
Constructs

The Acrophage

By Anders Sandberg

Many mages are hubris personified, Nietzschean Übermen able to warp reality with a single thought. They think they are able to Ascend and transform the world. But there are unseen dangers on the path towards Ascension, and the Acrophage is one of them.

The Acrophage is not a paradox spirit, but it and their kind share some similarities. The Acrophage is the response of reality to hubris, and gains power from trapping mages in their advances. Humble mages are ignored, while the quest for Ascension of hubristic mages attract its attention.

The Acrophage will usually manifest as a beautiful man or woman a head taller than the mage, dressed in classical clothes (usually brilliant white). An unseen light source illuminates the Acrophage from above, making its presence both intense and overbearing. In the physical world it sometimes manifests on television screens or on the phone. Its powers are always similar to but greater than the mage; the Acrophage will manifest greater forces before a mage who has mastered the lesser forces and teleportation before a mage able to just perceive space.

The Acrophage seeks out questing mages, and diverts them from the quest by challenging them and their hubris. Sometimes it claims to be the final opponent to be overcome on the quest, which is a complete lie. Often the Acrophage simply attacks one of the most cherished tenets of the mage's life and starts an escalating duel of magick. The only way of defeating the Acrophage is to ignore the challenge, but few mages can resist trying to defeat the arrogant being. Another method it uses is simply to appear during the quest and demonstrate its powers in a way the mage feels it has to overshadow in some way.

The Acrophage grows stronger the more the mage fights it, and does not care much about paradox or damage to innocents. Instead it gradually lures the mage into a more and more desperate fight that will destroy him. For example, Dr. Stanislaus Tergoz spent several years fighting an increasingly desperate scientific battle against an unknown colleague (the Acrophage), until he was killed in a massive paradox backlash after trying to harness the power of the entire world against his competitor. Sometimes the Acrophage succeeds so well that the mage forgets the path to Ascension and instead begins to Descend; the final triumph of matter over spirit. The mage has become so obsessed with proving his supremacy that he becomes the Acrophage.

The Angel of Pain

By Anders Sandberg

Description

In the high Umbra all kinds of concepts exist in manifested form, emanations from the minds of the Aeons. Some are beautiful, others terrible, but they all have a purity of existence impossible to understand by mortals. Except perhaps one, the Angel of Pain.

The Angel looks completely human -- except that it lacks skin. Its glistening organs are clearly visible and some of its tendons have been severed so that all muscles hang freely from its body. The loose muscles (which do not bleed) serenely drift around its body like a seaweed in the ocean, red veils of agony. All its movements are slow and graceful, as it floats weightlessly a foot above the ground.

The Angel is the manifestation of pure pain. Everyone in its vicinity feels its presence, not as pain but as potential pain; as if a sharp knife moved a hairsbreadth above the skin, ready to cut a deep gash. Anybody who touches the Angel, either physically or magickally, immediately is paralysed by agonising pain. The pain is far beyond anything normally experienced by mortal flesh, it is the essence of anguish magnified a thousandfold. In some rare cases the Angel has kissed a mortal, who has been "blessed" with total agony for the rest of his or her (usually short) life.

The Angel seems to be an independent being, not serving any power other than itself. It doesn't care about the affairs of mortals or their wishes, and it doesn't strive to extend its pain to others -- maybe there is enough pain in the world already. It never speaks or tries to communicate. In fact, the Angel seems almost serene, and a few mages have argued that if one could only accept it and reach the same mental harmony its touch would no longer be agony but ecstasy and tranquillity united.

Systems

Any contact with the Angel, through touch, magick or through a tool (Like a sword hitting it or a gunshot) will cause agony in the human. The important thing isn't physical connection but the fact that the person seeks contact with the being, a thrown rock will be just as painful as a direct touch.

The pain is not physical but mental. Mages with Mind can counteract it using their Arete against a difficulty of 8 to reduce the pain of the

Angel. It has 5 dices of pain initially if the mage just touches it, and 8 dice if it deliberately reaches out and embraces the mage. Some rites can also build up a mental barrier before touching the Angel; they also reduce the number of dice.

To be able to act at all while in total agony, the victim has to succeed with his Willpower against a difficulty equal to the remaining pain dice plus four. A botch means the victim has been completely overcome with pain and cannot do anything until it ends; a multiple botch might lead to a permanent phobia against all painful stimuli. If the victim succeeds in steeling his will and acts, his dice pool is reduced by the remaining dice of the Angel.

After being touched, the pain will gradually subside with one step per turn, until the victim is painless again (if it has not been touched by the Angel in the meantime, of course). However, if the angel kisses a victim on the mouth (which requires it to hold him in its arms) it can insert a fragment of its being into the very soul of the victim. The resulting pain will never go away until the soul is cleansed -- somehow.

Bittersweet

(Melancholy Epiphling)

By Tod T. Fox (vulpine@pobox.com)

Statistics

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Willpower: | 4 |
| Rage: | 2 |
| Gnosis: | 10 |
| Power: | 30 |

Image

This spirit is a bit of shimmering color and light like the smoky light overhead from a movie house projector. As it moves about, all who can see it and, to a lesser extent, Sleepers present, will find pictures displayed on its form, along with other appropriate sensory impressions -- the taste and sight of semi-sweet chocolate, candied ginger, or espresso in white demitasse cups; popcorn smells along with tragic yet redeeming scenes from recent movies (*Titanic* is seen often in recent months, much to the chagrin of some Hermetic Magi); the sighs and sounds of lovers; that special smell of the summer day before you go back to school and other bittersweet images.

The Bittersweet epiphling is most commonly summoned when melancholy, happy-sad feelings are felt. It appears to feed on the emotions, and most strongly on tears and other emotions of release. The spirit will use its various Charms in order to bring on these emotions; its actions, however, rarely seem malicious. It will not bring about sadness if it does not think, within its admittedly alien intelligence, that it will be beneficial to the creatures in question. In a turn of events that can only be termed bittersweet in and of itself, the Bittersweet Umbrood are becoming more and more rare as humans become more set in their ways and start to view life in more and more black and white terms. The delicate spirits are also occasionally harnessed with ulterior motives -- a few uncaring or heartless Mages have tried to summon a Bittersweet spirit in order to goad a person into revealing some deeply kept, emotionally charged secret. Many of these Mages, however, have had a rude awakening when their own, happy-sad memories are brought to bear.

Charms

Airt Sense (1 power)

Appear (4 power) The Bittersweet epiphling can appear to anyone, but only out of the corner of the eye (hence the reduced cost). The

spirit will appear as some physical but ephemeral manifestation of some missing or desired thing. Some Mages have also reported that the spirit can use a similar ability to draw attention to an object or symbol that will be reminiscent of a lost loved one.

Catharsis (1 power) By expending one power, the spirit can then charge itself by absorbing the cathartic grief and laughter in an area. Amount of power gained ranges from 1 to even 15, depending on the power of the emotions released.

Cleanse the Blight (10 power) Most often used in scenes of tragedy brought on due to corruption, and only used after the successful application of the Catharsis charm.

