunchy bits are done just right. Welcome, Norm!

As for me, I'll remain a Contributing Editor and provide final proofreading for issues as they're ready to go. I'll also submit the odd piece here and there as time allows. But *Shark Bytes* belongs to all the Savages, and no one should run it forever. As Thomas Jefferson famously said of the American Revolution, "God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed." The same is true for editors.

We hope you enjoy the *Necessary Evil* issue. Special thanks go out to Storn Cook for his amazing cover image and interior art, as well as Clint Black, Wiggy Wade-Williams, and all the contributors for their generous submissions. It feels like a new era has begun for the 'zine—make sure you stick around to see what happens next!

M. A. Cutter

April 4, 2008



The Edge of Reason

This month, a few new edges that are well-suited to *Necessary Evil* and a hindrance that most of you will probably recognize from a well-known movie.

NEW EDGES

He Will Pay For This!

by "Savage" Jason Irrgang

Requirements: Wild Card, PC was defeated by a major NPC Wild Card villain

You may take this Edge on your next Advance after being defeated by a major Wild Card villain (as decided by the Game Master). Your character swears vengeance on the offending enemy and on their next meeting receives a +2 to both attack and damage rolls.

Designer note: I initially thought this might be more appropriate as an Adventure Deck card, but there's no guarantee that the character would draw the card at the right time, so I went with the Edge idea. This way, the PC who really wants revenge can ensure he'll have an edge (excuse the pun) against said enemy.

Evil Laugh

by Gordon "Sitting Duck" Lawyer

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+.

The laughter of many a supervillain has been known to cause ordinary men to quake in their boots. When used, everyone in front of the villain within a Large Burst Template is subjected to a single Intimidation roll. Obviously, the villain must be able to belt out a laugh (usually accompanied with a phrase along the lines of, "Fools! I'll destroy you all!") to do this.

Designer note: In one of the old issues, I had contributed an Edge for NE called Evil Laugh. Since then it has occurred to me that the mechanics for it should be more along the lines of War Cry or Rebel Yell. [Ed. note: I don't want to "pull a Lucas" and change the past, but we'll gladly update it for all to enjoy!]

NEW HINDRANCE

Cape Fetish

by Gordon "Sitting Duck" lawyer

Major. The cape is a popular fashion accessory among both superheroes and supervillains, particularly those who can fly. Your character is particularly proud of his cape and will not remove it even when it becomes a safety hazard. Anytime the trait die for an Agility or Agility-linked skill comes up as one (regardless of the Wild Die result), the character loses his next action as he attempts to unsnag his cape. Should the roll come up snake eyes, the cape is snagged in a manner where it chokes the character, inflicting an automatic Shaken result as well. *Originally posted on Savagepedia.*

THE ARCANÉ TOMÉ

In this column, we discuss new powers, new Arcane Backgrounds, and new uses for powers.

Spell & Gadget Templates for the Super Sorcery & Invent Powers

by Matthew "The Mad Tinkerer" Mather

These are the layouts for the Super Sorcery Spell and Invent Gadget cards. The first one, a simple "Spell/Gadget" card covers the majority of NE powers. A few of them don't fit so easily into this template, so I've created specialized cards for those.

The unlabeled portion at the top is where you would write the name of the spell or gadget itself. Like "Ebon Hands of Binding" (*ensnare*) or "Dr. Vulture's Black Wings Of Doom" (*flight*). *Cost* is base cost in Power Points it takes to cast the spell or create the gadget in its basic form. *Powers* indicates which Powers the spell or invention is based on. *Modifiers* indicate which modifiers are modifying the powers in its base form. *Description* is for Trappings. *Extras* is where you note more modifiers and their cost if you want to cast the spell with more modifiers, or add modifiers to the design of the invention.

Example Spell

ZARTHOG'S ZAMAZING ZOMBIFICATION ZONE

Cost: 3

Range: Damage:

Powers: Mind Control

Modifiers: None

Description: When Zarthog casts this spell, his eyes and hands begin to glow. The victims' eyes go white and they slavishly obey Zarthog's every order. Zarthog's "zombies" tend to shuffle around and speak in low groaning noises until they are released from the spell. Former victims of this spell suffer no long-term ill effects, though they might find themselves sometimes reverting to "zombie talk" a day or two after the spell is cast.

Zarthog can cast this spell so that more people become his "zombies" for an additional cost of two points per simultaneous "zombie."

Extras: More Minds (+2)

Example Attack Gadget

PROFESSOR NUKULAR'S EXPLOSIVE DEBRIS LAUNCHER

Cost: 6

Range: 12/24/48 Damage: 3d6

Modifiers: Medium Burst Template (+2), Requires Material (-2), Extra Damage (+3)

Description: The Launcher is essentially a large hollow metal tube with handles and big yellow arrows painted on the side. When it's turned on, the user (usually Professor Nukular ("The spelling is deliberate! Muahahahaha!")), needs to place some solid inanimate object into one end, and the launcher shoots it out the other end as an explosive projectile. Before he went mad, the device was originally designed to teach his students about physics. Now it teaches the V'Sori about physics...the hard way! Muahahahaha!

The professor has recently been experimenting with different optional settings, like radioactive debris and flaming debris. These are represented by optional elemental tricks.

Extras: Elemental Trick (+3), Large Burst Template (+2)

The small examples provided below are just a teaser. Full size versions of the cards (two to a sheet) are available as a supplemental download from the *Shark Bytes* site, just like the one shown below.

Cost: Str:

Range: Damage:

Powers:

Modifiers:

Description:

Extras:

Animation Spell/Gadget

Attributes: Agility d , Smarts d , Spirit d ,
Strength d , Vigor d

Skills:

Face: Parry: Toughness:

Special Abilities:

Animated Object

New Recruits

Someone just pop in for game night, but you want to get going right away? Need a quick and dirty, colorful character to add some flavor to your setting? *New Recruits* has got what you're looking for!

Compiled by M. A. Cutter



Akakamasu, aka Red Barracuda (WC)
by Bill Wolff

"The Barracuda," as he's sometimes called, wears a blood-red business suit, the upper edges of his full-body tattoo showing just above the collar. He is obviously Asian, with longish black hair greased into a pompadour. His frequent, humorless smile reveals teeth filed to sharp points.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (d12), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Knowledge (Star City Organized Crime) d6, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2) / 9 (2)

Hindrances: Curious, Heartless, Servitor, Vengeful
Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Power Points, Rich, Strong-Willed

Gear: Duraweave business suit (Armor +1, wt 5), Z-Belt (Armor+1, wt 1), M2 HeroKiller (10/20/40; 3d6; RoF 1; shots 5; wt 10), 10 rounds (large), cellphone, vibro-knife (3d6, wt 1), Rutgers RE-IV target eye, laser sight, \$210. (Total weight: 17)

Super Powers:

- *Attack, Melee (2):* Str+1d6 (Sudden strike).
- *Mind Control (8):* Mind Wipe, More Minds (x2).
- *Telepathy (2).*
- *Gifted (1).*
- *Speak Language (1):* Device (Cigar).
- *Super Attribute (2):* Smarts, 2 steps.
- *Teleport (2):* Device (Wristwatch).
- *Toughness (2):* +2, Requires Activation (Writhing, shimmering tattoos).

Trash (WC)

by David Sarno, PhD

Standing 5'10" in very worn and dirty leather pants, jacket, and motorcycle boots, his face is partly obscured by a pair of old aviator goggles with lenses painted black. When he springs into action, he takes the form of a terrible monster. He is made of the filth, the garbage, and the detritus that humans create but try to ignore. And now they must face the fury of TRASH!

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d10, Intimidate d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Repair d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2) / 7 (+4 armor vs matter/kinetic attacks)

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor, "Huh? I don't smell anything."), Overconfident, Phobia (Major, sterile environments), Quirk (Minor, ruffles through garbage cans, litterbug)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Power Points, Mechanical Genius

Gear: Brass Knuckles x2 (Str+d4+3d6, wt 2), clothing (wt 1), tool kit (wt 5), lockpicks (wt 1), handcuffs (wt 2), small maglight (belt, wt 3), kevlar vest (+2/+4 Armor, wt 8), \$275. (Total Weight: 21)

Super Powers:

- *Altered Form (2):* Requires Activation (Garbage Form).
- *Attack, Melee (6):* 3d6 (Mighty Fists).
- *Decay (5):* Strong (Rot/Corrosion).
- *Super Attribute (5):* Strength, 3 steps; Vigor, 2 steps.
- *Super Skill (1):* Fighting, 2 steps.
- *Wall Walker (1):* (Viscous Slime).

The Fireman (WC)

by Scott Jarvis

A strapping young man, very large in size with huge muscles and a large square head wearing jeans and a T-shirt. He looks like he's taken a fair amount of steroids. In costume, he wears a fireman's outfit with full face shield.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6 (d12), Vigor d10 (d12+2)

Skills: Climb d4, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d4, Repair d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4, Taunt d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 24; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1) / 13 (1)

Hindrances: Enemy (Major), Power Negation (liquid nitrogen), Phobia (Minor, the ocean), Quirk (Minor, firebug)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Brawny, Power Points, Take the Hit

Gear: Fire axe (Str+d6, wt 10), pistol (0.50; 15/30/60; 2d8; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 2; wt 8), clothing (wt 1), Z-Belt (+1 armor, wt 1). Total Weight: 20

Super Powers:

- *Attack, Melee (7):* 2d6, Elemental Trick (Fire).
- *Immunity to Fire/Heat (3):* Requires Activation.
- *Toughness (2):* +2, Requires Activation.
- *Super Attribute (5):* Strength, 3 steps; Vigor, 3 steps; Requires Activation.
- *Speed (3):* Pace x4, foes -1 to hit.

Magister Ludi (WC)

by Glen Engel-Cox

A rakish and well-groomed man, standing over 6 feet tall, in impeccably tailored clothing including top hat, cane and cloak, he seems out of place in time and space. Which is just how he likes it.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Shooting d8, Spellcasting d10, Taunt d4

Hindrances: Arrogant, Gloater, Quirk (sees "connections" in everything), Vengeful (Minor)

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (2)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Healer, Power Points

Gear: Cloak, gloves, top hat, cane (combined wt 1), duraweave tuxedo (+1 Armor, wt 5); Z-Belt (+1 Armor, wt 1). Total Weight: 7

Super Powers:

- *Deflection (2):* Requires Activation (The Power to Cloud Men's Minds).
- *Extra Action (3):* 1 extra action per round (Incredibly Competent).
- *Super Sorcery (15):* Level 5 (Rhyming Couplets).

Aphotic (WC)

by Jack Coursen

From the ruins of the past comes a creature born of ash and destruction. Body annihilated, memories sundered...everything lost to the dark abyss. All that remains now is revenge!

Race: Hybrid

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6 (d12), Knowledge (Atlantis) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6 (d8), Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Hindrances: Heartless, Overconfident, Quirk (always wears a different mask), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Power Points, Strong-Willed, Telepathy (Hybrid)

Gear: Trenchcoat, fedora, mask, Z-Belt (+1 Armor, wt 1), duraweave clothing (+1 Armor, wt 5), flashlight (wt 3), \$380. Total Weight: 6

Super Powers:

- *Attack, Ranged (6):* 3d6 (Finger of Death).
- *Extra Action (3):* (Dual Personality).
- *Fear (1):* Scary (Essence of Death).
- *Fearless (2).*
- *Paralysis (3):* Strong (Chill of the Grave).
- *Super Skill (1):* Shooting, 1 step; Intimidation, 3 steps; Requires Activation.
- *Undead (4):* +2 Toughness (Body of Ash).



Slick Willy (WC)

by David Borak

A tall, slightly-pudgy man with a large head and white hair, whose good style of dress and manners give the appearance of power and charisma.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8 (d12+1), Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Electronics) d4, Knowledge (Language: V'Sori) d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6 (d12+1), Streetwise d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Distinctive Appearance, Greedy (Major), Quirk (loves women, fast food, and liquor), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Connections (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), Noble, Power Points

Gear: Duraweave suit (+1 Armor, wt 5), medstim (wt 1), Z-Belt (+1 Armor, wt 1), \$5. Total Weight: 18

Super Powers:

- *Fearless (2):* (Soulless Politician)
- *Gifted (1):* (Well-Read).
- *Intangibility (4):* (Device: Phase Disruption Belt).
- *Mind Control (8):* Mind Wipe, More Minds (x2).
- *Super Attribute (2):* Smarts, 3 steps, Requires Activation (Finger Snap—Eureka!).
- *Super Skill (1):* Persuasion, 4 steps, Requires Activation (Sly Wink).
- *Telepathy (2):* (Concentration).

Abraxas (WC)

by Glen Engel-Cox

Slim but sinewy-strong, Abraxas is not an individual one forgets having seen. He has deep scarlet skin and a small pair of horns that jut upward from his forehead, not to mention a barbed tail. One can almost feel the bad luck radiating from him when he grins.

Race: Rakshasa

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6 (d10), Strength d8 (d12), Vigor d6 (d12)

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8 (d10), Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bad Luck, Bloodthirsty, Distinctive Appearance, Servitor (Major, The Magister's Heart)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Power Points, Quick

Gear: Duraweave suit (+1 Armor, wt 5); Z-Belt (+1 Armor, wt 1). Total Weight: 6

Special Abilities:

Agile: Agility starts at d6.

Claws: Str+d6, +2 to Climbing except sheer surfaces.

Super Powers:

- *Awareness (3):* (Glowing Eyes).
- *Fearless (2):* (Demon).
- *Improved Jinx (4):* Foes suffer mishap on 1 or 2.
- *Malfunction (3):* (Wiggling Nose).
- *Super Attribute (7):* Spirit, 2 steps; Strength, 2 steps; Vigor, 3 steps (Infernal Health).
- *Super Skill (1):* Fighting, 1 step.

Katia & Two-Ton Galenta (WC)

by David Borak

Katia (known by only one name) was on top of the world—supermodel on the cover of dozens of magazines each month, dating exclusive men, the world at her feet. Best of all, she could eat as much as she wanted and never gained an ounce. But that food had to go somewhere...

On the day the V'sori attacked New York City, Katia vomited up her alter-ego: Two-Ton Galenta. Embarrassed at the horrified looks she received, Two-Ton fled the city (which saved her life, as NYC was annihilated hours later) and began a life of crime. Katia does freelance modeling for the V'sori, and is seen as somewhat of an insider on the entertainment scene. Somehow, though, Katia blames the V'Sori for what happened to her and is seeking her revenge against them.

Katia

Katia is a former supermodel—tall, with legs that go on forever. She is, however, dangerously thin. Her clothes reflect the latest fashions (incorporating elements of human style, Atlantean scales, and faux V'sori body armor).

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d6; Smarts d8; Spirit d6; Strength d4; Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Persuasion d6+4, Investigation d4, Knowledge (V'Sori Culture) d4, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Anemic, Arrogant, Quirk (always eating).

Edges: Quick, Very Attractive.

Gear: Artificial gill (wt 1), brass knuckles (2d4, wt1), clothing, various snackfoods (wt 5), combat drugs (9 Strength, 9 Vigor), duraweave suit (+1 Armor, wt 5), \$15. Total Weight: 12

Two-Ton Galenta

Two-Ton Galenta is a huge mass of fat and muscle. Under her stretchy pink Spandex dress, her sports bra holds her pendulous breasts and her gigantic thong is truly a sight to behold.

Race: Human (In a manner of speaking)

Attributes: Agility d6; Smarts d4; Spirit d6; Strength d8 (d12+4); Vigor d8 (d12+3)

Skills: Fighting d12 (d12+2); Climbing d4, Guts d4, Throwing d10, Taunt d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5 (20); **Parry:** 8 (10, -1 on attacks for Speed); **Toughness:** 9 (1) / 14 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clueless, Gimmick (Major, two characters, must vomit up Two-Ton), Obese

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Berserk, Fast Healer, Power Points

Gear: Artificial gill (wt 1), brass knuckles (Str+d4, wt1), clothing, various snackfoods (wt 5), combat drugs (9 Strength, 9 Vigor), duraweave suit (+1 Armor, wt 5), \$15. Total Weight: 12

Super Powers:

- *Attack, Melee (4):* 2d6 (Fat Fist Slap).
- *Growth (1):* Monster, +1 Size, Strength, and Toughness (Layers of Fat).
- *Speed (3):* Pace x4, +1 parry (Rolling Ball of Fat).
- *Super Attribute (9):* Strength, 5 steps; Vigor, 5 steps; Requires Activation (Mighty Flex).
- *Super Skill (1):* Fighting, 2 Steps, Requires Activation (Knuckle Crack).
- *Toughness (2):* +2, Requires Activation (A Mighty Wind).