Create Rain (1-6 power) The spirit can create catharsis through rain. The power cost ranges depending on the strength of the rain summoned and the existing weather conditions. The better the weather, the harder it will be to bring on rain and the less it will be able to create; a perfectly clear, cloudless day will completely inhibit the use of this charm.

Memories (3 power) While the images that normally appear in the presence of this epiphling are taken from the collective unconscious, with the use of this charm the spirit can harvest specific memories, images, or sounds from individuals or small groups. Common images include lost friends, childhood toys, or, disconcertingly, a person's own voice speaking to or about a lost lover.

The Cleaners

By Andrew Weitzman (aweitz@cam.org)

Description

In the Ascension War, people disappear without a trace. Some die from accident or murder, others succumb to Paradox, while a few are swallowed by their own Arcane. Every so often, a cabalmate or mentor falls through the cracks of reality and never returns. That is when the Cleaners arrive.

The Cleaners manifest as nondescript humans who arrive to "clean up" the residence or workplace of a missing mage. The precise form varies -- they have appeared as janitors, charwomen, professional movers, and such. A Cleaner's features are forgettable, their clothes generic, and witnesses have found they cannot recall any identifiable details at all. If challenged, the Cleaners will always have the correct authorization to perform their job; threats of violence can make them leave, but they always return later to continue their task.

The Cleaners have a terrifying power: the ability to erase any trace of someone's existence from reality. Anything handled by a Cleaner loses any connection it had to the person who owned it. Aspects like identifying marks, distinctive decorations, and the like are wiped away; the mementos and personal effects of the victim are transformed into anonymous possessions. A place visited by Cleaners loses any trace of the personality who once lived there.

There are a variety of theories on the exact nature of the Cleaners. Some say they are agents of the Technocracy who tie up the loose ends surrounding a kidnapping or assassination. Another opinion holds they are subtle Paradox spirits erasing the existence of an offending mage from the Tellurian. Magickal scans reveal a Cleaner possesses the pattern of a human being, but with a hollow where a mind or soul should be.

Chronomancers

By Tod T. Fox (vulpine@pobox.com)

Time Paradox Spirit

Statistics

Willpower: 5

Rage: 4

Gnosis: 2

Power: 15

Charms: Appear, Calcify, Lightning Bolts, Short Out, De-Aging (Cost is 5 per day of time removed, target must be calcified)

Description

Chronomancers usually appear in groups of 3-5 and have never been seen alone -- if all but 1 Chronomancer is destroyed or dispelled, the final Chronomancer will spontaneously vanish. These spirits appear as humanoid figures in dark blue hooded robes. They float over the ground with no visible legs. The arms of their robes hang limply at the ends as if they have arms but no hands. Where the 'face' of the figure should be there is instead a golden analog clock face. It has ebony black hour and minute hands that move constantly in reverse at a rate of approximately an hour every 5 minutes. The Chronomancers seem especially angered by Technomantic paradigms but can appear during any magickal act involving Time Paradox. Tactics primarily involve appearing and disappearing to confuse Mages by making them think there is only one very quick spirit. They will attempt to group around a Mage and calcify him. Then they will reverse the Mage in time, undoing whatever event that caused the Paradox by surgically removing that person from the events in question. Failing this they will shoot lightning from their arms and try to kill the Mages involved. Sleeper witnesses of these events end up with a blank hole in their memories.

The spirits communicate in a constant audible hum much like a chanted 'ohm.' Spirit 2 is of limited use as the creatures are very nearly mindless.

Ciphon

By Malcus Dorroga (malcus@xtdl.com)

"So, how long have you had that little pet?" "Oh, about three months. Stupid spirits; I'm surprised you can see the thing." "A master of the Umbra can see whatever he damn well pleases. What is it?" "Punishment." "And when will it go away, do you think?" "At the rate I'm going, probably when I die." -- an overheard conversation between Hermetics, *bani* Flambeau.

Level Five Paradox Spirit

Statistics

Willpower: 8 **Rage:** 2 **Gnosis:** 6 **Power:** 20 (+ special)

Charms: Mind Speak, Attach (cost 5; the spirit attempts to attach itself to the mage, thus allowing the use of its Curse Magick charm. Roll Gnosis vs. the target's Willpower; a single success allows the Ciphon to attach), Curse Magick (special cost; see below)

Associations

Spirit, Prime, Entropy

Background

One of the most persistent Paradox spirits, and possibly one of the rarest, Ciphon is a curse that can last months, possibly even years,

because it perpetuates itself every time the mage tries to use his power. It appears as an arachnid-like creature, about the size of a human hand, with a 3-foot long tail.

Ciphon began its first recorded official appearances during World War II. Marauders and Nephandi conjured up so much Paradox during this time that pockets of it coalesced in the air and began to form into spirits. These spirits, looking to absorb more Paradox, began attaching themselves to mages and drinking in the generated Paradox. Being spirits of Paradox, however, they soon began using the consumed power against their hosts, thereby creating more Paradox. Mages came to fear these spirits, and for good reason.

When a Ciphon appears, it speaks to the offending mage and gives it a single chance to revoke the vulgarly. If the mage does not respond properly, the spirit attempts to attach itself to the willworker, and will continue to do so until it either succeeds or is destroyed somehow. Once attached, the Ciphon converts the Paradox that created it into a "Curse pool". Every time the mage uses his power, the Ciphon can spend up to 3 "curse points" to pull successes away from the roll. If this causes a botch, a Paradox backlash immediately ensues, and the Paradox is absorbed into the Ciphon's pool.

Example: Dr. Simbaka, a Son of Ether, experiences an 8-point backlash and Ciphon pops up. Refusing to undo the ultra-cool laser-mirror effect he just accomplished, the good doctor finds the Ciphon attached to him with an 8-point Curse pool. Later that day, when Simbaka attempts to use his Backflux nullifyer to stop a Nephidic fireball, he rolls 3 successes and a single one, giving him 2 successes. The Ciphon, seeing an investment opportunity, uses 3 Curse points to nullify all 3 successes, leaving the etherite with a single one: a botch. Not only does the fireball knock him back and blow up his lab, but he suffers a backlash that feeds the Ciphon's pool.

There are two ways to get rid of a Ciphon. If the mage can step into the Umbra before it attaches, he can fight it and destroy it. If it attaches, the mage can simply stop using magick; the Ciphon loses one Curse point per day the mage uses absolutely *no* magick. When all Curse points are gone, the spirit dissipates from starvation.

Covert Executives

By Stuart Ellis (s.ellis1@lancaster.ac.uk)

Description

The Technocracy has a problem - it's short of humanity. Technomancers, particularly the senior officials, no longer think or act like normal people. This is partly due to the lifestyle and indoctrination systems but is also caused by Resonance, the principle that magick leaves traces on everything, especially mages. So over time Technocrats slowly become more like stereotypes -- the ruthless executive, the amoral politician, the passionless scientist etc. and are less able to relate to Sleepers. Think of Cancer Man and his colleagues, or Bill Gates...

Their creations and minions are even more inhuman, and have serious problems interacting with society -- Superiors range from being slightly sadistic to totally psycho; HIT Marks and Men In Black can terrorise but could never befriend a Sleeper or even subtly manipulate them.