Baubles and Trinkets

Baubles and Trinkets concerns itself with game aids of one kind or another. The theme this month is revisiting, as we revisit the original conception of hyper-drones, the Star City map and previous issues of *Shark Bytes*.

The Arrival of the Armored Drones

by Michael "Noshrok Grimskull" Schau
Art by Storn Cook (used with permission)

When I bought the NE Figure Flats, I found that the pictures on the flats for the Hyper-Drones did not match the description given in the book. This came as a surprise, since there was a perfect match to that description in the pictures made by Storn, namely this one:



So I went ahead and made a bunch of flats myself using that image for Hyper-Drones. A full sheet of these is available in the [Downloads](#) section of the *Shark Bytes* site.

Sample Hyper Drone Figure Flats.



I didn't want the original flats to go to waste, so I created the Armored Drone to go with those.

Armored Drone

For use with the *Necessary Evil Hyper-Drones* figure flats

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (6)

Special Abilities:

- **Ambidextrous:** Drones have no off-hand penalty.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 6. Cybernetic gills and marine adaptations allow drones to function underwater.
- **Electro-Shock:** Drones can generate an electrical current to incapacitate their targets. This is not a constant power and must be used in lieu of their normal attack. They only need to touch the target to affect them (+2 bonus to Fighting roll). If successful, the target must make a Vigor roll at -2 or be Shaken.
- **Fearless:** The capacity for fear has been removed... surgically. They are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Armor +6:** Cybernetic implant armor (-1 Pace)
- **Heavy Blaster:** Drones have an integrated blaster built into the forearm that runs off an internal capacitor. It recharges at the rate of 3/round. Range 15/30/60, Damage 3d6, shots 20, DT, AP 4, Blaster overcharge rules.
- **Low Light Vision:** Cybernetic eyes.
- **Vibro-Claws:** Str+d6, Heavy Weapon, AP 2. Retractable vibro-blades in one appendage.

Coming next issue:

Savage Fantasy!

Shaintar!

Evernight!

City of the Shark!

Sundered Skies!

Go to the PEG boards:

[SW General Chat & Games Stories](#) to see

how YOU can contribute!

www.peginc.com/forum



Star City Map Grid

by Marc "Lord Inar" Gacy

"Wait, where in Star City did you say we were going?"
 "Eastpoint."
 "Oh, OK. Where in Eastpoint?"
 "Mmm, about...there," points at map.
 "Right, weren't we there two weeks ago?"
 "No, you were at...oh, yeah you're right, actually, right there."

Evil Overlords, don't let this happen to you!

Now you can provide a location within a 1 km grid using this handy Star City grid, built on the annotated Star City map from a while back. The very minimal Gazetteer simply lists the grid locations of each of the known quadrants. A small version is provided here, and a full size version of the map is available as a supplemental download from the Shark Bytes site.

Star City Gazetteer

Northpoint
 L7-L10, M3-M10, N1-N10, O2-O10, P6-P10

Prospect Point
 F6-F7, G7-G9, H7-H10, I8-I11, J8-J12, K9-K11

Beachhead
 Q10-Q11, R9-R12, S8-S12, T8-T11, U7-U10, V7-V8

Westpoint
 A14-A15, B14-B15, C14-C15, D14-D16, E13-E16, F13-F16, G13-G16, H13-H16, I13-I16, J13, J16

Eastpoint
 R13-R16, S13-S16, T13-T16, U13-U16, V13-V16, W13-W16, X14-X15, Y14-Y15, Z14-Z15, @14-@15, #14-#15

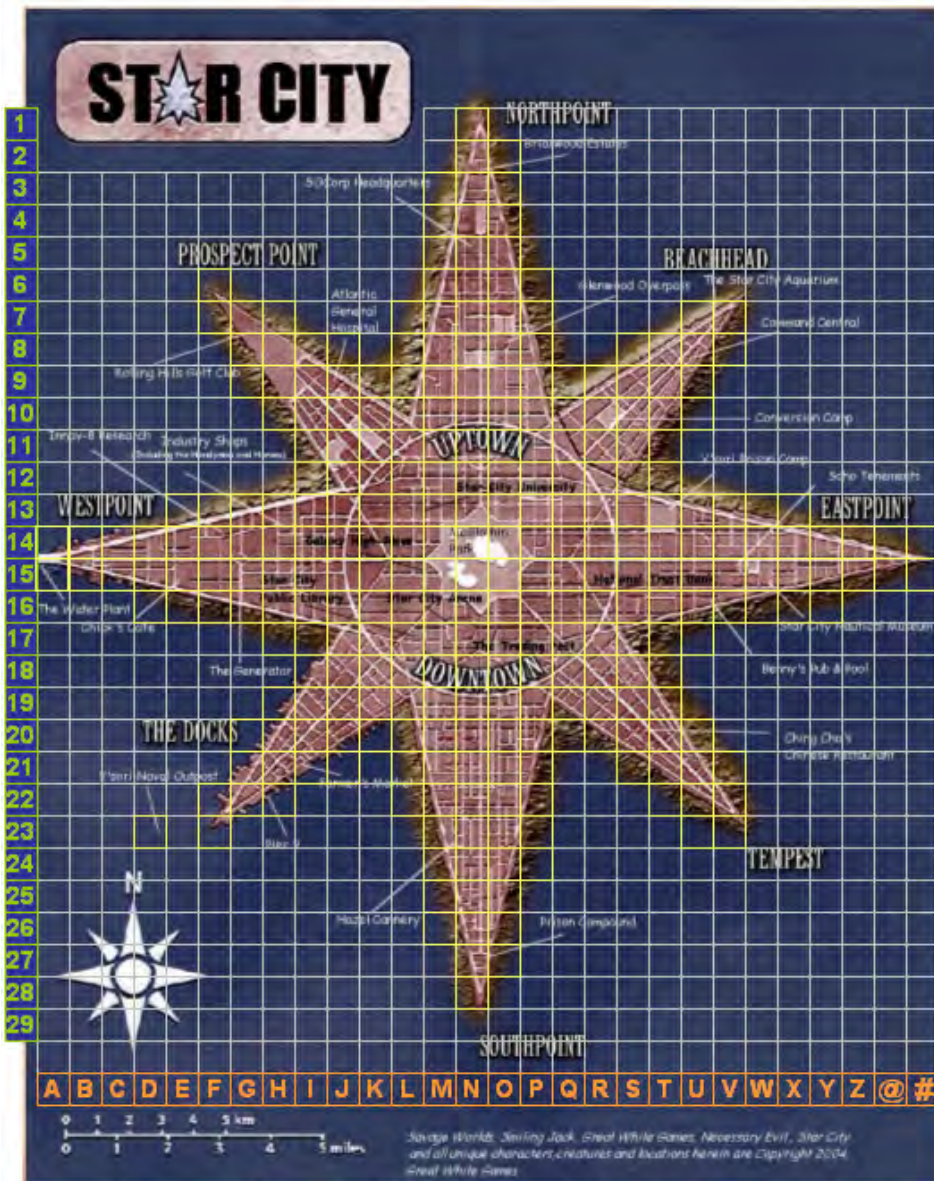
Uptown
 J14, K12-K14, L11-L14, M11-M14, N11-N14, O11-O14, P11-P14, Q12-Q14, R13-R14

Downtown
 J15, K15-K17, L15-L18, M15-M18, N15-N18, O15-O18, P15-P18, Q15-Q17, R15-R16

The Docks
 D23, F22-F23, G20-G22, H19-H22, I18-I21, J17-J21, K18-K-20, L19

Southpoint
 M19-M25, N20-N28, O19-O27, P19-P23

Tempest
 Q18-Q19, R17-R20, S17-S21, T18-T21, U20-U22, V21-V23



The *Necessary Evil Shark Bytes* Index

by Marc "Lord Inar" Gacy

What, you want more? Well, do you remember all the *Savage Necessary Evil* goodness from previous issues of *Shark Bytes* (SB) and *Shark Nibbles* (SN)? This table lists them all for your evil enjoyment. They are also available, collected into one handy dandy PDF on the *Shark Bytes* site, courtesy of Cutter.

Special thanks goes to arkcover on the PEG forums who came up with the list of existing adventures that I used and expanded to include all NE-related material.

Over on *Savage Heroes*, there is a Supers adventure (not in the NE timeline, but is uses NE rules) *Nullifiers Demands* from David "Grubman" Bezio.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention *A Hero is Suborned*, by Robert Rosenthal, a *Savage Worlds* Explorer Society One Sheet. What? You're not a member yet? What are you waiting for? Read the blurb on the right, then go over there now and sign up. I'll wait... OK, good. Now you've got it all.

Article	Description	Author	Where	Pages
Feeding Frenzy	NE Rules questions	Clint Black	SB v1 #2	18-20
Super Adventure Seeds	21 Adventure Seeds for NE	JB Littlefield	SB v1 #3	22-23
V'Sori Vision	A NE Sabotage Mission	Mark Aylor	SB v1 #3	31-32
Casting Without the Cape	Adapting NE superpowers to fantasy settings	Joel Sparks	SB v1 #3	36-37
Feeding Frenzy	NE Rules questions	Clint Black	SB v1 #3	46
Double Down	A Recovery Mission for NE	Mark Aylor	SN 01/05	15-16
Boys from Brazil	A NE Search and Destroy Mission	Mark Aylor	SN 02/05	16-17
Team Dynamo	An Omega Resistance Cell	Bob Bretz	SN 03/05	5-10
Local Hero	An NE ReconMission	Mark Aylor	SN 05/05	17-18
Star City Annotated Map	Labeled version of map from book	JB Littlefield	SN 07/05	N/A
Strength in Versatility	New power modifiers for NE	"JackAce", et al.	SB v2 # 2	45

reality blurs: the dirt

Konichiwa!

I'm glancing up from my keyboard to give you a quick update on what's going on with Reality Blurs. I've learned a few lessons about not divulging too much too early, but, since we're all friends here, I'll go ahead and give you the inside scoop on some of the things we've got ticking along on the *Savage Worlds* front.

First off, let me thank you all for your continued support of *RunePunk* and our growing print line of *Savage Worlds* products. *Orwell Industries* came out in print a few months ago and, as of this writing, *Starfall Jungles* is now wending its way to a friendly, local game store near you. We hope to continue this model of releasing both digital and print products in this fashion to satisfy your *Savage* needs.

Now on to the news.

We here at Reality Blurs are still alive and kicking, working on more *Savage* goodness than you can shake a stick at (provided you don't have a lot of spare time to go stick shaking). So, you might ask, what have you been working on in these seemingly quiet days since the release of *RunePunk*? Well, we've got more *RunePunk* goodness underway with numerous adventures and support materials, including *Darksummer Nights* and *Wizards of WildSky* to name a few.

A lot of our time has been taken up with the continued development of *Iron Dynasty*, our oriental steampunk samurai setting that is loaded with lots of martial arts goodness. We took a modular approach to the design, enabling you to easily build anything from a ganso (inventor) to an onmyoji (wizard) to a variety of ninja (at last count, I easily saw a half dozen approaches to crafting a ninja). The Player's Guide has been put to bed and I'm fleshing out the details of the Plot Point campaign and the adventure generators. If you liked what you saw in *RunePunk*, you should really be pleased with a novel new approach I'm taking to Plot

Point design in *Sins of the Samurai*, the first RPG book for *Iron Dynasty*. Along with the development of the RPG, we're still working away on *Iron Dynasty: Showdown Edition*, which handles the miniatures side of the world, enabling you to easily recreate the historical battles of Konoyo (the known world) and play out an entire campaign with your samurai warlord to determine the entire fate of Ni Ten. Stay tuned to our Web site, as well as the Pinnacle forums, for more details as they unfold.

In the meantime, however, you may also be wondering about the fate of *Agents of Oblivion*. I'm glad to announce that it is entering the more robust stages of development. I've got the bestiary sitting on my desk. I've got lots of organizations and global conspiracies jotted down in disparate files and look to more fully focus on them once we get the Player's Guide nailed down to our satisfaction. In the good news column, however, I'm looking at releasing some adventures for the setting, possibly along the lines of *Starfall Jungle*, to fill in the gaps in the meantime.

Finally, I'm happy to report growth in our staff. With new developmental policies and procedures in place and a more solid workflow, we should be able to get more of our creative ideas and stuff into your hands more rapidly than ever before. Hopefully, I'm not jinxing this by putting it in words, but you know how design and development can sometimes seem like we're just rolling dice and drawing cards. Honestly, we're working as fast as we can to deliver the best we can. Stacy Young, my cohort in this madness, and I will both be on hand at Origins and Gen Con and look forward to seeing you at the shows!

Regards,
Sean Preston
President, Reality Blurs
www.realityblurs.com

THE RULING HOUSE

This column showcases house rules or additional rules. The philosophical question this month is, "If Wiggy provides new rules, can you really call them just House Rules?"

Optional Rules for Necessary Evil

by Wiggy Wade-Williams

Second Wind

Read a superhero comic and you'll notice that heroes, and villains, sometimes get a second wind. After taking a pounding, they get back up and launch straight back into the action as if nothing happened. Without the Regeneration power, this isn't easy to simulate using the standard *Necessary Evil* rules. However, there is an easy way to do it, at least in part. Note that this rule makes fights last longer, so you might want to save it for the climactic battle.

Whenever a Wild Card hero (defined as a player character in this instance only) draws a red face card, he recovers one wound immediately. Incapacitated characters return to the fray unShaken, but with 3 wounds. Wild Card villains (GM characters) gain this benefit on a black face card. Jokers count as face cards for this purpose and still grant their usual bonuses.

Characters with Quick or Level Headed don't gain any extra benefit from using this rule—only the first card dealt them (not the one they eventually use) counts for the purposes of second wind.

Once all characters on one side are Incapacitated, the fight is over and second wind no longer applies.

Through the Wall

SMACK! One punch sends a villain straight through a brick wall, while a kick sends a hero crashing through the side of a truck and out the other side. How can *Necessary Evil* simulate this?

If Knockback occurs into a solid object, subtract the Object Armor from the total damage caused to the unfortunate victim. If there is leftover damage, the victim goes through the object. Should he hit another object, compare the Armor to the remaining damage.

Repeat this until either the total damage has been reduced to less than zero (at which point the object

is not penetrated and the victim comes to a halt) or the total Knockback distance is reached, whichever comes first. Apply extra damage from hitting a solid object just once!

For example, Mr. Slam smacks Paperweight for 20 damage and sends him flying a massive 8". Paperweight flies back 2" and hits a brick wall (he takes +1d6 damage from this). A brick wall has Armor +8. Since $20 - 8 = 12$, Paperweight goes through the wall and keeps flying.

He's entered an office divided by glass partitions. Each partition has Toughness +1, is 1" apart, and there are four of them in total. Paperweight crashes through each partition, leaving a total of 8 damage (12, -1, -1, -1, -1) as he flies across the office.

An inch later, he hits the other side of the building. Subtracting 8 from the remaining 8 damage means Paperweight has been punched through that wall as well! Paperweight flies a further inch (bringing his total to 8") and collapses on the floor, covered in dust and shattered glass. Had he hit an object right outside the second wall, even a sheet of glass, Paperweight would not have gone through it—instead he would likely squash up against it and slide to the floor.



RALLY THE TROOPS!

Rally the Troops will provide Showdown scenarios, including cards and maps. This month we proudly present a *Necessary Evil* scenario, because Cutter said it couldn't be done and it is so fun to prove him wrong!

UNsung HEROES

by Marc "Lord Inar" Gacy

Ex-supervillains aren't the only ones who fight the V'sori invasion. Sometimes, normal humans stand up as well. This is one of those times.

Background

Kid Dynamite was always a lovable villain, being more Robin Hood than thug, especially in his hometown area of the Docks. So it was no small surprise when he was one of the first to join an Omega resistance cell. Before the V'sori came he would often show up unannounced at the local boxing gym where he grew up to drop off some of his spoils or to give pep talks to the young boxers there. He still does it occasionally, but now they're carefully orchestrated affairs to keep the V'sori from tracking him down. This time, however, it was not carefully orchestrated enough, as a cadre of K'tharen ambushed Kid Dynamite on his way to Silver's Gym, where Ron "Wicked" Wilson, former heavyweight boxing champion, several of his students, and some close friends were going to meet him.

Kid Dynamite took out the K'tharen commander and several Fins before flying headfirst through the window of the gym on his air scooter, and crash landing into unconsciousness on the far side of the gym. The K'tharen immediately followed, demanding that the humans step aside and allow them to take their prize. Twenty normal humans against five K'tharen doesn't sound like good odds for the humans, but the K'tharen hadn't counted on Kid Dynamite's dedicated following. They weren't going to let him go without a fight and they all immediately picked up something to use as a club, either from their person, or lying around the gym. The K'tharen, their bloodlust already aroused by the previous fight with Kid Dynamite, threw caution to the wind and entered the building with the primary intent of teaching a valuable lesson in the futility of resistance. This day will be

remembered well, either for the demoralizing destruction of Silver's Gym or for the inspiring tale of a bunch of normal Joes fending off hideous alien invaders.

Setup

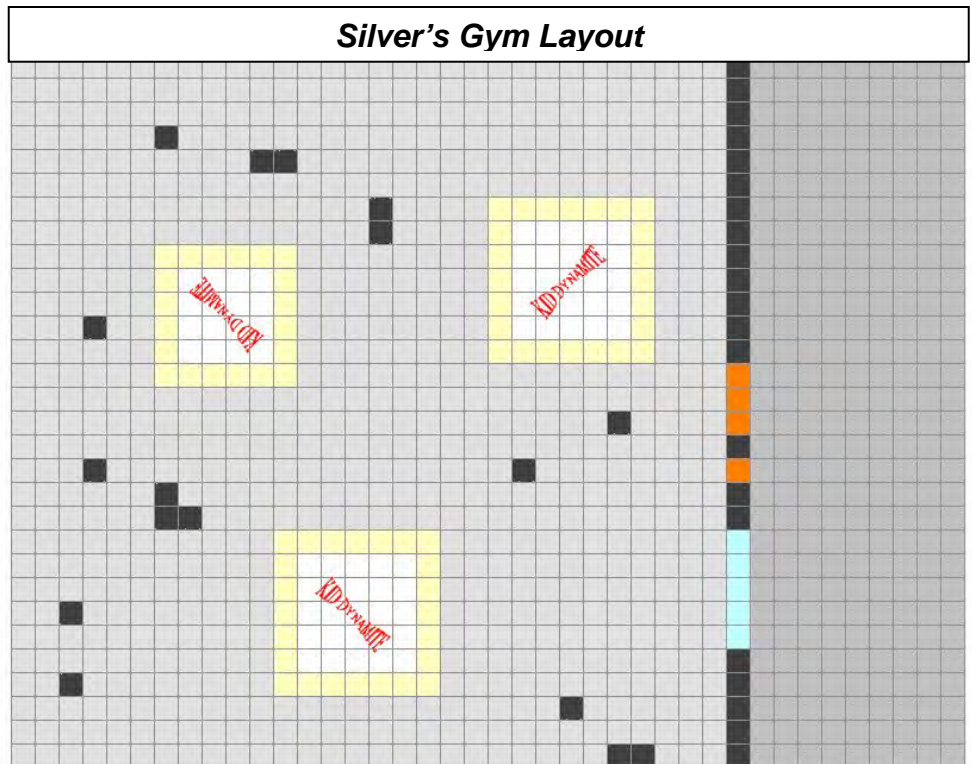
The unconscious Kid Dynamite is placed anywhere at the far end of the gym. The K'tharen start anywhere outside and may enter through the broken window of the gym (light blue) or spend one round breaking through the doors (orange). The humans start anywhere within the gym at least five squares away from the entrance wall. At least one boxer and one friend should be immediately adjacent to Kid Dynamite. Any of the friends (not the boxers) may pick up a Blaster Rifle from any fallen K'tharen and use it against them. Due to the contained space and the fact that both sides are out for blood, ignore the Cohesion and Morale rules. For this scenario, both sides should make sure to read pages 8 and 9 of the Showdown rules. Then read them again, and then one more time. OK, no more hints.

Boxing Rings and Equipment

The boxing equipment (dark gray squares) provides minor cover (-2). Each boxing ring provides substantial cover (-4) while behind it. If "Wicked" Wilson climbs into any of the boxing rings, his Command affects everyone regardless of proximity. Of course it also makes him a target. It takes a whole action to climb into the boxing ring. If performing this with another action, make an agility roll with the -2 multi-action penalty.

Victory Conditions


He who's left standing wins! 'Nuff said!



Showdown Cards for Unsung Heroes

RON "WICKED" WILSON
 A:d8, Sm:d6, Sp:d8, St:d10, V:d10
 Fighting d12
Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 8
Gear: Club (Str+d4)
Abilities:

- Brawny: +1 Toughness (included)
- Combat Reflexes: +2 recover from shaken
- Command: +1 to troops recover from shaken
- Two-fisted: Attack using each hand w/o MAP



90

KID DYNAMITE'S FRIENDS (5)
 A:d6, Sm:d6, Sp:d6, St:d6, V:d6
 Fighting d4, Shooting d4
Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5
Gear: Club (Str+d4)
Abilities: -

105

WILSON'S BOXING STUDENTS (5)
 A:d6, Sm:d6, Sp:d6, St:d8, V:d8
 Fighting d8
Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 6
Gear: Club (Str+d4)
Abilities:

- Brawny: +1 Toughness (included)
- Combat Reflexes: +2 recover from shaken

155

KID DYNAMITE'S FRIENDS (5)
 A:d6, Sm:d6, Sp:d6, St:d6, V:d6
 Fighting d4, Shooting d4
Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5
Gear: Club (Str+d4)
Abilities: -

105

K'THAREN WARRIORS (5)
 A:d8, Sm:d6, Sp:d8, St:d12+2, V:d10
 Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10,
 Shooting d10, Swimming d10, Throwing d8
Pace: 7; Parry: 7; Toughness: 9 (13)
Gear: Bite/Claws (Str+d6), Body Armor (+2 Armor)
 Blaster Rifle (30/60/120; 3d6; AP 4; RoF 3)
Abilities:

- Aquatic
- Improved Frenzy: 1 extra fighting attack at no penalty
- Military Training: +2 Shooting if warrior doesn't move
- Thick Hide: Armor +2 (included)
- Size: Toughness +2 (included)

560

KID DYNAMITE'S FRIENDS (5)
 A:d6, Sm:d6, Sp:d6, St:d6, V:d6
 Fighting d4, Shooting d4
Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5
Gear: Club (Str+d4)
Abilities: -

105

This scenario works well for one player to take the K'tharen and two to split the good guys into two groups, boxers and friends.

KID DYNAMITE

For more unofficial goodness, don't forget Savagepedia, where you can contribute and share information about your favorite RPG (it is your favorite, right?).



Around the World

This month, what better guide to understanding the deep inner workings of the major players in *Necessary Evil* than the master himself!

A GM's Guide to the V'sori, Omega, and Dr. Destruction

by Clint Black

What follows are some hints and suggestions for handling certain aspects of *Necessary Evil*.

The V'sori

There are two main things to remember when playing the V'sori. First, they are smart. They studied Earth, and they got an A in the class. Second, they don't play by the "rules." In fact, in a way this is the most alien thing about them to humanity.

Take the somewhat common question, "Didn't any villains join the V'sori side?" The answer is, "They tried." The V'sori know that traitors are just as willing to betray you. They rip any useful knowledge from the traitor's mind, and then shoot him in the head. If they can't get in the mind, they shoot him in the head. If it doesn't feel right, they'll shoot him in the head. Then the body goes off to the scientists for dissection. Occasionally, they may not shoot him in the head but use an equally incapacitating method such as an induced coma.



Omega

Here is the ultimate secret behind Omega. Omega does not succeed because it is made up of supervillains. It succeeds because it is organized.

Occasionally, this may be something you need to reinforce so the players, if not the characters, understand. Nearly every time their cell is performing a mission, other cells are performing simultaneous missions. If there is no mission, they may just tear things up to cause a diversion. You might even consider giving your cell a diversion mission, but I'd make it rare as the players should generally feel as

if their actions are the key ones, not just supplemental to what the NPCs are doing.

Even without the diversions, Omega has resources and connections that make life for a villain tremendously easier than going it alone. Should the characters perhaps decide they don't need Omega or Dr. Destruction's help, feel free to double or triple the resistance they start running into. Don't forget to disable the CommLinks and V-MAP as well. Unless, of course, that's the kind of game you want to run.

Dr. Destruction

Dr. Destruction is at once the most useful and toughest tool for a GM to use. It's easy to play him solely as an over-the-top mastermind villain, but the points made about the V'sori apply to him as well. He's smart...and he cheats. It should be clear that he will do what is necessary to stop the V'sori, but he also understands the nature of the tools he is using very well. Except in special circumstances, Dr. Destruction should know 95% of every villain's history and background. As the V'sori studied Earth, so he has extensive files on every villain.

Here's something that didn't make the book. Just because the villains aren't using them doesn't mean the CommLinks aren't transmitting. Everything around every CommLink is constantly being recorded by Destruction's computer. He gets reports on events and discussions daily and can be interrupted in the case of emergency.

One thing Dr. Destruction will do if possible is "soften" the villains. He has to keep in mind what will happen when the V'sori are beaten. Some of the villains are simply irredeemable (and this is a fine and viable way to play a campaign), and he won't try to turn them unless they show an attempt themselves. However, those villains get the most dangerous, possibly even suicidal, missions. And usually ones that avoid innocents.

Rewards and Fans

If there is a chance, Dr. Destruction will facilitate (and sometimes manipulate) things based on what he knows of the villain's psychology. The two main things that he typically uses (again it can vary with the individual) are **rewards** and **fans**.

Dr. Destruction rewards villains who act heroic; he just calls it "good PR" or "putting someone in our debt," but when they do it, they will get a benefit. He probably won't specifically link the benefit to the "good" act but to the mission as a whole. Still, like Pavlov's dogs, he hopes they will come to link the behavior to the reward.

Fans. I love fans. They can mess with a villain's mind like nothing else. First off, let me just say, it doesn't matter how callous or heartless the villain is, they will get fans. Heck, the Heartless ones are some of the most fun to do it to. It weirs them out to get some crayon drawn picture of themselves seen as a hero to some small child, or a thank you letter from some sweet old lady with a box of cookies just like their grandmother made (chocolate chip with raisin).

The trick to fans is to think like someone who only sees one part of a situation. For instance, consider a kid who lived in the burning building. She doesn't see the villain just standing around watching it burn for a while; she sees the "hero" who disintegrated the top of a hydrant to get water to put out the fire. Or the old lady who lived down the hall and only sees the water controller putting out the flames, not when he was standing around smoking a cigarette earlier.

In fact, I would even say the best thing is when they are undeserving because it puts the pressure on them to be deserving. (And even if they don't do it, it leads to good roleplaying.)

So Dr. Destruction will make sure that some letters and packages will make it into the hands of the villains. This is almost never directly, but maybe by making sure through intermediaries that the fans get a contact in the underground or something that has a contact to the PC's.

And while speaking of fans, another useful device is the love interest. It's hard to be evil when you care what someone else thinks about you. Dr. D isn't above playing matchmaker, setting the cell up with missions that work with a group of the Underground, led by or containing someone who may fit a certain villain's profile.

The final thing about Dr. D is that he knows how to give people what they want. If characters want respect, he'll play up the "I need a team I can trust to get this done" angle. If someone wants a "cure" to their powers, he'll send them on a mission that may lead to that. Heck, even the tough "join me or die" is pretty much an act so that later his "appreciation" seems like it was genuinely earned.

You'll know you are playing Dr. Destruction right if the characters want to work for him. In essence, he should come across as this kind of hard-ass father figure, but you secretly know you're his favorite child.

That's where you get the real impact at the end of the story.

Sticks & Stones

So, are you looking to tangle with some prehistoric creatures? No problem! Sticks & Stones is a furious, fun, and sometimes hilarious prehistoric Savage Worlds setting. So stop shaving. Stop bathing. Stop talking. Put on a comfortable loincloth, grab a club and let's rock and roll!

It is the Dawn of Humanity. 75,000 years in the past. The beginning of the last Ice Age. You may have studied about it in school. But some things were actually very, very different from what you learned in class . . .

Just like you were taught, our ancient ancestors—the Archaic Homo sapiens—had to contend with Neanderthals, Saber-Tooth Tigers, Woolly Mammoths, and a downright hostile environment.

But what you weren't taught is that our ancestors had other things to contend with. Things that later became legends - and sometimes even campy Hollywood movies. Things like dinosaurs that didn't quite become extinct. And Shamans who used real magic. And dead things that didn't stay that way. And even prehistoric Nerds!

Survival is the name of the game. But your characters won't know that. You'll be lucky if they even know their own names.

The *Sticks & Stones* miniatures game (available now from Jeff Valent Studios) and roleplaying game (to be released later this summer) are set in the Land of Lur, a prehistoric place that would be close to paradise—if it weren't for the encroaching Ice Age, the dinosaurs, the monstrous creatures, the undead, and the hostile tribes! Players choose armies based on Clans and Tribes who worship different Spirits (the Spirit of the Sun, the Spirit of the Moon, the Spirits of the Beasts, and the Spirit of Darkness).

In the roleplaying game, players become Archaic Homo

sapiens (or Ahs), Cave N.E.R.D.s, Neanderthals, Dino sapiens, or Homo floresiensis (Florz). In the miniatures game, these races comprise armies; players may also command Cave Orcs, Dinosaurs, prehistoric mammals, flyers, a few monsters, and, of course, Cave Zombies. "Neuro-Evolutionary Rostral Developers," or Cave N.E.R.D.s, are socially inept, but able to create fantastic inventions. Neanderthals are the stereotypical big, dumb brutish cavemen; Dino sapiens are humanoid dinosaurs; and Florz are Cave Halflings.

The *Sticks & Stones* games are both powered by the *Savage Worlds* rules. The miniatures rules contain all the information you need to play; the roleplaying game requires the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition* to play.

We have added a number of prehistoric twists to these rules, including keeping talking to a minimum (grunting is okay!) and using hands and fingers for measurement.

The books include information about the Land of Lur, Weird Prehistoric Science, Prehistoric Shamans, Beast Mastering, Invoking the Spirits, Using Vehicles & Mounts, Cave Gear, Vehicles, Gadgets & Relics, and a Bestiary. The roleplaying game has a Plot Point campaign, as well as other adventures that can easily be integrated into a campaign or run as "one shots."

The authors of the *Sticks & Stones* Miniatures Game are Rob "Lug" Lusk, David "Moog" Ross, Shane "Sokkem" Hensley, William "Gug" Littlefield, & Greg "Taah!" Whalen (with additional material by The Mysterious "Tel-Ur" & Mark "Nu Mon" Metzner).

Visit <http://www.savagesticks.com/> to see the gorgeous cover art and more information about the games!

I Love an Adventure

...and who doesn't? Here we showcase short adventures to drop into an existing campaign, or to provide an evening's entertainment.

The Heist

by Kalan

Setup

This adventure is best used once the characters have achieved some recognition amongst the V'sori as being a "menace." If you are running the Plot Point campaign, it is best placed before Episode Seven, "Turncoat," as some events in this adventure can be used as a lead-up to that particular episode. It also works best if the cell is already starting to be more "heroic," as opposed to demonstrating their villainous roots.

Learning of the Shipment

One day while the cell is between missions, they get a notice on their CommLinks from Dr. Destruction that there is an important V'sori shipment coming through Star City. He does not go into much detail on how he knows of this, only that the information came from an anonymous source.

Dr. Destruction is hesitant about sending the cell out on this mission, however he is interested in finding out what exactly is in this shipment, not to mention that this could put a crimp in the plans of the V'sori. He warns the cell to be careful on this mission, as it sounds very much like a trap.