This has led to the use of Covert Executives, Sleepers recruited from intelligence and law enforcement agencies who are carefully trained and indoctrinated to be used in the war against the fantastic. They are rarely used to terminate reality criminals; their role is to carry out the routine work of paradigm enforcement -- investigation, surveillance, basic sanitation (cleaning up traces of weird events), handling (manipulating ordinary Sleepers into doing things) and other tasks which require more brains, social graces and autonomy than most Techno have.

CovEx usually operate in teams of two to six, and pose as minor

officials with enough influence to get the job done without being too conspicuous -- private or police detectives, health inspectors, lawyers and even repairmen. Their ID is always flawless, and the cover story always convincing.

These agents are not mindless thugs but intelligent, dedicated men and women working to protect civilians from alien things that the population would be terrified to know existed, and those dangerous and irresponsible people who try to harness uncontrollable powers for their own ends.

STs can use CovEx to give players both roleplaying and moral challenges -- 'retiring' a death squad of cyborgs or Superiors is common sense but killing misguided humans is straight murder, and if anything happens to their investigators the Technocracy will become even more interested. The CovEx can also justify their work; in fact their appearance in a Chronicle will probably be the result of characters seriously disrupting static reality in a way that harms Sleepers.

If there is a fight then the Executives will make full use of their intelligence and teamwork, either to capture isolated Awakened or retreat to call in the cavalry, and a discreet van full of 'men' in bulky coats or a black cadillac will soon be on its way. They also have subtle defences -- their Willpower is normally high and because they are unAwakened they count as Sleeper witnesses for mystical magick (but not for technomagick such as Etheric science or VA gear), so using vulgar Effects against them is always dangerous. A modified government agent profile works well (CovEx usually have good Subterfuge and Bureaucracy skills).

Electronic Cats

By Anders Sandberg

Introduction

I was in that comfortable state between waking and sleeping when suddenly a small cat jumped up onto my back, turned around a few turns (as if to inspect its new domain) and then scurried down to the end of the bed where it sat down and began to lick itself, purring contentedly. I rested in warm assurance for several minutes before a small thought began to intrude into my consciousness. I didn't own a cat. But how could a cat appear in my apartment? I looked up, and for a moment I thought the cat had vanished like a dream.

But then I saw a shape on the desk, a small grey figure watching me intently with its shining green eyes. Our eyes met, and it was as if the kitten carefully read my soul without giving any hints back. When I suddenly broke free the cat jumped down from the desk, padded over to the bookcase and calmly walked into the crack between two dictionaries. Shocked and confused I jumped up and looked into the crack. Inside the tiny space I clearly saw how the cat had removed parts of its fur, revealing printed circuits and electromechanical muscles, and a flat cable connected it to a socket inside the darkness. It purred. Suddenly it turned around, impaling me with its green gaze, filling my field of vision. I awoke in my bed, alone.

Cats are mysterious even to mages. That many felines can see into the Umbra is quite well known, but there are other kinds of cats too, cats so bizarre that perhaps only the marauders can understand them.

The electronic cats look and behave almost as normal cats. They like to eat fish, stalk through the night, hunt and play with rats. When petted they purr or bite, just as unpredictably as normal cats. But beneath the warm and furry skin (which is removable) they are built out of electronics and artificial muscles covering an aluminium skeleton. They are apparently biomechanical devices, not unlike the HIT Marks of Iteration X. But the Technocracy has not sent them; they appear out of nowhere, behave normally and then vanish, transmitting information they have gathered... where?

Electronic cats seem to be able to cross the Gauntlet freely, and often do so. They also seem to have almost quantum properties: when watched they behave normally, but as soon as you look away they can

vanish and appear somewhere else, even in locked rooms or on top of inaccessible places. Their gaze is almost hypnotic; they will never look away or blink, keeping the opponent fixed with an intense stare. And they seem to extract information from the minds of anybody who looks in their eyes...

Electronic Cat

Str 1, Dex (graceful) 4, End 1, Cha 3, Man 3, App (feline) 4, Per 2, Int 2, Wit 3

Alertness (observant) 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Dodge 3, Stealth, (hide) 5

Electronic cats have claws that do one die of damage; they are not especially powerful fighters and will try to flee from attackers or hide. If pressed they will vanish completely.

Willpower: 3 Arete 4

Powers

Suck Information (Mind 4): The cat can read the memories of a person, storing them within its own circuits.

Forget it (Mind 4): The cat can briefly take control over a person and rewrite his memories to make the person forget a specific event, such as seeing the cats innards or that it has just emerged from empty air.

Vanish away (Corr 3 Spirit 3): If unobserved, the cat can appear somewhere else, or move into the Umbra.

Cute (Mind 2): The cat can look cute and irresistibly cuddly, or beautiful and dignified. Each success will increase the difficulty of harming or interfering with the cat one step the first time someone attempts it. This is also used to create a feeling of comfort and warmth in people resting with or petting the cat.

Remember (Mind 1): The cat remembers *everything* it sees and experiences, and can later transmit this information.

GARGOYLE

By Alexander Shearer (alex@apogee.nosc.mil)

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Appearance 0-1

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 2

Willpower: 7-10

Arete: 0

Quintessence: 3 innate (may be harvested as Tass)

Paradox: Depends on Dormancy state, see below.

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -4, -5, Incapacitated

Attacks: Wing buffet (Str dmg), Claw (Str+2), Ram (Str+1), Gore (Str+1 to Str+3, depending on horns).

Innate Countermagick: The gargoyle may have 1-3 dice of innate countermagick, usually more if older.

Notes: Inadvertently created by the creative drive of the sculptor who made them, Gargoyles are living statues, with bodies of animate rock. Gargoyles tend to stay dormant for decades on end. They become active every so often for reasons only speculated at - perhaps it is due to a threat to their "home" building, or maybe just a strange call to the species. The Paradox of the Gargoyle varies with its activity level. For every month of activity, a gargoyle gains a point, as well as a point gained every time a significant group of people sees it in action. These points drain away once the Gargoyle goes back to where it is supposed to be.

Yes, this is in Mage terms, even though it was a Werewolf-1 post that prompted it. I thought Mage stats would work better, and this is, after all, a cross-game beast.

Guardian of Dreams

By Anders Sandberg (nv91-asa@void.nada.kth.se)

Description

This being has guarded the barrier between the dreaming and the waking worlds since time immemorial. It prevents the beings of nightmares from escaping into the material world, and sleepers from entering the wrong parts of the dreamworlds.

The Guardian is extremely powerful, but subtle; most people who encounter it never realise the extent of its influence over the land of dreams. Most beings in the dreamworlds understand how powerful the Guardian is, and fear its powers: it could sever all ties between the waking world and dreamworlds, or banish dreambeings into the harsh banality of reality. If a dreamer has the Guardian's favour the word will quickly spread among the dreams and he will be well treated. Even the Dreamlords fear the Guardian, and often seek to placate him (especially since they occasionally transgress his rules by entering into the waking world).

It is said that the Wonderwhats (see Book of Worlds) occasionally serve it, to run errands, guide favoured dreamers or scare away disfavoured dreamers. It is also believed by the Order of Hermes to be a sub-aspect of the greater and feared being called the Dweller on the Threshold, which guards the higher planes from the unworthy.

Manifestation

The Guardian often manifests in a dual form, reflecting that it guards the threshold between worlds. In ancient Rome it was Janus, the two faced god of doors and beginnings. Today it often manifests as a human half white, half black, half male, half female, half angel, half demon. In its hands it holds a staff that can both open the way and bar it, strike down any being or heal it. It moves and speaks in a dignified but friendly way to everybody who pays it respect, and ignores those who don't pay proper respect.

Powers

Bar entrance: The Guardian can bar a being from entering or leaving the dreaming. This is most commonly used to prevent nightmares from escaping, but the Guardian can also prevent people who have displeased it severely from dreaming; creativity is drained in the daytime and sleep no longer gives true rest. An even rarer use is to trap a dreamer in the dreamworlds: it is said that mages who go to sleep with enough Paradox will be trapped in the dreamworlds until they have atoned for their actions.

Open gate: The Guardian can open gates into the dreamworlds or waking world with its staff. These gates allow beings and objects to pass between the worlds under its watchful eyes. If attacked it often throws the attacker physically into one of the deepest nightmares possible.

Two Story Ideas

Death Dreams: An Etherite researching sleep and dreaming has been experimenting with the myoclonic spasm, the sudden jerk which often occurs just before falling asleep. Using his DYNAmical COrtico-PONtine MOtor Neutralizer (DYCOPOMON) he has found a way to inhibit the jerk when falling asleep, and started to study if it has any effect on his sleep.

What the Etherite didn't know was that the jerk is one of the

manifestations of the Guardian, a spirit-oriented mage would say it is his gentle nudge with the staff to prevent a sleeper from falling into the darker regions of dreaming. From a more Etherite perspective it is an evolved defence against having nightmares manifest: during the Palaeolithic era few individuals and tribes whose dreams came real survived for long, while individuals who in some way could prevent nightmares from manifesting prospered. The myoclonic jerk is simply a favourable mutation in this view that prevents nightmares from becoming real.

Unfortunately the Etherite doesn't know this, and [Terror](#) sneaks out through his unguarded mind. Soon it will start to spread in the waking world, turning it into a nightmare.

Breakthrough: A powerful mage once committed a crime in the dreamworlds so great that the Guardian banished him from dreaming forever; today the mage is a respected master but secretly longs to return to the dreams she lost. So she has devised a clever plan to break through to the dreamworlds and get her revenge on the Guardian. She has made contact with one of the dreamlords, the Seriph of the Ten Monoliths. The Seriph seeks to enter the physical world, so she suggested an exchange: his kingdom for hers. She has used her significant powers to summon and bind a huge number of paradox spirits into a fetish; once the fetish is broken these spirits will hasten to bring their delayed revenge upon many mages. She plans to send the fetish to the Seriph, who will send back another fetish filled with dreams. At a given time they will destroy the fetishes, letting loose the spirits and dreams, both unable to get home to their worlds. The Guardian will be forced to open a portal to let them through, and the Seriph and mage will switch places in accordance to ancient tradition in the dreamlands.

The PCs are sent to give the paradox fetish to the Seriph and bring back the dream fetish, since the mage cannot enter the dreamworlds. Since they do not know anything about the plan they can safely pass the scrutiny of the Guardian and will think it is just an exchange of gifts between two powerful beings. However, a small group of spirits and dream-beings know about the plan and want to stop it for various reasons (one of the most important is to give a service to the Guardian). They will try to steal the fetishes, and possibly convince the PCs that great ill will come to happen if the plan succeeds.

HIT Mark 5.1

By Bob Cooper (andorax@idibbs.com)

Introduction

"Good Morning. As we have much to accomplish this morning, I shall dispense with the pleasantries and get right to the point. According to the reports that have recently come in from the observation team, the Hyper Intelligent Technologies Mark VI prototype, or HIT Mark 6 Alpha, has met with a very untimely and permanent end at the hands of a construct of Etherites. With the complete failure of the HIT Mark 6 project, I would like to once again reiterate the need for diversification in our current front-line model, the HIT Mark 5. For this reason, and others mentioned in previous meetings too numerous to bring up at this time, I give you the specifications for the HIT Mark 5.1 Alpha." -- Robert Smith, 100101101011

I have been long perplexed by the lack of diversification in the HIT Mark 5. It seems as if there are two available possibilities -- either use the standard HM5 or a dramatic departure such as the Cyber-Tooth Tiger. For this reason, I have come up with a list of potential modifications to the standard HM5.

The basic concept revolves around dividing the HM5.1 into five separate areas of note, and then offering alternatives in those areas. In all cases, the "standard package" is described in the first entry of each chart. Storytellers are strongly discouraged from "random rolling" unless the players have entered into Iteration X production factory -- HM5.1's represent a considerable investment and are not going to be assigned to particular roles haphazardly.

The five areas of significance in the HM5.1 are as follows: External Cover (the "skin"), Internal Payload (the "Chest/Back cavity"), Internal Structure (the "Skeleton"), Limb Enhancements (the "hands" -- occasionally the "feet") and Programming (the "Mind"). Additionally, due to some further enhancements of the original design, up to four "dots" of additional Talents, Skills, or Knowledges can be imbued in a given HM5.1 after "Programming" is selected. This is done only in specific instances, and "generic" HM5.1's will not have this benefit.

Tables

External Cover:

- Armor 4
- Magic Resistant
- Thermal Resistant
- Stealth (No armor, renders HM5.1 invisible)

Internal Payload:

- Chain Gun
- Additional Limbs
- Missile Launcher
- Magic Sink
- Damage Sink
- Bio-Realistic
- Flotation
- Explosive
- Additional Processing Power
- Parachute/Hang glider/Rocket Pack

Internal Structure:

- Primium
- Hyper-Steel
- Bio-Realistic
- Disconnective
- Extra Musculature

Limb Enhancements:

- Claws
- Hand-Gun
- Shotgun
- Flame-thrower
- Lockpicking Tools
- Data-Access Tools
- Additional Processing Power

Programming:

- Standard Combat
- Heavy Weaponry
- Infiltration
- Seduction
- Information Gathering

Descriptions

External Cover

Armor 4: This is the standard HM5 armor rating, sub-dermal armor meant to absorb physical impact.

Magic Resistant: This replaces the standard HM5 Armor with additional Primium plating. While not as durable as "standard" armor (Armor rating of only 2) it confers an additional die of Countermagic.

Thermal Resistant: Another alternative to the standard HM5

Armor, this variant takes the form of an armor plating that is specifically designed to resist forces-based attacks (mostly fire and lightning). While only conferring an Armor rating of 2, it also provides 4 dice of "soak" against fire and lightning based attacks (which normally ignore armor completely).

Stealth: In place of armor entirely, the HM5.1 can be covered in a light-redirecting substance which renders it virtually invisible. This can be activated and deactivated at the option of the HM5.1, and operates in similar manner to the Forces 2 effect (Assume 5 successes upon activation, reduced by the innate countermagic of the HM5.1).