The details of the shipment are as follows:

- The convoy will consist of four Sargasso transport ships, with two Barracudas as escort.
- The convoy is scheduled to arrive two days from the date of the message.
- The convoy will be approaching Star City from the north along Interstate 108.
- The only information on what exactly is in the shipment is that "it is of vital importance to our operations in the African theatre."
- A detailed map, showing the route the convoy will be taking once it reaches Star City, is provided.

Allow the cell some time to come up with a plan for intercepting the shipment. If the cell attempts to investigate the shipment further, allow them to make an Investigation roll, but levy a -4 penalty on the roll. If the character succeeds, he finds a name linked to the shipment—H'ulpa. If he manages a raise, they find out that H'ulpa is a mid-level logistics officer based in the Star City Docks district.

During the planning process, it becomes apparent that the best chance to intercept this shipment occurs before it arrives in Star City, about five miles outside of Judith Point on I-108. This is a perfect time for role-playing. No idea for *Shark Bytes*, Vol. 4, No. 1

the ambush should be taboo—let the cell run as wild as you are comfortable with.

The Ambush

Allow the cell some time to get their plans together prior to heading out to stop the convoy. They should arrive at the site of the ambush with just enough time to set up whatever their plan calls for. Once you feel the cell is finished setting up, a short time later they can spot the convoy nearing their location. Play out the encounter as you see fit, but surprisingly the convoy offers little to no resistance.



As the cell approaches any of the vehicles (make note of anyone who is keeping an active eye out for trouble), they notice something does not seem quite right with any of the occupants. Should the cell "request" that any of the drivers get out of their vehicles, it becomes immediately evident that the drivers in the V'sori battle armor are not V'sori—they are human! Shortly after being discovered for whom they are, the driver of the lead Barracuda slowly removes his helmet, and addresses whoever appears to be the leader of the cell.

Now I don't know who the heck you are, or what it is you're doing, but you must let us go quickly. We don't have much time left before they're onto us...

If someone begins interrogating this guy, he looks nervous, actively trying to avoid answering the questions. If intimidated enough, he finally says, "Aaron." He does not give much more than that, other than he and his group were hired by someone (all he knows is the name Smith) to take this convoy to Star City. Anyone with mental powers who thinks to "scan" Aaron gets images of: *war, death, urgency, need*. Anyone with empathic-type powers who is within 2" of Aaron is overwhelmed by a strong sense of urgency and need.

Aaron does not give up much willingly—if someone brings up what they have learned via the scan/empathic link, he gets even more defensive. One suggestion for running this confrontation would be to draw a card after every exchange. If a face card comes up, skip to **Hey! You're Ambushing Our Ambush!**

After the fifth "exchange," or whenever someone manages to score a raise on an Intimidation Test of Will (treat Aaron

as a Soldier), Aaron finally cracks, visibly relaxing as he leans up against the Barracuda, and reveals what he knows:

We're members of a small resistance cell. See, we don't fight the V'sori like you do. Rather than frontal assaults, we help support those whose lives they have destroyed. This convoy you're stopping is on its way to one of our bases overseas to aid the locals.

If pressed on how they came across the V'sori gear:

Well, it would seem that not all V'sori are supporters of the invasion, or at least that's our take on it. Up until a few months ago, we were a fairly minor organization, only loosely associated with similar groups around the world. Then we were approached by—of all people—a V'sori Logistics Technician named H'ulpa. He "allowed" us to acquire some V'sori equipment that could aid us in getting help to those who truly needed it. He also arranged for these items to travel on V'sori ships under the guise of "supplies."

This undoubtedly sounds unbelievable. Aaron can sense the probable disbelief, and then says, "Look, if you don't believe me, check the convoy yourself."

Presuming the cell has not done so yet, allow them the opportunity to check the convoy now (if they thought to check it earlier, give them the information which follows). Each of the four Sargasso transports are packed with boxes, labeled MUNITIONS—HANDLE WITH CARE. If the cell thinks to look inside any of the boxes, they find that they indeed have munitions inside. If "threatened" with this information, Aaron only says, "look closer."



Hey! You're Ambushing Our Ambush!

Allow anyone on active guard duty to make a Notice roll prior to this encounter (give anyone with Super Sensory type powers a +2 bonus). Adjust the following encounter according to when it takes place.

Those who succeed on the Notice roll see the telltale white plume of a missile streaking towards the convoy. Treat the missile as an Extra (just to keep track in initiative; it has a Toughness of 9, and a Parry of 8), and deal anyone who succeeded on the Notice roll into initiative. Unless it can be stopped, the missile will impact with the lead Barracuda in 3 rounds. If the missile is not stopped, it completely destroys the Barracuda, as well as two of the Sargasso transports behind it. It also deals 4d10 damage in a Large Burst Template centered on the Barracuda.

After the third round (regardless of whether the missile hits or not), the cell notices a contingent of V'sori coming up the road (start the contingent about 18" away from the cell). The contingent consists of 2 Drones per cell member, 1 K'tharen Warrior for every 2 cell Members, and a V'sori Warlord by the name of T'reshari aboard a V'sori Stingray (with a K'tharen Warrior pilot, and a K'tharen Warrior riding shotgun). They are coming at their full speed—and will reach the area around the convoy on the following round.

As soon as the V'sori come within 6" of the cell, T'reshari raises his right hand, and motions his troops to stand down, as he slowly removes his helmet. As he does so, the cell hears a voice coming from T'reshari—and they instantly recognize the tone and bearing of a V'sori War Lord.



T'reshari booms, a tone of definite disdain and arrogance can be picked up in his voice.

So, it would seem our little trap has indeed been sprung. How arrogant of H'ulpa to think he'd be able to sneak something like this under my watch. Not to mention all of you showing up to truly make my day."

Allow this to role-play out for as long as you feel comfortable. Be sure to really set the cell on edge by having T'reshari address each of them in turn, by name. If asked as to how he came to know they would be the ones to turn up to intercept this convoy, he replies, "We didn't know it would be you specifically, but we had determined the probability of you showing up to be high enough to risk leaking the information."

If Aaron is still alive, T'reshari turns to him specifically sometime during the banter:

And you, Mr. "Savior of the human filth," I must truly thank you for helping us root out the traitors within our midst. Have no fear; H'ulpa is reaping his just rewards for betraying our cause.

At that, Aaron is likely quite shaken and upset by the news—but it doesn't not last long, as T'reshari orders his vehicle's weapons to fire on the helpless human (allow any cell members a chance to interfere, especially anyone with some kind of Speed or Telekinetic style powers).

If someone intercepts the attack, T'reshari simply smiles, and continues:

Ahh...so you lot aren't as single-minded as we were led to believe. Sacrificing yourselves for these worthless humans. Very interesting indeed.

If the attack on Aaron was allowed to proceed unhindered, T'reshari chuckles aloud:

So...it would seem that even you have a streak of self-preservation. How noble of you, to allow those who are simply wishing to assist your pathetic race's attempts at survival, to die for your cause. I applaud your efforts.

T'reshari focuses his attention again on the cell, and grins:

Now for you lot. The Overmind will surely grant me a place amongst the Shocklords after this, so if you please, would you kindly surrender? Of course, I am secretly hoping you don't, as it has been a very long time since I last faced adversaries worthy of my notice.

If the cell decides to surrender, T'reshari immediately has them shackled in Nullifiers and forcibly escorted to the nearest detention facility in Star City. However, it is far more likely that they will resist, in which case T'reshari smiles, dons his helmet, and orders his troops to destroy the cell and any intact vehicles from the convoy. If any of the convoy drivers have survived up to this point, allow them to fight alongside the cell in battle. Treat them as Soldiers from *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*. The vehicles have had their weapons systems disabled; however, the crews do have some weapons available.

Victorious?

Should the cell come out on top, allow them to deal with T'reshari. He does not divulge a whole lot of information. If the cell shows interest in what has happened to H'ulpa, he just smiles, and informs them that it is too late for him. Before leaving to intercept the convoy, T'reshari left instructions to round up H'ulpa and a number of others who were involved in the plot.

If Aaron survived, he pleads with the cell to help them get to a safe harbor, so that they can arrange to have the shipment moved. It will be far more difficult now that H'ulpa has been captured, but perhaps the cell could beseech Dr. Destruction for assistance in getting these supplies to their final destination.

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Con Men

The Savage Worlds Explorers Society

Ever wonder how you can spread the Savage word to all those poor unlucky gamers you see at the conventions playing the same old, same old?

The best way is to jump in there and run some games yourself! The *Savage Worlds Explorers Society* is all about helping you be successful at running convention games and rewarding you for doing it!

We offer a place for GMs to share with each other, helpful aids, previews of upcoming *Savage Worlds* projects, and much more! Becoming an Explorer can also net you some cool branded items just for running games! Stickers, T-shirts (yes they are coming soon! Check the site for more details!), and some other as of yet unannounced freebies are coming for you devoted GMs!

Running a game at a con can seem intimidating, but take it from the Explorers, it's not as bad as you might think! So the next time you're going to a convention that doesn't have enough Savageness, why not bring your own!?

Visit the web page at www.savageworldsexplorerssociety.com for more information and thank you for supporting *Savage Worlds*!

- Evil Mike and Chaos Steve

Upcoming Conventions

OST-Con	May 1-4	Neukirchen, Germany
Jencon	May 1-3	Mount Vernon, IA
HMGS-South	May 2-4	Orlando, FL
KublaCon	May 23-26	Burlingame, CA
MichiCon	June 13-14	Detroit, MI
Origins	June 25-29	Columbus, OH
GenCon	August 14-17	Indianapolis, IN
Con/Cob	October 2-5	Hudson, OH
Flatcon	Oct 3-5	Bloomington, IL
MACE	Nov 7-9	High Point, NC



The Stuff of Legend

The *Stuff of Legend* showcases Legendary (or at least more experienced) characters available as NPCs. This month we have some great entries from Wiggy, including a few you may already know.

VILLAINS GALORE!

by Wiggy Wade-Williams

Gumball (WC)

Bertie Braithwaite loved bubblegum as a kid. He held the school record for blowing the biggest bubble for years. When he left school, he got a job working in a bubblegum factory as a taster. Sheer heaven! One fateful day a vat of liquid bubblegum exploded, drenching Bertie. Rather than killing him, it somehow merged with his body and gave him the sticky power of gum. Bertie has since turned to a life of crime to fund his bubblegum habit.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 0

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Distinctive Appearance (bright pink skin), Greed (Minor), Habit (Major: bubblegum), Weakness (Major: ice/cold)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Fleet-Footed, Power Points

Super Powers:

- Altered Form (6): *More Elastic, 3" Reach, can stretch up to 150% larger. Fall-Proof. +4 Armor against matter or kinetic attacks (made of bubblegum).*
- Ensnare (7): *Area Effect. Ranged Attack (gum bubble).*
- Leaping (3): *Leap 8" vertically and 16" horizontally (springy legs).*
- Toughness (3): *+2 Toughness (rubbery skin).*
- Wall Walker (1): *Can move on any surface (sticky hands).*

Hammer (WC)

Dmitri Rasputinovich and his twin sister Olga (a.k.a. Sickie) are the results of the Russian Mafia dabbling into creating superpowered enforcers through experimental drugs. Hammer specializes in hardcore combat, carrying a huge sledgehammer wherever he goes. Luckily, he isn't the most agile of opponents, but when he hits it packs a mean punch. Hammer and Sickie were in Star City when the V'sori attacked and have remained there as resistance fighters. Hammer's suit is red with a yellow hammer and sickle on the chest. Hammer and Sickie always work together.

Race: Human

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Experience Points: 5

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+5, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d8, Knowledge (Language: English) d4, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Survival d4

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Clueless, Gloater, Mean, Heartless

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Brawny, Nerves of Steel, Power Points

Super Powers:

- Attack, Melee (8): *Device. Focus. Str+3d6+2 damage, knockback 1d10". Heavy Weapon (sledgehammer).*
- Immunity (4): *Kinetic. Takes half damage from fists, bullets, and blunt weapons (toughened skin).*
- Super Attributes (8): *Strength +6 steps, Vigor +2 steps (experimental drugs).*

Sickle (WC)

The drugs given to Olga Rasputinovich enhanced her natural gymnastic abilities and heightened her ability to detect danger. As Sickie, she carries a large scythe and while not as strong as her brother, Hammer, she is a skilled opponent. She is the brains of the pair and formulates all of their plans. Her costume is identical to her brother's, but looks better on her slim, toned body. Hammer and Sickie always work together.



Race: Human

Experience Points: 5

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d12, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 48; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Arrogant, Heartless, Overconfident, Quirk (spends first action carving "S" into opponents)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Power Points

Super Powers:

- Attack, Melee (2): *Device. Str+1d6+1. +1 Reach. Heavy Weapon (sickle).*
- Leaping (3): *Leap 8" vertically and 16" horizontally. Death from above (enhanced gymnastic skills).*
- Parry (2): *+2 Parry (enhanced gymnastic skills).*
- Speed (5): *48 Pace. Opponents receive -2 to attack rolls when she is moving (experimental drugs and heightened muscles).*
- Super Edge (2): *Frenzy (advanced combat training).*
- Super Edge (2): *Level Headed (advanced combat training).*
- Super Edge (2): *Sweep (advanced combat training).*
- Super Skill (2): *Fighting +2 steps (advanced combat training).*



Hangman (WC)

Bert Nichols became a vigilante in response to the growing crime in his neighborhood. At first he merely caught criminals and handed them over to the police, but the courts proved inefficient and the crooks were back on the street in days. Bert changed his modus operandi, built his lightweight nylon lasso, and became Hangman. Unfortunately, Hangman takes a dim view of any crime—even littering—and punishes every lawbreaker. That he too is now a criminal has obviously escaped his mind.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 20

Attributes: Agility d12+3, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Stealth d10, Throwing d12+4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6 [12 swinging]; **Parry:** 8;

Toughness: 6

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor: he's judge, jury, and executioner), Heartless, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Acrobat, Arcane Background (Super Powers), First Strike, Power Points (x2)

Super Powers:

- **Ensnare (8):** *Device. Ranged Attack. Stronger. Range 12". Foes are -4 to escape. Uses Fighting or Throwing. Special: on a raise the target is caught round the neck and takes nonlethal damage equal to Hangman's Strength each round he is ensnared (noose).*
- **Super Attributes (7):** *Agility +5 steps, Strength +2 steps (training).*
- **Super Skill (2):** *Throwing +4 steps (training).*
- **Swinging (3):** *Can move 12" in tactical setting (noose).*

Chainsaw (WC)

Unlike most supervillains, Chainsaw (alias Pete Kopovski) doesn't dream of world conquest, financial wealth, or other such lofty ideals. He wants to be remembered for one thing—setting the highest body count for a serial killer. Were it not for the needs of the Resistance, this psychopathic criminal would have been sentenced to life in prison without parole. For now, he's a useful fighter in the war for freedom.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 20

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12+2, Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: -3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Habit (Minor: always polishing his chainsaws), Heartless, Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Arcane Background (Super Powers), Florentine, Power Points (x2), Two-Fisted

Super Powers:

- **Attack, Melee (16):** *Device. Focus. Str+4d6+3. Chainsaw has two weapons, and has bought the*

Psicopath (WC)

Reggie Brooke's powers were awakened when he volunteered for a government experiment into mind control and remote viewing. Realizing that if his powers were discovered he would end up as a government tool, he broke out and set himself up as a crime boss, determined to rule through subtle control rather than brute force. He wears a black costume with a silver infinity symbol on the chest.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 10

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12 Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Gloater, Habit (Minor: laughs quietly to self), Overconfident, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Charismatic, Power Points

Super Powers:

- **Attack, Ranged (7):** *Nonlethal. Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d6, RoF 1. Heavy Weapon (mind blast).*
- **Mind Control (10):** *Mind Wipe. More Minds. Can control up to three minds at once (indomitable will).*
- **Telepathy (3):** *Can communicate mentally to all minds within 1 mile (mental powers).*

power twice (8 points each).
Heavy Weapon (small chainsaws).

- Fear (2): Device. Opponents must make a Guts check (skull mask).
- Super Attributes (5): Agility +1 step, Strength +5 steps (enhanced adrenal gland).
- Super Skills (2): Fighting +4 steps (advanced training).



(advanced training).

- Wall Walker (1): Can move along any surface (strong grip).

Worm (WC)

Humphrey Knuck is one of life's victims. An interest in astronomy and computers and the physique of a pencil have labeled him an easy target for most of his life. His fellow pupils nicknamed him "worm." Desperate to be someone, Humphrey injected himself with radioactive worm DNA—the result of reading too many comic books—gaining the creature's powers. Now as the Worm, he strikes back at whoever has tormented him, trying his best to make their lives a misery.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 50

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Astronomy) d12, Knowledge (Biology) d10, Knowledge (Chemistry) d10, Knowledge (Genetics) d12, Knowledge (Geology) d10, Shooting d8.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Heartless, Outsider (total nerd), Phobia (Major: bladed weapons), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Fleet Footed, Nerves of Steel, Power Points (x3), Scholar (x2): Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Genetics)

Super Powers:

- Altered Form (8): Fall-Proof. Can stretch up to 250% larger. +5 Reach. +4 Armor vs kinetic attacks (mutable body).
- Attack, Ranged (11): Burst Effect. Extra Damage. Range 12/24/48, Damage 4d6, RoF 1, Medium Burst Template. Heavy Weapon (digestive enzymes).
- Burrowing (2): Can move through soil and loose earth. Attack from below (wiggly body).
- Growth (4): +2 Size and Strength. Stats not included above (mutable body).
- Super Skills (5): Knowledge (Astronomy) +2 steps, Knowledge (Biology) +2 steps, Knowledge (Chemistry) +2 steps, Knowledge (Geology) +2 steps, Knowledge (Genetics) +2 steps (super nerd).

Black Scorpion (WC)

Black Scorpion is the codename of an Arab terrorist leader who commands a number of Resistance cells in the Middle East. His superpowers are the result of being stung by a black scorpion while conducting a terrorist attack on a suspect Israeli nuclear test facility. His skin is black and chitinous, and he has a scorpion's tail, complete with deadly sting.

Qabbalah, a Jewish sorcerer, has vowed to kill Black Scorpion after he blew up Qabbalah's lair, killing his wife and two children.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 40

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12, Knowledge (Explosives) d8, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Survival d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 48; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11(4)

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Distinctive Appearance, Enemy (Major: Qabbalah, an Israeli supervillain), Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Nerves of Steel, Power Points (x2), Sweep

Super Powers:

- Armor (6): +4 Heavy Armor (chitinous skin).
- Extra Limb (5): One additional limb. +1 Reach (scorpion's tail).
- Infection (4): Opponents must make a Vigor roll or die in 1d6 hours (poison sting).
- Speed (5): Pace 48. Opponents are -2 to attack when he is moving (super fast).
- Super Attributes (3): Agility +1 step, Strength +2 steps (mutated DNA).
- Super Skills (1): Fighting +1 step, Stealth +1 step

Harlequin (WC)

When Dr Nicola-Jane Bartz, psychiatrist and amateur astronomer, went to see the total eclipse in England, she got more than she bargained for. As the eclipse neared its maximum, strange energy waves from the sun and moon washed over her, starting a rapid transformation—half her body became jet black, the other pure white. The transformation also affected her mentally, and she has two distinct personalities—one pure and good, one dark and evil. Her costume mirrors her flesh, being half-white and half-black.

In game terms, her personality depends on the color of her initiative card. If it is red, her good side is in control—if it's

black, she's evil. If dealt a Joker, she must make a Spirit roll (with the +2 bonus from the Joker) as a free action. On a success, the last personality retains control. With a failure, the two personalities argue and she loses her action. Whichever personality is dominant when combat ends remains in control until the next initiative card is dealt.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 75

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Healing d10, Knowledge (Astronomy) d6, Knowledge (Psychology) d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (evil side only), Disability (Major: complete split personality), Distinctive Appearance, Habit (Minor: argues with self in two different voices), Pacifist (Major: good side only)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Power Points (x4)

Super Powers:

- Attack, Ranged (10): *Area Effect: Medium Burst Template. Nonlethal. Extra Damage. Range 12/24/48, Damage 4d6, RoF 1. Heavy Weapon (black light).*
- Energy Control (5): *Darkness. Elemental Trick: Darkness. Nullify. Damage 2d6. (absorb light).*
- Energy Control (5): *Light. Elemental Trick: Light. Nullify. Damage 2d6. (project light).*
- Immunity (4): *Darkness. Direct attacks cause half damage (glowing aura).*
- Immunity (4): *Light. Direct attacks cause half damage (turns black as night).*



Legion (WC)

Dimensional physics has always been a dangerous field of study. With unknown powers existing in dimensions beyond our own, the potential for reward for the first scientist to breach the dimensional barrier—and survive—drives many to take great risks. Dr. Lorraine Parker took one risk too many and opened up a dimensional portal, through which walked four duplicates of herself.

Before she could stop them, they merged with her, granting her superpowers over dimensional energy. Not only can she throw bolts of energy and shape it to manipulate objects, but her duplicates can separate themselves from her, adding their own firepower to hers.

Before she summons her duplicates, she always says the Biblical line, "My name is Legion, for we are many." It's corny, but effective, especially when followed by a deadly volley of energy bolts.

Legions duplicates are Extras and are therefore subject to the bonuses granted by her Leadership Edges (sneaky, eh?).

Race: Human

Experience Points: 75

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d4, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Physics) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Gloater, Habit (Minor: always has to deliver her "opening line"), Phobia (Minor: mirrors), Terminally Ill

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Hold the Line, Improved Level Headed, Inspire, Level Headed, Power Points (x4), Steady Hands

Super Powers:

- Attack, Ranged (16): *Extra Damage. Nonlethal. Rapid Fire. Range 12/24/48, Damage 4d6, RoF 3. Heavy Weapon (energy blasts).*
- Duplication (14): *Can create four duplicates (dimensional twins).*
- Force Control (4): *Level 2 (Strength d10). Range 12". Medium Burst Template (focused dimensional energy).*
- Heightened Sense (1): *+2 to Notice rolls (multiple dimensional senses).*

Pied Piper (WC)

While rummaging through his great-grandfather's attic, Klaus Werner discovered a small set of pipes and a mysterious letter written in the 17th century. The letter said that one of Klaus' distant relatives was one of the children taken from Hamelin by the Pied Piper of (supposed) legend. The child had managed to escape the Piper's prison and stolen his pipes, which Klaus now held in his hand.

After some experimentation, Klaus discovered that the pipes could indeed be used to control rats. Better still, by playing different notes, Klaus could generate fear in humans and even control their minds. Seeing a chance to get rich quick—and get some babes to fulfill his basest perversions—Klaus bought a harlequin costume and became Pied Piper.

His Minions are citizens who the Piper has controlled so often they have become brainwashed slaves. This is

simply a way of accounting for his Minions and cannot be used to permanently brainwash other characters.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 70

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12 [d12+2], Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Music) d12, Stealth d8, Taunt d12

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Anemic, Greedy (Major), Obese, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Nerves of Steel, Power Points (x4), Strong Willed

Super Powers:

- Animal Control (2): *Device. Swarm of rats (pipes).*
- Fear (2): *Device. Opponents must make a Guts check (certain notes).*
- Minions (14): *Has 14 minions who have been mind controlled so often they are now permanent lackeys. All are armed with swords, clubs, and other assorted melee weapons (thugs).*
- Mind Control (16): *Device. More Minds. Can control 9 minds at once (pipes).*
- Super Attribute (1): *Device. Smarts +2 steps (playing the pipes).*

Grym Reaper (WC)

Claudia Shapman was dying of cancer and she knew it. All medical treatment had failed. As she lay dying, Death himself appeared beside her bed. Her time was short, he said, but there was a way to avoid what lie beyond. In return for eternal service, she would be granted an ageless body possessed of great strength. All she had to do was kill appointed people at an appointed time. Prepared to live an eternity as undead rather than face whatever lay beyond the grave, she accepted.

Death has jurisdiction over all life, including the Fins and V'sori. Whether Death has some insight into the future of mankind is unknown, but he has declared all Fins and V'sori high priority targets for Grym's scythe.

Her scythe doesn't cause slashing wounds. Instead, it mimics heart attacks, ages victims, and so on. To all effects and purposes, those she kills die of natural causes.

Race: Human

Experience Points: 80

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d12+2, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: -3; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 11

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Distinctive Appearance (rotting corpse), Habit (keeps list of victims), Heartless, Servitor

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Block, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Fleet Footed, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Improved Level Headed, Level Headed,

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Improved Sweep, Power Points (x5), Sweep, Trademark Weapon (scythe)

Super Powers:

- Attack, Melee (6): *Device. Str+4d6+3. Heavy Weapon (scythe).*
- Damage Field (3): *Adjacent targets suffer 2d6 damage (necromantic energy).*
- Decay (3): *Opponents must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer a wound (life drain).*
- Extra Actions (3): *One extra action (super fast).*
- Fear (3): *Scary. Terror. Opponents must make a Guts roll at -2 (undead).*
- Fearless (2): *Immune to Fear and Intimidation (soulless).*
- Intangibility (5): *Can walk through walls (nothing can halt death).*
- Super Attributes (10): *Agility +1 step, Spirit +1 step, Strength +4 steps, Vigor +4 steps (undead).*
- Super Skill (2): *Device (scythe). Fighting +4 steps.*
- Undead (4): *+2 Toughness. Ignore two wound penalties. Immune to poison and disease. Piercing weapons do half damage. Called shots do no extra damage (dark blessing).*



The Goddess (WC)

Rose Gardner was a campaigner for green issues before coming into contact with the mysterious Orb of Gaia, a powerful magical artifact. She was transformed into a half-human half-plant monstrosity, but the change drove her insane. Instead of using her superpowers to protect the environment, she has become set on destroying all animal life, leaving a world populated by plants.

Race: Human/Plant Hybrid

Experience Points: 100

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10, Taunt d6

Charisma: -8; **Pace:** 6 [6 gliding]; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12(4)

Gear: \$1000

Hindrances: Alien Form (half-human, half-plant), All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty, Overconfident, Ugly, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Super Powers), Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, First Strike, Fleet Footed, Improved Level Headed, Level Headed, Improved Sweep, Power Points (x5), Strong Willed, Sweep

Super Powers:

- Armor (6): +4 Heavy Armor (thick bark).

- Attack, Melee (8): Str+3d6. Knockback 1d10" (powerful arms).
- Decay (3): Opponents must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer a wound (corrosive sap).
- Fear (3): Scary. Terror. Opponents must make a Guts roll at -2 (abomination).
- Fearless (2): Immune to Fear and Intimidation (soulless).
- Matter Control (9): Level 1. Plants. Binding. Gliding. Can control 50,000 lbs (magic).
- Super Attributes (9): Strength +7 steps, Vigor +2 steps (super physiology).

White Silver, Blood Steel: News from the World of Shaintar: Immortal Legends

Greetings my friends! It's been too long since I last shared words in these pages, but it's high time to bring you all up to speed on what's happening with *Shaintar: Immortal Legends* (the epic high fantasy setting for *Savage Worlds*, published by Talisman Studios).

Sales of the PDF have been wonderful, and I am personally grateful for the amazing support. For all of you who have been waiting for the print version, I have rather excellent news to share! From the official Talisman press release:

"Talisman Studios is proud to announce that it has moved beyond the PDF arena and will start selling print versions of their most popular books effective immediately.

"For retailers, print books will be available through Studio 2 Publishing while online sales will be managed directly from the Talisman shop at www.talisman-studios.com. The first product to benefit from this move is the Shaintar rule book, which will shortly be available online. Retailers should contact Studio 2 directly for trade distribution. Suzerain material will follow shortly."

This means *Shaintar: Immortal Legends* will be available both for direct purchase from the Talisman site as well as in your favorite gaming retailers; in fact, I would be really grateful if you would all start bugging your game store managers to ask for and carry the book on their shelves.

In other news, I've put together a rather spectacular program of gaming for both the Origins Game Fair and GenCon. Called "The Burning Heart," it is a mini-campaign of truly epic proportions to be played out over the two shows.

Origins will feature the three main Scenarios: Release, Revelation, and Requiem. GenCon has the complete program, including all-day walk up Skirmishes (where heroes can fight the battles of the War of Flame and gain Level Ups), the three Scenarios, and the battle interactive style Finale that WILL decide the fate of Shaintar from that day forward!

I am also hard at work on the second Plot Point arc, "The Chosen of the Horn," which follows the "Raven's Quest" arc found in the first book. A stand-alone book based on the Modular Adventure Creation System (M.A.C.S.) that

was presented in *Shaintar: Immortal Legends* is also in the works.

As always, there's a ton of free material posted in the "Journal" section of the Talisman site, with lots more Worldbook information and some new Edges and other free content; I highly encourage you all to visit our site frequently to get all the good stuff.

As always, thanks so much for the amazing support. 2008 is going to be a major year for Shaintar and the fans who love it!

—Sean Patrick Fannon

"It is the year 3121. The Gates of Hell have opened after a century of peace. The Kal-a-Nar Empire is engaged in the largest invasion ever into the Southern Kingdoms. Olara barely holds, and Galea, the Freelands, and Grayson's Grey Rangers are stretched to their limits on all fronts.

The elvish kingdom of Landra'Feya remains a vital barrier to the forces coming from the west—the demon-worshipping mercenaries of the army-for-hire called the Maelstrom, and the opportunistic raiders of the Malakar Dominion. Breaches have occurred everywhere, though, and bands of demonic Childer and their acolyte masters wreck havoc throughout the great Forest.

Heroes of all types and training are called on to try and halt the onrush of evil and stem the tide of destruction. There are constant skirmishes over key terrain, vital missions to take or defend territory or rescue key people, and other important scenarios that will decide the fate of the region.

These are the days of fire and blood. The War of Flame is upon the people of Shaintar.

Amidst all of this, a plot is unfolding. If it succeeds, there will be no hope for Landra'Feya. The very heart of the Southern Kingdoms will burn, and Light and Life will be thrown on the Queen of Hell's pyre of war! Will the heroes discover the truth in time? Will they be able to stop what is coming? Or will all of Shaintar be scorched and torn asunder by the fiery wrath of Ceynara and her hordes?

At Origins and GenCon in 2008, you and the heroes you join with will decide the fate of a world!"

Let Me Tell You a Story

Game reports, short fiction, a fictionalized account of an adventure from the character's perspective...all of these are the domain of *Let Me Tell You a Story*.

Necessary Plot Hooks

by Michael "Noshrok Grimskull" Schau

Weird Energy

An Omega source reported some weird energy fluctuations emitting from a V'sori lab in Misantla, Mexico. A team of human Omega supporters was sent in to investigate, but failed to report back. The source of the energy fluctuations was a renegade super who tried to sabotage the lab facility. He died in the attempt, but not before releasing a mutant strain of contact poison that turns humans (and only humans!) affected by it into zombies—and most of Misantla is infected by now! Will the team link up with the few remaining V'sori still defending the lab? Will they try to overload the fusion generator in the lab and wipe out Misantla? Will they try to engineer a cure using the lab facilities?

The Eleanora Maersk

<http://shipoftheday.blogspot.com/2007/11/eleanora-maersk.html>

The V'sori have developed a new security code for their high security messages and computer systems. This code has proven unbreakable. The team needs to get one of the eight decoding machines known to Omega. Unfortunately, seven of them are inside high security fortresses all over the globe. The last one, however, is located aboard the Eleanora Maersk, a super freighter the V'sori turned into a floating arms factory. The team needs to board the floating fortress and get that decoder. Will they follow Omega's plan of a night-time insertion via parachute? During a storm conjured up by a fellow Omegan to cover their approach? Will they sink the ship to cover their tracks?

In Need of an Inventor

Gavin Farnsworth, a highly intelligent scientist forced to work for the V'sori, has been shipped to Star City to help in the development of some major anti-Omega equipment. The team is

tasked with the job of kidnapping Farnsworth so that he can work for Omega. Will the team try to break into the compound Farnsworth is held in? Will they discover that he eats lunch in a specific restaurant outside the compound three times a week? Will they get him out alive?