Internal Payload

Chain Gun: Standard "heavy armament" of the HM5 (Diff. 8, Dam. 8, Range 200 yd, Rate 4, Clip 200).

Additional Limbs: This represents two additional arms which can be retracted into the interior of the HM5.1. Each of these additional limbs can be further enhanced with Limb Enhancements, as described below.

Missile Launcher: A single-missile Missile Launcher, it also has adequate space for a single reload (reloading the Launcher takes a full turn's actions) (Diff. 7, Dam. 14, Range 2 mi., Rate 1, Clip 1+1). Use the skill Heavy Weapons with this weapon. Firing this weapon causes a "back-blast" 2 yards behind the HM5.1 inflicting 4 dice of fire damage.

Magic Sink: A large additional mass of Primium allows the HM5.1 to be far more resistant to magic (2 additional countermagic dice).

Damage Sink: A reinforced internal structure, giving the HM5.1 a +1 Stamina and 2 additional Health Levels.

Bio-Realistic: The innards of the HM 5.1 are designed to resemble actual organs. Thus, the HM5.1 can suffer considerable wounds and will still appear (dependant on actions, of course) to be a normal human. Onlookers shouldn't be able to notice anything unusual at all, and medical personnel on site need to roll Int + Medicine at a difficulty of (10 - Health Levels Lost) to tell the difference. The difficulty increases by 2 if Bio-Realistic Internal Structure is also taken, but is only useful if the injuries are not to the head or the limbs where other enhancements would be obvious.

Flotation: Ordinarily, HM5's are useless for underwater operations. Simply put, they don't float. They're far too heavy for even their own considerable strength to be able to swim effectively. This enhancement counteracts this problem by providing the HM5.1 with an internal flotation device allowing it to swim readily (normally, HM5.1's with this enhancement will have some or all of their extra 4 Abilities dice placed in Swimming).

Explosive: A very straightforward (but rarely used because of the price involved) modification, the HM5.1's payload in this case is a very large explosive device (Dam. 15, reduced by 1 per yd. from the HM5.1). This can be set to go off from a pre-programmed set of circumstances (after entering the center of the Chantry), upon the destruction of the HM5.1, or both. A variation on this concept, for use with the Flame Thrower, is an additional tank of fuel that will support 15 minutes of use (obviously, firing both will use it up twice as fast) and will explode if the HM5.1 is destroyed with Forces, or if the tank (Stamina 3) can't soak the leftover damage that destroys it, for damage equal to the # of minutes of fuel left in the tank.

Additional Processing Power: Simply put, this HM5.1 model has got brains in other places than its head. The internal payload has sufficient room in it to store a full 3 additional programs. When a HM5.1 has access to multiple programs, it may make use of the best attributes of each at all times (example: The HM5.1 has both the Seduction and Information Gathering programs. It has an effective Charisma of 4 and Perception of 5).

Parachute/Hang glider/Rocket Pack: Depending on the need for subtlety (both in terms of reality and in terms of attracting attention), the HM5.1 can carry a variety of devices allowing it to survive falls and/or escape a difficult situation. The Rocket Pack option only carries about 30 minutes worth of fuel, or 10 minutes if the HM5.1 is carrying a passenger as well. The Hang glider option is not capable of carrying a

passenger, and the Parachute will only reduce fall damage to 4 health levels if a passenger is carried (easily soakable by the HM5.1, not necessarily so for the passenger).

Internal Structure

Note: A standard HM5 has Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Appearance 4)

Primum: Normally, it's the Primum "bones" of the HM5, which gives it its innate 2 dice of countermagic.

Hyper-Steel: Opting for durability rather than magic resistance, Hyper-Steel gives the HM5.1 two additional Health Levels.

Bio-Realistic: The bones of the HM 5.1 are designed to resemble actual bones. Thus, the HM5.1 can suffer moderate wounds and will still appear (dependant on actions, of course) to be a normal human. Onlookers shouldn't be able to notice anything unusual at all if a leg or upper arm is broken, and medical personnel on site need to roll Int + Medicine at a difficulty of (10 - Health Levels Lost) to tell the difference (again, only for leg or upper arm injuries). See Bio-Realistic under "Internal Payloads" for further use of this modification. A HM5.1 with this modification has a -1 Stamina.

Disconnective: The Internal Structure of this HM5.1 is designed to come apart -- this is similar to a contortionist's ability to put limbs out of their sockets. This modification, in addition to allowing the HM5.1 to get in, out, or through spaces that should be too small for it to fit through, confers an additional +1 to Dexterity with a -1 to Stamina.

Extra Musculature: This model of HM5.1 is greatly over-muscled. Designed for sheer, raw punishing power at the sacrifice of modest amounts of mobility, this variety of HM5.1 has a +2 to Strength and a -1 to Dexterity.

Limb Enhancements

Select 2, one for each arm.

Claws: A standard HM5 has retractable claws in its forearms, allowing it to inflict Strength + 3 Damage on a Claw attack.

Hand-Gun: As an alternative, the HM5.1 can have a handgun inset into the forearm (Diff. 7, Dam. 6, Range 35 yd, Rate 2, Clip 6).

Shotgun: Another alternative is to provide the HM5.1 with a shotgun for additional punch (at close ranges) (Diff. 6, Dam. 8, Range 20 yd, Rate 1, Clip 5+1).

Flame-thrower: Sometimes, a more dramatic approach is called for. HM5.1s can also insert a Flame-thrower into their arm. Nasty weapon. Diff. 6, Range 60 yd. A single die determines damage. Roll the die and multiply by 10. That's the % of the body covered in napalm, and the # of health levels suffered *per turn* for 10 turns. Large objects suffer damage in like manner, but with obviously smaller %s of surface covered. The flame-thrower attachment only has enough fuel for 2 minutes of operation, but see the Internal Payload "Explosive". Use the skill Heavy Weapons with this weapon.

Lockpicking Tools: The hand of the HM5.1 has several hidden (self-retracting) lockpicking tools that can be used to break through most any sort of lock with much greater subtlety. They can also be used for disabling security systems (reduce all Lockpicking and Security difficulties by 3).

Data-Access Tools: Serial, Parallel, and Network connections? No problem. Hidden in the HM5.1's forearm are all sorts of direct data connections, and powerful cracking/decryption equipment as well (allows the HM5.1 to plug directly into a computer without using a keyboard/mouse interface, and reduces all Computer and Computer Hacking difficulties by 3).

Additional Processing Power: Just like the module of the same name in "Internal payload", but to a smaller scale. The limb enhancement has sufficient room in it to store 1 additional program. See Additional Processing Power under "Internal Payload".

Programming

Standard Combat: The typical HM5 has the following Abilities and Attributes: Cha 1 Man 1 Per 3 Int 2 Wits 2 The Talents of Alertness and Brawl at 3, all Skills and Knowledges in the baseline Mage book

except for Meditation, Stealth, Occult, and Cosmology at 3.

Heavy Weaponry: Designed to handle larger weapons (such as the Rocket Launcher and Flame-thrower enhancements). Cha 1 Man 1 Per 3 Int 2 Wits 2 Replace Brawl 3 with Heavy Weapons (BoS) 3

Infiltration: Intended to enter into enemy strongholds to recover or assassinate. Cha 2 Man 2 Per 3 Int 2 Wits 3 Add Stealth 3, Lockpicking (BoS) 3, Subterfuge 2. Remove all Skill and Knowledges that do not pertain directly to the mission (Etiquette would be retained if an Embassy were infiltrated, as would Lore if it were a Mage Chantry).

Seduction: Rather straightforward. Also somewhat modified by the extremely powerful to create "personal companions". Cha 4 Man 1 Per 2 Int 2 Wits 3 Seduction 4 (BoS). Some models have a custom "External Cover" which increases Appearance to 5 or even 6.

Information Gathering: Need a secret recovered, or data retrieved? This is the program for the job. Cha 1 Man 1 Per 5 Int 2 Wits 2 . Alertness is increased to 5, and some models even have 1-2 dots of Awareness. Research and Investigation are also increased to 5, but combat skills (Brawl, Melee, and Firearms) are reduced to 2.

Examples

A HIT Mark 5.1 that is designed as a complement to the standard Combat team, but intended to take out a large target would have Thermal Armor, a Missile Launcher payload, a Primum structure, Flame-thrower Limb enhancements (both), and the Heavy Weaponry program.

A HIT Mark 5.1 designed to infiltrate a Cabal and recover a captured Technomancer would have Stealth, a Rocket Pack, Primum structure, Lockpicking Tools and Additional Processing Power for the Limb Enhancements, and both the Standard Combat and Infiltration programs (even bare-handed, a HIT Mark is a dangerous foe, and weapons can be carried readily).

A HIT Mark 5.1 designed for hand to hand combat (this is a popular model in the Asiatic Constructs) would have Armor 4, either a Damage Sink or Extra Limbs, Extra Musculature, Claws on both (or all four) arms, and the Standard Combat Programming, replacing Brawl with Martial Arts and adding 2 dots of Dodge.

A HIT Mark 5.1 designed for ongoing observation in a delicate setting (such as an embassy or a deep-cover around other mages) would have Magic Resistant, Realistic Organs and Bones, Data Access tools and Additional Processing Power, and have both the Seduction and Information Gathering programs.

Homing Chihuahua

By James Hertsch III (jwhertsc@bulldog.unca.edu)

Cost

4

Level

2

Arete

3

Quintessence

10

Introduction

Graphs don't lie, Doctor Velazquez thought, regarding the descending population curve. The homing pigeon will very soon be extinct. Such a useful creature, too. More's the pity.

Tired from a long day's work, Velazquez exited his basement lab, shut off the lights, and retired for the evening. Toss. Turn. Barking from outside. Yip-yip-yip-yip. Crash. Boom.

Dogs scavenging through the trash again. Discontented, Doctor Velazquez activated a Canine Repellent Field, and watched as the little dogs scampered off into the night.

Pausing for a moment, Velazquez wondered how the little chihuahuas managed to get everywhere. And, more importantly, Doctor Velazquez thought, could they serve mankind in the same way as homing pigeons once had?

Capturing several of the rat-dogs, Velazquez used Lamarckian genetic techniques to instill in his simple chihuahuas the ability to remember where "home" was, and the ability to journey from anywhere to home.

As the homing pigeon faded from the biological spectrum, the world became ready for: Doctor Velazquez's Homing Chihuahuas!!

Description

The Homing Chihuahua is, in effect, a Living Talisman. Gifted with a certain amount of Quintessence to power its gifts, the dog grows extremely tired after several runs. Tass for the dog is available in the form of a high-protein dog food (available from Doctor Velazquez at reasonable rates).

The Homing Chihuahua can return to any location defined as "home." The mage gives the Chihuahua a sense of "home" by showing it the area, saying the phrase "Here is home," and then keeping the dog in a cage. When released, the mage activates the chihuahua by saying "Go home, boy! (or girl)" and the dog races back towards the home location.

Because of its small size, the chihuahua usually can't carry more than a small message in a tube around its collar.

Rumors exist of Velazquez breeding later generations of Homing Chihuahuas with the abilities to step sideways (Spirit 3), or rapid travel to the "home" location. (Mind 1, Correspondence 1, Time 3).

The Host

By Adam Solis (ajsolis@aol.com)

Overview

Face it guys, Banes are just stupid. They trade their individuality, powers, and immortality for a short trip as a fleshly creature. Not all Spirits are that stupid though. So be careful, that "fomor" you may be confronting may be Host.

Tell me, do you happen to know any spirit mages? If you do, they make great friends and worse enemies. One of their tricks is guesting a spirit, so that they can channel the Spirit's power through themselves. Well, The Host are a lot like that trick, except it is the Spirit's idea to begin with. These guys are just bad news; to begin with they are a better breed of spirit to begin with. The end product is something more along the lines of a Kami than a fomor, usually.

You kids are probably not interested too much in their cultural values or political opinions, so I'll start off with their powers.

Powers of the Hosts

First of all, the Host retain their innate spiritual nature unlike those fomori types. So Host retain their charms, power, gnosis, and Rage.

Oh yeah, they can definitely use those powers too. Now think about it pup, The Host by definition already has a body. They also already have rage, but it is their charms which are the killer. Take the Charm Manifestation for example; that is definitely one of their faves. The Host retains all the abilities and characteristics of the "meatbod," their pet name for the fleshly part of their little union. With the expenditure of a little power, The Host could increase its dexterity, stamina, strength, health levels to any amount it wanted. It could also heal its body, or give itself any kind of ability (talent, knowledge, or skill) to levels that leave Dream or Past lives in the dust. In other words, think of any manifested spirit you have ever fought with a free base of a human or animal meatbod to begin with. Scary thought, eh? Also, Host with the Shapeshift Charm can still shapeshift, and pretty much use any other charm in its repertoire with the obvious exception of Possession, which is already in use. Mental and social aspects of the Host depend upon the meatbod's social and mental characteristics as well as the Spirit's Gnosis. (I have not quite decided on the rules for this yet. Any thoughts?)

Host regain power, gnosis, and rage like every other other spirit. Since Host do not tie themselves to the meatbod as tightly as Banes do, they may leave the meatbod at any time and are also vulnerable to exorcism as well. Furthermore, if the meatbod dies, well the Spirit can always find a new meatbod to possess.

Variations

Magick: Just as certain Spirits can use magick, so can certain Host. Such Host have Arete, spheres, and suffer from paradox like any other magic worker. Host can even belong to a specific paradigm, although most can be safely considered Orphans.

Host Fomor: Although Host invariably consider themselves superior to fomori, host can have fomori characteristics. Create the fomor as usual according to Freak Legion, but such fomor always have the Banespeak and Unpossessed merits and the Dispersal power. These aberrations are looked down upon by The Host.

The Spirits Themselves

The Host are not so much a race as a state of being. The only requirement for becoming Host is that the spirit have the Charms Possession and Materialization, or their equivalents.

Middle and High Umbra: Spirits of any of the Triad can become Host. There are rumors that the dreaded WyldThings are really Wyld Host. There are several Bane Host, as in Warriors of the Apocalypse. The most famous fomor host is Malfeaxis, the Wyrms Bear. Weaver Host are unusual, but possible.