Stop the Inventor

Remember Gavin Farnsworth? He did a good job working for Omega, but the treatment he suffered while working for the V'sori had left him mentally unstable... and despite Omega's best efforts, he finally cracked. That in itself is already a loss for Omega, but what's worse is that Farnsworth is also delusional now and believes that Omega and the V'sori are secretly working together to totally exploit this planet! And he took a bunch of his newest inventions with him on a crusade to rid the earth from both the V'sori and Omega—and he has in-depth knowledge on both organizations. Can the team stop him?

Will they even want to stop him from harming the V'sori? Will Farnsworth start a guerilla war? Or an all-out rampage in a 75-ton armed and armored mecha?

Here Be Omegans

Omega has lost contact with a secret training facility in the Antarctic. Since there are no signs of V'sori activity in that region, the team is sent in to investigate. What lies waiting for them in the howling cold? What happened to the staff and the Omegans-in-training? And why is there a giant crater blasted into the ice some distance from the camp?

Puzzle of Death

Somebody is killing influential V'sori sympathizers. The V'sori are blaming Omega, of course, but what they don't know is that every single victim was a spy for Omega. The killer is also quite confident in his abilities, because he always leaves some cryptic clues indicating his next victim at the scene. It is up to the team to stop the killings before Omega's entire network of spies is eliminated. But first, they have to solve his trail of clues... Will the team be able to solve the puzzles in time? Who is this mysterious killer and how does he know about the spies? Is he a mind reader? A super sorcerer? Or even a V'sori assassin?



Cryptozoological Society

Monsters and new races to terrify your players! This month, aliens from other V'sori conquered worlds!

Necessary Evil: **Extraterrestrials**

by Bob Bretz

So your players have battled Drones and War Spheres, K'tharen Warriors and SOCorp Operatives, and are now looking for some more challenges. Battling super-powered traitors could be a option and might remind the them of times when similar battles happened almost daily; but even this might get old in time. So what's a busy Game Master to do?

This article provides a few more options to challenge players with some new threats. Some of these opponents and creatures could be the focus of a whole adventure. Some are more useful as a challenge during a much larger adventure, maybe even inserted into an existing plot point from the *Necessary Evil* book. A few suggestions are implied in the descriptions below, but feel free to adapt them to the game as best serves your campaign.

Enforcers

Long ago, an interstellar alliance of planets known as the Darian Republic found itself in a troublesome situation. Located between two other powerful interstellar empires (the Scalarins, see below, being one of them), and possessing resources and strategically important planets, the Darrians were often drawn into conflicts. After being nearly destroyed by a major war, their greatest scientists and inventors came up with a plan to protect them from future invasions.

Known for their advanced scientific and technological knowledge (yet another reason for several invasions), Darian scientists created a race of robots that would protect them from external threats. They named them Enforcers, maintaining Darian rule along the Republic's borders. Over time the Enforcers where granted a form of artificial intelligence and self-awareness that allowed them to operate more autonomously. They eventually evolved into peacekeepers, capable of maintaining Darian law within the Republic and protecting its borders from invasion.

In time, the Darrians came to rely on the Enforcers to protect them. Since they had every reason to do so, the robots always dispensed the law fairly and dispassionately and never failed to carry out their duty or abused their power in any way. But that would all change.

An Enforcer was hunting down a space vessel that attacked a border world of the Republic. Suddenly, it was ambushed by a group of V'sori vessels. They captured the robot (with some difficulty) and reprogrammed it to accept only V'sori orders. They sent it back to the Darian Republic

and had it infect a control program to its fellow Enforcers; the robots share a communications network that allowed a viral program to spread quite quickly. Once the V'sori controlled all of the Enforcers, they hatched their plan.

The V'sori ordered the Enforcers to attack the Darian Republic military and government forces and facilities from within. In short order, the Republic government lay in ruins. The K'tharen where sent in and mopped up what little resistance was left. The V'sori now had a hundred new planets in it's ever expanding empire and a force of deadly robots at their control.



The V'sori usually use this new resource in a Special Forces capacity. After the K'tharen and other V'sori forces have conquered new territory, if resistance forces need to be hunted down or a harsh environment needs quelling, the Enforcers are often sent in to get the job done. They are not necessarily the only resource for such operations, just one tool in the chest of V'sori oppression. Their masters have found a way of using the robot's natural abilities in a way that suits their needs.

There are about a hundred Enforcers stationed on Earth. Before the invasion, Earth's heroes encountered Enforcers on a number of occasions, usually due to some kind of misunderstanding causing a conflict with Alpha Force or other of Earth's heroes. Now they are used to fight Omega cells that prove too strong for other forces, or tracking down hidden cells that have proven difficult to locate.

The Enforcers are about 7 feet tall, humanoid in shape, covered in gray metal that is quite durable and clearly resemble robots. Though sentient, they show no emotion (possibly a result of the V'sori programming), and they speak with synthesized voices that reverberate with cold, robotic efficiency.

They come in three models: a standard version that makes up the bulk of their number, heavy assault model with modules on their shoulders for heavy weapons, and a command model that resembles a standard model but with red markings on their upper arms indicating their rank. They usually operate in groups of five, with three standard models, one heavy assault model, and one command model.

Standard Model

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d10, Tracking d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14

Special Abilities:

- Regeneration

Powers:

- Attack, Ranged (9): 4d6
- Construct (5)
- Darkvision (2)
- Ensnare (5): "Energy Net", Ranged Attack
- Fearless
- Heightened Senses (2): Tracking
- Toughness (13): +6, Hardy

Heavy Assault Model

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d10, Tracking d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14

Special Abilities:

- Regeneration

Powers:

- Attack, Ranged (19): 4d6, Area Effect (Medium Template), ROF 3, AP 2
- Construct (5)
- Darkvision (2)
- Fearless
- Heightened Senses (2): Tracking
- Toughness (13): +6, Hardy

Command Model (WC)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d10, Tracking d10

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14

Special Abilities:

- Regeneration

Powers:

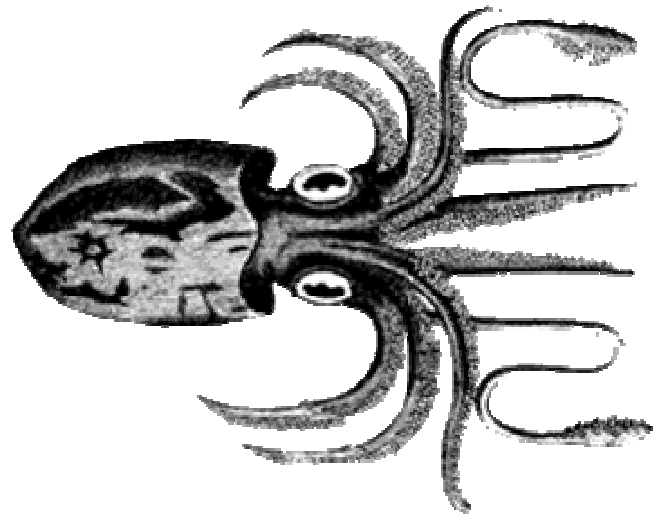
- Attack, Ranged (9): 4d6
- Broadcast (3): More Range

- Construct (5)
- Darkvision (2)
- Ensnare (5): "Energy Net", Ranged Attack
- Fearless
- Heightened Senses (2): Tracking
- Interface (3): Code Breaker
- Toughness (13): +6, Hardy

Leviathans

Soon after the V'sori conquered Earth, they began to investigate how to use the planet's resources for their own needs. One low priority project was to create a creature that could protect underwater locations, such as the captured city of Atlantis.

The first logical candidates for experimentation were sharks, but the creatures lacked the basic level of intelligence necessary for the programming process, a process by which the creature is subjected to telepathic instructions. The next candidates were squid, whose intelligence and fierceness made them perfect candidates. A little genetic engineering, and the Leviathans were born.



Leviathans are gigantic squid, like what science fiction writers have theorized actually exist. They are extremely intelligent (but still only at an animal level) and are telepathically programmed by V'sori scientists with very specific instructions—usually something like, "swim around here and attack anything that you find." Though programmed, they will fall back to natural instinct and swim away if they take enough damage, but they are never frightened.

A few Leviathans seem to have broken their programming or maybe it just didn't seem to "take." These essentially return to their natural instincts and return to the deep; but a few actually track down humans as prey and have been known to stalk the shores of Star City.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d12

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** -; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- Aquatic: Pace 12
- Bite: Str+d6
- Hardy
- Ink: projects ink that inflict a -2 penalty to opponent's Notice checks
- Size +5

Powers:

- Altered Form (3): Rubbery Body (+4 Toughness to kinetic attacks)
- Attack, Melee (6): +3d6
- Extra Limbs (15): 4 limbs, +3 reach
- Fearless (2)

"Rat-Dogs"

After the V'sori conquered Earth, their supply ships began to make regular deliveries to their occupation forces stationed on the planet. While they brought supplies and troops, they also brought stowaways. One such stowaway is a large rodent-like beast called a Vimrin.

Vimrin found shelter and more importantly food aboard the V'sori transport ships that were receiving cargo on another planet. When the vessels landed on Earth, the Vimrin found literally better pastures on the war-ravaged planet. They found sanctuary underground or in buildings that suit their needs.

Over time, they began to breed and multiply at an incredible rate. Their size and ferocity soon devastated their earthly rodent cousins and Vimrin became a pest of dangerous proportions. Though shy and fearful of humans and other larger creatures, Vimrin live in large communal groups and will scavenge for food together as a group. They attack living creatures—a favorite tactic is to swarm a potential prey and kill it with their massive incisors.

Omega believes that the V'sori intentionally brought the creatures to Earth in an attempt to harass anyone trying to hide out underground. Several Omega Cells have reported being troubled by the creatures, and more than a few people are thought to have been killed by the beast, though usually they only go after small or wounded creatures. Due to their size and their rat-like appearance, the Vimrin have been given a nickname that has stuck, "Rat-Dogs."

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Survival d4.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- Bite: Str+d4
- Immunity (Disease)
- Low Light Vision
- Size -1
- Mass Attack: "Rat Dogs" attack as a group and have learned to take advantage of their numbers. As a result, they can have a Gang Up bonus of up to +5.

Scalarins

Of the many intelligent species that populate the Milky Way Galaxy, the Scalarins were one of the most militaristic and aggressive. The shape-shifters created a massive empire spanning hundreds of star systems. They plagued Earth for decades, sparring with Alpha Force and Champion on their many attempts to conquer the planet. However, for about five years almost nothing had been heard from them, the V'sori had struck.

Their immense appetite for conquest led the Scalarins to over extend themselves. Their empire was simply too large for them to efficiently manage. And as bureaucracy wasn't one of their strengths, their empire would become an empty shell where worlds were virtually left to their own devices. The V'sori saw an opportunity and invaded. In short order, they had destroyed the Scalarin Fleet and allowed hundreds of worlds to be cut off from outside support many of who required regular supply. The Scalarins surrendered after K'tharen burned their homeworld to a cinder and killed the Scalarin Emperor as an example to those who survived.

In the aftermath, the V'sori began the process of converting the surviving population of Scalarins into Drones. During the research stage, the V'sori Scientist realized that there was a problem with the process. The Scalarins shape-shifting abilities makes their physical form unstable and unsuited to the various internal equipment that all Drones possess. The scientist came up with a different plan.

Instead of a technological solution, the V'sori would use their great mental powers and alter the Scalarin minds. They now have no real free will of their own. The V'sori leadership use them as undercover agents to infiltrate groups they suspect of duplicity. The mind blanked Scalarin would be programmed for a specific mission and return to "base" upon completion.

The methods used on the Scalarin mind allows V'sori to detect them with their psionic powers regardless of what shape they have assumed. As yet, none of them has ever broken the programming and Omega has never been able to do so either.

In their natural forms, the Scalarins are a white mass of protoplasmic-like material with nerve endings that serve as eyes. They are rarely seen in this form, as they are only active when they are on a mission and have assumed the appropriate form.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Persuasion d12, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- Infravision

Powers:

- Altered Form (4): "Rubbery Body" +4 to kinetic-based attacks, Fall-Proof
- Attack, Melee (4): 2d6
- Chameleon (8): Inanimate Object, Voice

What We Talk About When We Talk About Games

New concepts, and more detailed or alternative explanations and uses for rules. This month, Cutter tells us how he keeps his players hoppin' in *Necessary Evil*.

UNBELIEVABLE BASTARDS

How to Run a Kick-Ass *Necessary Evil* Campaign

by M. A. Cutter

WARNING! GAME MASTERS ONLY!

The V'sori High Command has deemed this material to be in violation of 23 Top Secret Directives and rife with SPOILERS. Players and Villains found in possession of this information are subject to summary execution.

Bad Guys Are Good!

Most folks agree that *Necessary Evil* is pretty kick-ass. It provides a massive menu of mix-and-match super powers for *Savage Worlds*, as well as giving your players the rare opportunity to play the bad guys while still striving for the greater good. And if you were raised on comic books like *The Uncanny X-Men* and *Secret Wars*, the prospect of playing anti-heroes united against a cosmic threat—while Earth's fate hangs in the balance—is just too good to pass up.

But for all its potential, the Plot Point campaign in *Necessary Evil* has a few pitfalls too. First and foremost is the Villain's Dilemma. This is when players wonder, "If my character is such a hardened criminal and nefarious ne'er-do-well, why would he ever agree to work for Dr. Destruction? And if he agrees, why wouldn't he revolt at the first opportunity?"

When running other settings, a GM can crack down ruthlessly on "My guy would never do this" players (usually with the terse instruction, "Then make a new guy"). But in *Necessary Evil* it's a valid concern, since it applies equally to all the characters. None of them are liable to be team players, and they'd rather kill everyone off than serve the greater good. With some extra preparation, none of these issues are insurmountable.

The GM who's strapped for time might not consider a Plot Point that requires extra work to be playable. That would be a shame with *Necessary Evil*, since the work isn't much more than what's involved in prepping for a single long session! What's more, your players will actually do a lot of the work for you in the process of creating their characters.

The trick is to give your players' villains a vested interest in Star City—the more selfish the better—and to make the "occupied Earth" milieu come alive. Do those two things, and you'll get a campaign that truly kicks ass with a minimum of effort. This article tells you how.

Star City Nightly News

"Good evening, and welcome to News Channel 8. I'm Sheila Glass, and here's tonight's big stories. On the SCU campus, student protestors clash with police again..."

Grainy video shows angry mobs of students battling police in riot gear. A Molotov cocktail explodes.

"The Star City Sentinels' owner George Weston flat-out guarantees his team will win this year's Championship..."

A soccer player scores an amazing goal in slow motion. A handsome, moustachioed man in a pinstripe suit speaks at a press conference.

"And bumper-to-bumper traffic locks up the Sea Bridge—a nightmare for all you mainland commuters out there..."

Aerial view of the Sea Bridge—stretching across two miles of Atlantic Ocean—clogged with honking vehicles, as V'sori Barracuda swarm in the air above.

"But first, a call to action from Star City's leaders. The offices of Warlord Grypon and Mayor Jerry Perez issued a joint statement today condemning recent terrorist actions by the so-called Omegan Resistance."

Cut to the front steps of City Hall, where a large group of officials are being photographed beside a large vidscreen. A man steps forward, his face molded into an expression of practiced solemnity. Caption reads MAYOR JERRY PEREZ.

"We will not allow these terrorists, these agents of villainy and mayhem, to bring us to our knees. We will bring them to justice. We will exhibit the finest of human qualities in service to our masters and overlords, and we will root out this cancer that afflicts us! We're going to have to come together as never before, but I know we can do it!"

Applause. The vidscreen lights up, showing the frowning, blue-skinned visage of WARLORD GRYPON. His voice booms out, overwhelming the public address with feedback:

"THE RESISTANCE SHALL BE CRUSHED. ALL HAIL THE OVERMIND! END TRANSMISSION."

Cut to Sheila Glass in the News 8 studio, smiling.

"A V'sori of few words. The announcement comes on the heels of OPERATION: BIG TUNA, a joint effort by Star City Police and K'tharen Shocktroops to root out illegal supers in Star City. The effort, which got underway two days ago, has already bagged at least a half-dozen scum-sucking mutant villain bastards. Now that's something to smile about!"

Sheila Glass smiles vacuously.

Origins

Players typically come up with origins for their villains. As GM, you ought to take a more active role than usual in helping players to mold their histories. For example, try suggesting that one or two villains were once known accomplices of Colonel Clone, back in the days before the V'sori invasion. That way, when you run the Savage Tale, "Colonel Clone's Legacy," you won't need to go through a long spiel explaining who Colonel Clone was. When the time comes, the Colonel's erstwhile ally (and his double!) will do all the explaining for you.

Flip through the Savage Tales, and you'll find almost limitless ideas. It's important to inject the iconic characters of Star City into the villains' histories, since you know much more about the world and its personalities than the players do.

Contacts and Goals

Before the game begins, lay some groundwork by establishing connections between the villains and Star City. Two good methods for grounding the scoundrels firmly in Star City are to give them **Contacts** and **Goals**.

Contacts

No, not those little lenses you stick in your eyes. We're talking about who your character knows. Sometimes you can find likely contacts—friends, relations, or former associates—in the origins that players create for their characters. Other times you'll need to choose one for them. *Necessary Evil's* Chapter Four, "Secrets of Star City," provides plenty of ideas. Lila Jackson, Richard Lyons, Benny (of Benny's Pub & Pool), Dorothy Summers, Mitch Powers, and Chick Abel are all good choices for contacts.

Tell each player a little bit about his villain's contact (appearance, personality, and where he can typically be found), and be sure all the players know that their contacts

represent long-standing relationships.

Don't give away any secrets right now! For

example, a villain who has Mitch Powers as a contact should know he's confined to a wheelchair and runs a comic shop, but will only find out later that Mitch is actually the

Hippocratic Oath. Be sure to let players personalize the details of their relationships, as

Random Contacts

Use this table if you'd rather leave the villains' Contacts to chance! Page references are for the *Necessary Evil* book.

d12 Personality

- | | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | Lila Jackson (p. 67) |
| 2 | Morrie Smalls (p. 78) |
| 3 | Benny (p. 69) |
| 4 | Dorothy Summers (p. 74) |
| 5 | George Dexter (p. 77) |
| 6 | Chick Abel (p. 75) |
| 7 | Richard Lyons (p. 69) |
| 8 | George Weston (p. 62) |
| 9 | Mitch Powers (p. 75) |
| 10 | Dr. Cynthia Martin (p. 76) |
| 11 | Willy the Fish (p. 73) |
| 12 | Sarna (p. 72) |

long as it doesn't impinge on any secrets or major plot twists.

Contacts make players feel that their villains have personal ties, and an actual history, in Star City. A Savage Tale that features the contact has more meaning, because the players feel that it's truly about them.

Goals

Every villain should have some personal goal to strive for. Look over the Hindrances your players choose, as well as their character origins. Often these will give you a hint as to something a character has lost, something he wants, or someone he hates (or loves!). If nothing jumps out at you, ask the player in question to better define his villain's motivation in life.

Goals serve three important functions. Most importantly, they give villains ideas for what sorts of illegal activities they might perform when Dr. Destruction isn't sending them on a mission. Since Destruction controls their destinies to a great extent, you must create a sense of freedom for the villains, even if it's just an illusion.

We Now Interrupt This Broadcast...

"On behalf of News Channel 8, I'm Sheila Glass. In Westpoint last night, terrorists allied with the Omegan Resistance detonated a bomb that killed five Union workers and shut down power to most of Northpoint for over eight hours."

Cut to video of a massive electrical turbine burning out of control. Bodies covered with white, blood-stained sheets lie on the ground. Emergency workers rush about in a panic.

"Mayor Perez responded to this latest attack in a press conference last night, vowing the seek out and put an end to the Terrorist Insurgency."

Cut to press conference video. Jerry Perez faces the Press Corps from behind the official podium, index finger jabbing for emphasis as he rants.

"Who do they claim to be helping? Can you tell me that much? These aren't Freedom Fighters, Bernie, these are an army of psychotic killers with dangerous, illegal powers. Freedom Fighters?! Give me a [bleeping break! Tell that to the children of those workers! Tell them their Daddies aren't coming home, and see if they chalk it up to acceptable losses!"

When the villains are sent on a mission, that's reactive. They're told what to do, and they do it. But villains don't just react—that's typically the realm of heroes. Villains should be *proactive*—they've got plans for world domination, and they're the ones who go out and rob banks, blow up bridges, steal candy from babies, and kick

stray dogs. The structure of the *Necessary Evil* Plot Point demands a certain amount of reactivity. That's why villains also need to have ideas about what sort of proactive things they'd do, right from the get-go.

Goals also become important in terms of the villains' relationship with Dr. Destruction, and in the creation of a Subplot for your campaign. We'll get to both of these topics a little later, True Believers.

Channel 8 Newsbreak

"Good morning, and welcome to News Channel 8. I'm Sheila Glass, and here's today's big stories. Last night members of the so-called Omegan Resistance raided a Southpoint detention center, after destroying a M'buna craft and murdering a unit of K'tharen Shocktroops."

Cut to blurry amateur video showing the detention center a half-mile away. People are seen plummeting out of the night sky. The tin roof of the prison is thrown upward, along with a dust cloud. Difficult to see too much at this distance, except for the bright flashes of energy weapons inside. Moments later, figures run from the main building and board a waiting APC that soars skyward.

"According to V'sori officials, the terrorists effected the escape of Jeffrey Sentowski—aka Mindjack—convicted last year of twenty-five counts of first-degree murder, grand theft, burglary, conspiracy, treason, sedition, littering, and jaywalking. Be cautious, citizens! The terrorists left a message stating their intent to randomly murder twelve Star City citizens in the next three days!!

"Anyone with information as to the attackers' identities and whereabouts is instructed to contact the SOCorp Helpline immediately!"

Occupied Earth

The first thing you need to convey to the villains is that they simply can't survive on their own. And the best way to do that is to subtly—and not so subtly—drive home the concept of "Occupied Earth" every chance you get.

Sure, a villain can wander around the slums of Southpoint with virtual impunity if she bothers to wear a baseball cap and a trenchcoat. But as soon as the characters visit one of Star City's more populous districts, they're risking their lives and freedom every step of the way.

You might imagine Star City as a cross between Nazi-occupied France and the world of *Gattaca*. But really, almost any fascist regime of the 20th Century can provide proper inspiration for the omnipresent banners, statues,

and grandiose structures built by the V'sori as emblems of their total control. Nearly every street is monitored by surveillance cameras. The advanced technology of the V'sori can pick up the fingerprints and DNA traces of known felons who dare to enter official areas. M'bunas lurk in the skies, SOCorp Operatives patrol the streets, and K'tharen Shocktroops set up random checkpoints between districts to search passing vehicles for contraband. Remember that overwhelming back-up is always just a radio call away for Earth's overlords.

The V'sori's throttlehold on all printed, online, and broadcast media gives them another means of attack. While many citizens refuse to believe the propaganda (and privately laud the Omegans as "heroes"), there is a significant number who do. At the very least, try to ruffle the villains' feathers by pointing out how they are continually lambasted with outrageous lies and distortions in the newspapers and on television. You might begin each session by describing what News Channel 8 said about the villains the night before.

An important corollary to the idea of Occupied Earth is the so-called "Atlantean menace." When you create scenes that hinge on secrecy, subterfuge, and a ruthless alien bureaucracy attempting to root out traitors, remind players that illegal supers aren't the only fugitives in the city. Whether or not any of your villains creates an Atlantean character is immaterial; the Atlanteans become very important later in the Plot Point. If you've established this thread from the beginning, the idea of Hybrids can provoke recognition, curiosity, maybe even shock. If you wait for that tale to roll around before mentioning rogue Atlanteans, the impact is far less dramatic.

Plant the seeds early on, and later your players will be able to see the forest for the trees.

Dr. Destruction

Each GM needs to decide for herself how she'll portray Dr. Destruction, but a simple reward/punishment structure can be quite effective. After all, just because *heroes* toe the line and follow a leader for no other reason than the fact that he's in charge doesn't mean villains will do the same. Villains tend to respect one thing—power. Therefore, it's important for Dr. D to make a big show of his power the very first time he's challenged.

Imagine that during Episode Two, "The Underground Irregulars," the bad doctor overhears one villain's plan to use Terron's Terminal for his own gain. Using his knowledge of technology and electronics, the villain proposes to adjust the terminal to broadcast the minimum possible power to Dr. Destruction, while keeping the lion's share for the cell's own use. In the end, the group chooses not to go this route, but Dr. D still overhears the whole exchange (via those pesky two-way CommLinks).

With the mission complete, Dr. Destruction calls an emergency meeting at the safehouse. The second he arrives, green-suited minions surrounding him, he lays into the offending villain with everything he's got—starting with a searing blast from the Destruction Ray. There's really no

risk in doing this, since the “Recurring Roles” Setting Rule prevents villains from dying before their time.

When Destruction finally scrapes the scheming villain off the bottom of his boot, he reminds the rest of the villains that he isn't to be trifled with. The remainder of the group—none of whom is likely to raise a finger to aid their poor comrade—nods obediently, in awe of Destruction's sheer might.

Random Heists

Here are some ideas for typical heists villains might undertake, or a means to generate rumors if the villains use Streetwise and Investigation to find some “opportunities.”

d12 Heist

- 1 *Bank job: There's plenty of banks filled with money in Star City.*
- 2 *Classic cars: Valuable vehicles in town for an auto show make nice toys for enterprising villains.*
- 3 *Cyber-piracy: Information can be a very valuable commodity.*
- 4 *Sting: Some criminal group (Longshoremen, the Family, Slashers) is in possession of something the villains want.*
- 5 *Diamonds: A large shipment of precious stones is known to have arrived in Star City.*
- 6 *Goals! The villains hear of a “job” that relates directly to one of their Goals.*
- 7 *Shakedown: Hitting up locals for “protection” money is the oldest grift in the book.*
- 8 *Vaccinations: Even V'sori get sick—they'll get sicker if villains steal their medication.*
- 9 *Payroll: Ripping off the SOCorp payroll money should give any villain the jollies.*
- 10 *Techies: A piece of advanced technology (or perhaps many pieces) is ripe for the taking.*
- 11 *Ransom: Kidnapping a V'sori sympathizer can be dangerous, but profitable if done right.*
- 12 *None can defeat me! A solo villain recruits the PCs to help him out with his latest plot.*

In one quick scene, all those villains asking “Why would I work for this guy?” have their answer (just in case being dropped out of a flying personnel carrier wearing nullifiers in Episode One wasn't enough). More importantly, at least one villain has a very good reason to *despise* Dr. Destruction. When the leader of the Omegan Resistance is finally unmasked, this adds a great deal of drama to an already supercharged situation.

Beating down players with a far-superior stick is fun once or twice, but you're going to have to buckle down and offer the carrot as well. Remember we mentioned that villains' personal goals feed directly into their relationship with Dr.

D? Here's how that works. The Big D knows just about everything about the villains, and he's perfectly willing to help them out in getting what they want, as long as they are loyal to him.

Under no circumstances will Dr. Destruction simply give a villain his heart's desire, or kill off his mortal enemy, but he'll feed the villains a constant stream of accurate clues and information as long as they keep completing missions for Omega. Not only does this give them a reason to lend their skills to Omega, but it gives them a *selfish* reason—which is exactly what every villain needs.

The Subplot

The Plot Point chronicles the villains' battle against the V'sori occupation—the main story. A Subplot tells the secondary tale of the villains' struggle against their own personal nemeses. Omega's fight comes to have meaning over time, but the subplot resonates with characters from the very beginning—because the players are the ones who wrote it!

Not literally, of course. Creating the subplot actually constitutes the bulk of the prep work for you, the GM. But as mentioned in the discussion of goals, the hardest part—thinking up the antagonists and various situations that make up your subplot—comes from the villains' origin stories, contacts, and personal goals.

The subplot is the most important piece to add if you want your Plot Point to run smoothly. Villains typically don't mind being errand-boys for Dr. Destruction if they also get plenty of opportunities to pursue their own goals, pull off their own heists, and fight their own battles. A subplot provides the loose structure in which characters can achieve their goals, and a sense of free will for characters who are basically being blackmailed throughout the entire campaign.

The first thing you need is an antagonist who has nothing to do with Omega or the V'sori (at least not directly). If any of your players choose a Major Enemy as their Hindrance, you've got your Big Bad right there. Ask the player for some details about this antagonist, and how her villain came to be opposed to him. If two villains have the Enemy Hindrance, give them both the same one! Comic book lore is chock-full of villains who put aside their mutual contempt to battle a common foe. If they're willing to work together against an enemy, they'll get better at working together against the V'sori.

If the players don't supply you with an enemy, and you don't feel like creating one from scratch, you can always choose one from among the many Savage Tales. The Hammer of Justice and Capone are good choices, but there are several others to choose from. [And this issue of *Shark Bytes* contains a whole slew of them! —Ed.] Make sure you choose an enemy who's too powerful or sneaky for the villains to simply wipe out at the first opportunity. Pump up the stat block if need be; a single nemesis should be powerful enough to take on the whole group if his back is against the wall.

Another great choice for an enemy, with a strong basis in comic books, is the rival team. This requires the most work

of all, because you'll need to create a sort of "counterpart villain" for each character in your group. But this option can also be the most rewarding, as the villains are forced to compete with their rivals to, for example, be the first to secure Capone's safe, or to recover Four Star and Lucky. If the rival group proves tenacious enough, Dr. Destruction might even recruit them as a new Omega Cell!

Putting It All Together

You know your villains' origin stories. You've given them contacts established over the years in Star City, and worked with the players to define exactly what their characters want out of life. You've established Star City as an occupied city, acutely hostile to the villains and Omega, as well as hinting that illegal supers aren't the *only* renegades keeping to the shadows—there's the Atlanteans to think about too. You've even decided on a major nemesis for the nefarious villains. What now?

Start by writing out the numbers 1 – 20 on a sheet of paper. Beside #1 write the title of the first Plot Point episode, "Jail Break!" That's where everything begins. Leave #2 blank, next to #3 write "The Underground Irregulars," and so on, until you get to the very end. The last two Plot Points should occupy slots #19 and #20 on your list, since they occur without any break in between. Assume that your subplot will reach its own "sub-climax" in slot #17 or #18.

Now you've got the framework. All those empty slots are where the subplot takes place. Try to alternate between Plot Point and subplot roughly every episode. Placing the last two Plot Points together means you'll end up with two subplot episodes in a row at some other point in the campaign. That's fine. As the story goes on, you'll probably need to adjust the order of episodes to account for those events you can't foresee. You can also use this sheet to note general developments in the campaign (e.g., the fact that the V'sori begin to develop specific countermeasures for the villains after Plot Point Four).

With time and inclination, you can create some or all of the subplot episodes from scratch. But the other *Savage Tales* provided in *Necessary Evil* work just as well. If you've chosen your villains' goals, former accomplices, and enemies from *Savage Tales*, be sure to include those particular tales in your overall structure.

Villains truly focused on achieving their goals will also provide you with some (or in rare cases, all) of your subplot episodes. Investigating the whereabouts of something a villain has lost, performing surveillance on a rival team, or even something as simple as knocking over a bank can provide an entire episode's worth of action. Rather than using the Adventure Generator to create the whole scenario, just use it to generate the opposition villains face in the course of pursuing their own ambitions.

If you want your campaign to last approximately 20 sessions, you might consider giving the villains a flat 5 Experience Points after each one. This is a lot—for most games far too much—but it works rather well for *Necessary Evil*. These are super-powered beings, so it makes sense

that their abilities continuously improve. Players in a fast-moving, rollicking campaign will enjoy seeing their villains grow more formidable every time a new "issue" hits the newsstand. It also makes things easier for you as a GM, since you can plan farther ahead if you know the exact point in the campaign the villains will hit each Rank.

Best of all, it ensures that the characters will be Legendary Villains—at the very pinnacle of their abilities—for the all-important, senses-shattering climax of the Plot Point.

Long Live Omega!

A Licensee Dispatch

from the folks at

12 to Midnight

The 12 to Midnight writing serfs are hard at work on the *Degrees of Horror* campaign book set at Pinebox's East Texas University. The first draft is roughly 80% complete and we hope to send it to the editors by the beginning of the summer. *Degrees of Horror* is a complete Plot Point campaign that takes characters from entering freshmen to graduating seniors. ...At least, the ones who survive. Because ETU is a trial by fire for heroes in the making, characters begin without the advantage of a Wild Die. College at ETU is not for the weak of heart, but for those willing to take back the night it will be the most memorable times of their lives.