Low Umbra: It may be possible for there to be Host of a meatbod and Wraith/plasmal/spectre. It would require Puppetry 5, and Embody at the very least. These are essentially living Risen.

Maya: A Chimera Host? Anything is possible...

LF-106 (Life form No. 106)

By Ian Ward (I.J.Ward@dcs.hull.ac.uk)

Introduction

The aliens described here are based on the creatures in the Alien film trilogy and also on the Genestealers by Games Workshop (which are also based on the Aliens films). They are *not* the actual aliens from the films, but a lot of ideas have been taken from them, so please don't write to me saying that you've studied the films and you think that my rules are wrong. These aliens can be used in any WoD game, but will probably fit best into a mage game 'cos mages like this sort of thing. I know there are other stats for aliens, and mine are fairly similar, but I am more concerned here with the abilities of the aliens and the implications for the Progenitors and Void Engineers, rather than the actual stats for the creatures.

Prelude

- Perimeter secured. 1st unit sent in.
- Initial scans show area clear.

Sergeant Collins led the first unit through the corridors of the outpost. Everything seemed quiet. Too quiet. His personal life form scanner showed absolutely no signs of life nearby, even though the research station should have a permanent staff of 45. The rooms of the complex were neat and tidy and showed no signs of any attack. It was as though everyone had suddenly disappeared into thin air. They hadn't even sent out a distress signal; the only reason anyone knew that something was wrong was when no weekly report was received from the outpost.

- No signs of disturbance. Moving into inner complex area.

Collins continued deeper into the complex, feeling more and more apprehensive with each passing moment.

- Second unit reporting in. We've found something.
- Location ?
- Medical lab.
- On my way.

Collins stepped in to the medical lab, "What is it corporal ?"

"Over here. We were hoping you could tell us what it is." Corporal Jones pulled back the cover on the dissection table, revealing the body underneath.

- Life form 106 discovered. Body being returned to drop ship for further examination. Awaiting further orders.
- Message received. Continue search of complex.

Collins slumped in to a chair, trying hard not to show any fear. He didn't want any of his men getting alarmed. None of the other marines had seen a 106 before, but Collins had. It was something he had hoped he would never have to see again. It had been one of his first missions in the deep universe; they were to investigate a beaten up ship drifting through the Wolf-359 system. Life scans had been unable to pierce the ship's extremely thick hull and so they were going in blind, not knowing what creatures they might be facing. Out of fifty marines that were sent in, only 4 survived. They escaped back to the mother ship expecting to be told to nuke the ship but instead they were ordered back to Earth, leaving the ship alone. The last thing Collins had heard about it were rumours that some elite troops were being sent in to the ship to try and recover some of the creatures for study, and that meant the Progenitors were interested. The thought of what the Progenitors could do with a creature like that made Collins shudder.

"Are you all right?"

The sudden noise made Collins jump, "Oh.. yes. I'm fine. I was just thinking about something."

All Collins wanted to do now was to run back to the drop ship and get the hell out of there, but he couldn't.

He had orders.

- Continuing search of inner complex area. No other life forms

detected.

He wondered why they were not picking up any life readings from other 106's. Could it be possible that they were not many on the planet and that they all died off. But if that was the case then where were all the colonists. It didn't make sense, but then suddenly he had his answers. Entering one of the rooms he discovered a huge hole in the middle of the floor. The 106's must live underground and if they were a long way down then the rock would be too thick for the life form scanners to pick up any signals.

- Discovered underground passage. Awaiting orders.

- Make brief search of passage. Return to drop ship if any LF-106 detected.

Collins slowly led his unit down into the passage. Suddenly the life scanners started showing multiple life forms heading towards them from various passages at an inhuman speed. Collins quickly estimated that they had less than one minute before the creatures arrived. Shouting back up the passage he order his men in to standard defence formation, with heavy weapons up front. There was no need for the men to take cover as the 106's had no weapons and relied only on hand to hand combat.

- LF-106's converging on our position. No time to run.

- Acknowledged. Return once first wave destroyed.

The first wave would be quite easy to take down. The marines were in a good tactical position with a long corridor of fire. This would, however, be their downfall. Without warning, laser weapons started firing at the marines, taking many of the front row down. Then the hideous creatures poured down the passage shooting and clawing at anything in their way. There was mass panic from the marines as they ran back up the passage towards the light. None made it out alive. The last thing Sergeant Collins saw was a three armed monstrosity bearing down on him, holding what was obviously a VE weapon in its hands.

- Test site one reporting in. Test was a complete success. Hybrids performing as planned. Hybrid casualties 5%. Marine casualties 100%.

Life Form No. 106

In the early 1970's, a VE scout ship crashed on a remote planet while on a standard recon mission. The crew of 5 was not badly injured, but their ship needed several hours repair before they would be able to leave. The planet had previously been scanned for life and only simple life forms had been detected, but then about an hour after the crash the scanners suddenly started showing about 20 unknown humanoid life forms approaching the ship from all directions. The crew quickly set up life disruption fields around the ship when the creatures suddenly attacked. The ferocity of the creatures was amazing. At first they were just throwing themselves wildly against the disruption fields, but then suddenly they all stopped and seemed to be looking for something. Then, as if by some unspoken command, they all started to attack the disruption field projector. The Void Engineers were amazed by this sudden display of intelligence and assumed, correctly, that there must be some kind of hive mind in operation. They managed to send out a distress call, but it was far too late. Within minutes the creatures had destroyed the field and killed the helpless Humans. When a VE rescue ship finally reached the crash site, all they found was the deserted scout ship.

Life Form No. 106 (or LF-106) is the official name for these creatures, identifying them as the 106th intelligent extra terrestrial creatures discovered by the Void Engineers. Most technocrats know very little about LF-106, although they are aware of their existence. The people that know the most are top ranking members of the Void Engineers and Progenitors, and for reasons known only to them they are keeping things very much to themselves. This has made members of the other conventions, especially the NWO, very concerned about what they might be planning. There are various rumours being spread around about the Progenitors and VE's creating a human/LF-106 hybrid, which will have the amazing strength of LF-106 and the dexterity and intelligence of humans which should enable the hybrids to use weapons.

The Progenitors have in fact created several successful 106 hybrids, but are keeping them very quiet. The hybrids aren't quite as strong as the truebreeds, but the Progenitors have managed to increase their intelligence and have taught them some basic skills. The hybrids obviously can't be used on Earth, so they are mainly being used in remote areas of the deep universe, well away from the prying eyes of the NWO. Several NWO operatives have been sent out to try and discover what the VE's and Progenitors are up to, but they have all either disappeared or died in some mysterious accident, all of which has been blamed on the Nephandi.

LF-106 normally live in deep underground passages, but in later years they have been found living in various man made labyrinths as well. There have even been reports of LF-106 living in derelict space craft, some of Human design and some not. No one is sure how they control the ships, but some scientists have suggested that they don't. Most of the Human ships have automated life support systems, and it is believed that the LF-106 just float around in the space craft waiting for someone to discover them. It is not known if the LF-106 have a particular mission, but if they have then it does not involve communicating with Humans.