While we are continuing to work on *Degrees of Horror*, we will keep periodically releasing more free Bites of Midnight adventures. *The Prodigal*, a great ghost hunting Pinebox adventure, has nearly completed the editing cycle and should be available this summer. After we finish *Degrees of Horror* and *The Prodigal*, we will be returning to our epic serialized adventure, *12 Hours to Midnight*.

Finally, do you like Pirates? Pirate songs? Rock and Roll? We have a special treat coming for ya. Look for more great things from us soon.



Campaign for my real friends

...and real pain for my players! Fully developed campaigns go here, and we're continuing what we started last month with another installment of...

Sticks, Stones, & Rail Wars

A serial *Deadlands: Reloaded* Plot Point

by Jon Ginsberg

Episode Two: Dark Deeds in Deadwood

The posse eventually tracks the robbers—and the equipment they stole—to the treaty town of Deadwood, in the heart of the Sioux Nations. On the way there, the posse hears talk of strange happenings in the town lately, and of several attacks made by the Sioux. Those they talk to have little in the way of details on any of this, so the only way for the heroes to get the truth is to go right to the source. The trip to Deadwood is as long and difficult or short and quiet as you want, Marshal, but you should do your best to keep the posse on edge. With all the kung fu and katanas they saw at the robbery, it should be pretty clear that there may be a link to the Iron Dragon Company in all this.

Once they finally get to the town, they find it to be—oh, what's the best way to put this?—a wretched hive of scum and villainy. I heard that from a crazy old codger years ago. Just about everyone in this town's crooked in some way, and some make your average bushwhacker look as innocent as a choir boy. Even with the Sioux all around them, they find reasons to fight amongst themselves. And some strange stuff's been happening to stir up the pot even more than usual. Now we're gonna lay out the story for you twice. First is gonna be all the info that the posse can get through some Streetwise and Investigation rolls, as well as some good roleplaying. What bits and pieces you decide to give them is up to you, Marshal, but just make sure they have enough to move on. Then we're gonna go over what's really been happening.

So here's the scoop for the posse: A couple of miners disappeared out in the hills about a week ago. All of the local claims are near each other, and anyone who's gone to see what's up over there were confronted by a bunch of Asian gentleman in bad moods and told that the miners sold their claims and moved on. A few snooper people have been to the claims by night, and heard some strange noises coming from there. Also, a lot more Asian folk have been seen in and around the camp lately. They keep to themselves, and don't even associate with the Asian residents or Iron Dragon workers. If they ask anyone around Farnum's hotel for news, they talk about two ladies that have arrived in town. The first is a real looker, with two gunmen keeping her company, and is staying at the hotel. She showed up a few days after those miners went missing. The other's a rough looking lady. If one of the

players gets some real good rolls or does some fancy roleplaying, they find out that this rough gal saw the pretty one, and changed her mind about staying at Farnum's. Just about anyone in the camp can tell the heroes she's staying somewhere just beyond the outskirts of the town. Finally, Calamity Jane's been acting stranger than usual, talking about "devils" in the hills. Feel free to add some red herrings of your own, Marshal—no reason to do the posse's work for them.



Now, as for the real scoop. Those disappearing miners were killed by lida's men. The deluded ronin's been told by his "ancestors" that the key to restoring his honor lay in the ground there, and lida wasn't about to let a few prospectors get in his way. Those noises the snoops heard were lida's men using the stolen equipment to dig for the piece of the medicine staff hidden in the Black Hills. As you can probably guess, the other Asians in town are lida's men. All they're doing is buying more supplies for their lord's work in the hills.

Those women who've come to town are a very interesting pair. The looker's name is Kristina Dalton. She's a huckster from Black River, and was sent by Mina Devlin to help out her old friend Virginia. She's been told only to keep people away from lida's dig site at night, when they do the digging, and to that end, she's used her skills wrangle up some nasty abominations. So far, most of the snoops have just run off and not talked about the monsters, except for Calamity Jane; those abominations are the devils Jane's been railing on about lately. Kristina's not too worried about her though, as she's too drunk for people to put much stock in anything she says. The other woman is Agent Susan Forrest. As we said in the first volume of this here tale, she's been sent to investigate the arrival of a Black River "associate" in a town practically run by Iron Dragon. She has about as much clue as to what's actually going on as the posse does at this point, though she plans on amending that real soon. If the posse spends enough time talking to folk in town, you should have them cross paths with Susan once or twice. If the posse asks Susan about the strange happenings, she feigns ignorance, but tries her best (not so subtly; it's not her strong suit yet) to find out

what they know. Kristina plays innocent, saying she's here only to see the sights and maybe make some money, and she's VERY convincing. Anyways, once the posse gets their hands on a good chunk of this stuff, they should be itching to check out those claims and see what's going on there.

Bats and Serpents and Witches, Oh My!

Should the posse investigate the claims during the day, they are confronted by several Asian men, with a variety of guns and swords. Make it clear to them there's no other claims nearby and have enough men show up to make them think twice about a confrontation. Even if they do trade blows with these guys, they don't find anything at the claims. Kristina's got a nice powerful hex over the place helping to blend everything in. If they come at night, it's another story. Kristina's heard about the heroes nosing around town, and has come up personally to see that they're dealt with. She's gotten together a small cadre of devil bats, as well as a serpentine uktena, and is laying in wait. Kristina's got exceptional use of the beast friend and mind rider powers, and is using the bats as sentries, watching for the approach of the posse.



The claims are in an isolated part of the Black Hills. The land is a rugged forest, with a large creek running through it. The claims all together make up nearly an acre of land, with lida's mine in the northeast corner. The hills and forest make travel tough, and the easiest way through to the dig site is to follow the creek. As the heroes make their approach through the forest, be sure to keep them on edge. This place has a Fear Level of 3, so be sure to describe some evil looking trees, howling winds, and the like. The more on edge the better. Once they're far from just about anything, and not yet to the dig site, have everyone roll Notice against the devil bats' Stealth (make that a group roll for the bats).

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Enemies: *Devil Bats (1 per hero, DLR 187), Uktena (DLR 223), Kristina Dalton (Treat as a Wild Card Rail Warrior from Black River (DLR 233), but her powers are mind rider, beast friend, deflection, and obscure and she has 15 PP. She is armed with a double action Peacemaker)*

If the bats score a Raise against anyone, they have the Drop against that hero this round. Deal out cards, and start the fight. Don't forget to apply darkness penalties as needed. Its a dark night, so the default is -2, if the posse failed to bring any light sources. After two rounds have gone by, the uktena shows up with a thunderous roar and joins the battle. Throughout the entire fight, Kristina stays out of sight as much as possible. Her black magic abilities aren't as flashy as some of her sister witches', so she depends more on her abomination servants. She can be disrupted from maintaining her powers over the creatures as per the standard rules. Don't worry if the posse gets their keisters handed to 'em. If they do, and they're smart, they'll head for the hills; Kristina won't follow. She's only here to make sure lida gets the staff piece, then take it from him.

Otherwise, let them get back to Deadwood and nurse their wounds. As they run back to the town, call for Notice rolls—no Darkness penalties on this one. Anyone succeeding hears the sound of Gatling gun fire and the uktena roaring. The sound of gun fire dies out quickly, and the beastie keeps up the cries. Once they wake up in the morning give them some time to do what they want; buy supplies, come up with a new plan, anything like that. If they ask about after Kristina, and they wounded her, they find out she's been in her room since last night, apparently very ill.

At some point in their day, they are confronted by Agent Forrest. She makes it clear she wants to talk to the heroes in question in private, at her camp. She gives simple directions to where she's made camp. If asked about what, she hints that it has something to do with some "strange bats" she saw in the hills last night, saying that with a smirk on her face. The Agent's camp is a modest affair; a small tent, a horse, and campfire with a pot of something cooking on it. She greets the posse, introducing herself and flashing her Agency badge. She then goes on to say the following:

Look, I'll be blunt. We all know somethin's up in those hills, and coverin' it up with y'all ain't gonna be doin' any good. Far as I can see, you're the ones that put some lead into those beasties afore I showed up. I call up my superiors, they'll be a long time comin', too long. You help me out, I keep your names outta my reports, and I owe you one. Long as what you're up to don't get in my way, at least. Sound good?

Another experienced gunhand can't hurt the posse, even one who may or may not be completely trustworthy. Susan refuses to tell the posse her assignment here, only saying it deals with national security. If they don't want her help, she makes it clear that their presence will be reported to the Agency; what happens after that is out of her control. At that, any sane hero will probably accept her aid. She's

obviously not happy about having to enlist their aid, but now that they've encountered this firsthand, and more than likely sought out this fight, she knows she doesn't have much choice in the matter. She needs the help, and she knows it. Susan says they should head out again tonight, and to meet her at her camp an hour after sundown. Kristina and her abominations (what's left of them) lay in wait once again, but with Susan's help and knowledge, the posse should do just fine.

Exploring the Mine

Once the posse gets to the mine entrance they find a massive piece of digging equipment, steam and smoke from its ghost rock engine billowing about. This is the device they were sent to find. If anyone thinks of getting it out of here now and running, Susan makes it clear she'll be alerting her superiors about them. No one is about, and the site is eerily silent. Heading down into the mine itself is the next step. The atmosphere here should be as eerie as you can make it. There isn't too much in the way of lighting in the mine, just the occasional lantern left behind, and combined with the Fear Level of 3 for Deadwood and environs, makes the mine one spooky haunt, Marshal. There's not much in the mine other than random equipment scattered about. Drop in a random thug or martial artist every now and then, keeping watch from the shadows to keep the group on edge, and maybe inflict a bit of pain here and there.

After wandering about for a bit, maybe getting lost once or twice, the posse hears the sound of water falling. With a couple of Notice rolls, they should be able to figure out a path to get them there. Once they do, it quickly becomes clear that the mine has entered a natural cave; there are no longer any wooden beams holding up the walls and ceiling, and the rock is worn and weathered. A grotto opens up before them, with the waterfall they have been hearing at the far side, spilling into a small pool; no exit for the water is visible. At the center of the pool is a large stalagmite with a flat top, and some kind of object sits on top of it. Also in the grotto are several rather unfriendly looking types—lida's men. They're arrayed throughout the room, and a couple are watching the tunnel into the grotto (the only way in or out, mind you). Some are in traditional Chinese dress with long queues, while others wear Western clothes and carry six-shooters. Two of them are ronin, and wear Japanese armor. As the posse enters, lida is about to wade into the pool and grab whatever's on that stone column. He's wearing his full demon armor (Check out Episode 1 of our tale for details on this relic, Marshal) and is a startling sight indeed. Have all the heroes make Guts rolls; failure means they're at -1 to all Trait rolls as long as lida's around. As soon as the heroes' presence is noticed by lida and his men, he says the following, in slightly accented English:

My ancestors told me there would be some who would challenge my destiny. No matter. Their spirits are with me, and you shall feel the bite of my steel!

With that he and his men attack. These are all experienced fighters, and this is a major event in our tale, so make sure

the posse fights hard. Also, do what you can to keep Susan alive. She's got a couple more parts to play in this tale of ours.

Enemies: *Martial Artists (1 per hero), Gunmen (1 per hero), Rail Warriors (2, use Iron Dragon Elite abilities), lida Zenko (WC)*

When lida goes down, he falls to the ground, not even crying out in pain at his wounds, no matter how bad they may be. Suddenly a look of shock crosses his face and he cries out, cursing false spirits for betraying him. Call for Notice rolls at -2, and anyone succeeding hears an unearthly cackle as the samurai finally leaves this world. That should be plenty to clue your posse in that this is a lot more complicated than it seems.



Loose Ends

With lida gone, and something clearly not right, lida's men are not nearly as eager to fight. Most of them are more than willing to tell the posse and Susan all about lida (not really betraying the chap if he's dead), and they all make it clear that they just want to get back to their lives, hoping that the muckety-mucks at Iron Dragon don't hear too much about this escapade. They all know lida's background as related in Episode 1, and that he was looking for something down here that would help him "regain his lost honor," as he would always say.

There is also the subject of the object on the pillar. This is the bottom half of Hanaptala's medicine staff, the relic that Brackneller's so keen on taking possession of. To the posse, though—and this includes Susan—it's just a broken stick with weird carvings. Its obviously old, but other than that, it has no outward sign of being supernatural. Of course, anything that's even a piece of a powerful relic like this is gonna have some kind of power, and this is no exception. The good news is, thanks to the power of the Old One who broke it, there's a chance that the relic won't harm the user. On the other hand, there's a nice bit o' power in the thing, if you're willing to pay for it.

Bottom of Hanaptala's Staff: *This powerful relic is carved with strange symbols, and carries the power Hanaptala used when the manitous he let loose turned on him. Anyone carrying the staff adds +2 to Vigor rolls made to soak damage from a supernatural source (abominations, magic, mad science devices, etc). And while that's plenty*

nice to start, its nothing on what the relic does if you tap into its power.

The bearer of this relic can make it very difficult to use arcane powers in his presence. The person carrying the staff piece may spend a Fate Chip whenever someone tries to use a power within a range of his Spirit in inches. If he does so, the roll made to activate the power is at a -4 penalty. After using the relic in this fashion, the user gains the Bloodthirsty hindrance for 1d6 hours. This lasts longer and longer (an additional 1d4 hours) each time it is used this way. After six such uses it is permanent.



Once they've made it clear of the mine with the stolen equipment in tow, the posse will probably want to head back to town, and back to Denver to collect their payment. Susan accompanies them back, warning to any who showed notable bravery during their ordeal. While she's no fawning maiden, she does make a possible love interest for one of the posse should you decide to go that route. Even if you decide not to, she knows who her friends are, and definitely considers the posse on that list (short as it may be). She reminds them all of the consequences of letting word of this "event" get out, and makes it clear she considers it a personal favor to her. Once they get back town, she nods and bids the posse good day, and good journey. Don't worry, you'll be seeing her again soon, and she'll be plenty happy she made friends with the posse.

Now calm down there, Marshal. I know you're wondering about the staff now, and who should keep it. If anyone in the posse's the superstitious or knowledgeable type, they may insist on it. On the other hand, Susan's an agent, and something like that stinks of the supernatural. She is a bit on the green side, and when she sees no obvious sign of power about, she may not care. In the end, it really doesn't matter. Allow the posse to do what they will with it, but don't make a big deal out of who gets to keep it.

All that's left now is for the posse to get the excavation equipment loaded up, and hit the trail back to Denver. Feel free to have them run into some trouble along the way, but getting back shouldn't be too big a deal. They should have plenty of unanswered questions after this experience, and they'll be finding out the answers to some of them sooner than they would like. Just not quite soon enough to be safe!

Be sure to catch the next installment of **Sticks, Stones, & Rail Wars**, coming soon to *Shark Bytes*!

Raise the FLaGS!

Friendly Local Game Shops doing their best to promote *Savage Worlds*. This month:

GRYPHON GAMES AND COMICS

<http://www.gryphongamesandcomics.com>

Gryphon Games and Comics (out of Fort Collins, Colorado) ran what looked like a very fun game of *Savage Worlds* called *Dungeon Stomp* with a nicely detailed dungeon layout at this year's GenghisCon in Denver, Colorado. I believe they ran it for all three full days of the convention.



Dungeon Stomp at GenghisCon 2008

Each player was provided with a laminated card of their character with a picture of the figure they would be using. I was not able to play, but I did enter their drawing for a \$50 gift certificate (which I won! Full disclosure here to keep my bias in the open).

I went to their store and Pinnacle products were well represented. At least one copy of almost all of Pinnacle's books was on the shelves displayed prominently for all to see. The store is new and clean with a HUGE gaming area in the back and the staff was very friendly, even when faced with three small kids looking at miniatures, games, and comics.

So here's a big Raise the FLaGS to Gryphon Games and Comics for both actively supporting *Savage Worlds* in their stores and taking it to the convention scene as well.

If you know of a friendly local game store doing its part to help spread the word, write it up, let us know, and we'll get it in the next issue.