LF-106 Warrior

Physical Strength ***** Dexterity ***** **Mental** Perception *****
 Stamina ***** Intelligence * Wits *****

Talents Alertness ***** Athletics ***** **Skills** Stealth *****
 Awareness ** Brawl ***** Dodge **** Survival *****
 Intimidation *****

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Dead

Appearance: Height ranges between 8ft and 9ft, although they are usually stooped so their true height is actually about 11ft. Although tall, they are amazingly flexible and are capable of squeezing into spaces only a few feet wide. They have 4 arms, each ending in a 3 clawed hand. The skin is very hard and thick (gives an extra 2 dice for soaking damage (the stamina score shown is for endurance)) and also protects against harsh environmental conditions. It is also a vary dark colour, and as the LF-106 are usually most active at night this acts as perfect camouflage. Under the skin is a layer of acid which is capable of melting through almost all known substances (in fact, the LF-106 skin is the only known substance the acid does not effect), but the corrosiveness of the acid is reduced after repeated reactions with various substances (one drop of acid can melt through a block about 10cm thick, but this varies depending on the substance being corroded). The legs are very powerful and are capable of propelling the LF-106 up to 50mph for short periods of time.

Notes: All LF-106 function as one by using a hive mind. This hive mind is controlled by the LF-106 Queen (see below). The hive mind allows each LF-106 in the tribe to be aware of where all the other LF-106's are and to experience what they experience. This means that all LF-106 learn new things at the same time as each other. The hive mind has a radius of about 2 to 3 miles, and so most LF-106 don't stray too far from the Queen.

LF-106 Queen

Stats: As above, but with int 5 instead of 2 and willpower 9 instead of 8.

Appearance: Same as for warrior, except that the Queen is usually more battle scared and has a larger body.

Notes: The Queen is the controller of the hive mind. All things sensed by all the LF-106 in the tribe are felt by the Queen, who processes the information and then sends the relevant bits out to all the other LF-106. The mind can be sensed by any mages using mind magic, but the amount of information involved can easily overwhelm even the most powerful mage. As the Queen is the most important LF-106, it is normally very heavily guarded by other LF-106 whose sole job is to protect the Queen. If the Queen is killed, then after a few days another LF-106 in the tribe somehow evolves very quickly to replace the lost Queen. Until that time the tribe is disorganised and very vulnerable to attack. The Queen is also the only egg layer in the whole tribe, and so usually stays in one place. About the only physical movement the Queen ever does is lay eggs. That is unless the eggs are under attack in which case see will fight ferociously to the death.

LF-106/Human Hybrid

Physical Strength **** **Mental** Perception
 Dexterity **** Stamina **** Intelligence ***
 ***** Wits *****

Talents Alertness **Skills** Stealth ***** **Knowledges**
 ***** Athletics **** Survival **** +Computer **
 Awareness *** Brawl +Firearms *** +Science **
 **** Dodge **** +Melee *** +Cosmology **
 Intimidation ***** +Technology **

Willpower: 7

Health levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Dead

Appearance: Hybrids are smaller than true LF-106, but they are still over 6ft. They usually have only 2 arms, but sometimes they can have 3 or 4. The 2 arms have humanoid hands on the end which are capable of holding and using weapons. The other 2 arms (if they are there), have the standard 3 claws on the end. The skin is not as thick as a truebreed (only gives 1 extra soak dice), but hybrids still have the corrosive acid. Hybrids are nowhere near as fast as their truebreed cousins, and are only slightly faster than humans.

Notes: Hybrids are less influenced by the hive mind and so are capable of more independent actions which is what the Progenitors currently want. However, if they are allowed too near to a Queen then the hive mind can take over. For this reason, hybrids are kept well away from any other LF-106. Some hybrids have unfortunately come close to a Queen and there are now several LF-106 tribes roaming the deep universe containing quite a few hybrids. The hybrids knowledge of human technology makes these tribes very dangerous indeed. Hybrids are also capable of very crude speech, and so can communicate with humans.

The stats marked with a + will vary between hybrids depending on what they have been trained for. All other stats are the physical abilities of the hybrids and will not vary unless the Progenitors have made any modifications. The stats above are for a standard Border Corps Division hybrid. Most variations will have at least very basic training in computers and technology, due to the amount of VE technology they will be using.

LIQUID PEOPLE

By Anders Sandberg (nv91-asa@black16.nada.kth.se) (10 Nov 94)

Jason looked at the man in dark suit across the street. Such emptiness,

no trace of new possibilities... this unfortunate soul was in desperate need of the Good Death. He moved silently back into the shadow.

"Excuse me, do you have any spare change sir?". The man looked into the dismal alley, right into the unkept face of Jason. Jason struck out with his hand in a silent and swift movement, intended to painlessly and cleanly break the man's neck. To his surprise his hand just sank into the flesh instead of connecting with bone. With more confusion than fear, he saw how his hand had seamlessly merged with the man's throat like molten rubber. A strange numbness spread from his hand.

Desperately he tried to pull away, but only managed to drag the still expressionless man close to himself. He tried to shove him away, but his free hand just melted together with the suit, which had become fluid and warm as flesh. With a scream he backed away, tripping over a pile of trash and falling over with the man on top of him. The last thing Jason saw before their faces merged was how the expressionless eyes had begun to melt.

These nightmarish beings appear to be vaguely allied with the Marauders or Nephandi, if they are indeed allies and not creations of the mages. The liquid people look human, at least to a casual observer. Closer scrutiny will however reveal that their bland and expressionless faces are somehow inhumanly smooth, almost as if they were painted onto their heads. The nose lacks nostrils, and the mouth has no teeth. They never speak or do anything to attract attention, and their clothing is uniformly bland.

Its when they are hurt or in a fight the difference become obvious. Their bodies and clothes are made of liquid flesh, flowing smoothly from one form to another. Wounds will just seal up, with no bleeding. Arms and legs bend jointlessly, and are quite elastic. When their flesh comes into contact with the flesh of another being, it will instantly and painlessly merge with it. A person striking a liquid person will suddenly find his hand seamlessly joined with the opponent. Further struggle usually brings them closer into contact, and usually ends in both combatants being melted together into a single mass. When this happens, the mass slowly divides into two new lumps of flesh, which reform into two exactly identical liquid people looking like some kind of average of the victim and the liquid person.

The liquid people are not particularly bright, and often behave a bit like discreet sleepwalkers. They have an amazing ability to avoid notice, just walking along with other people and following the crowd. Their origin is unknown. Some mages claim they are a Technocracy experiment. One possibility is that they are a failed Progenitor experiment. Another is that they are the raw material for the Men In Black. Other mages guess that they are spirits lusting after the stability of material life, or some kind of magical disease. And there is some evidence they might be used by the Marauders and Nephandi for unknown purposes. Some fear that they are stocking up for a wholesale invasion with liquid people, turning them into an unstoppable army. Others equally fear that the liquid people are already among us, secretly doing the bidding of their masters.

Liquid Person

Str: ** **Cha:** * **Per:** *

Dex: ** **Man:** * **Int:** *

Sta: ** **App:** **

Wit: *

Alertness: **

Brawl: **

Stealth: **

(Other skills like Drive or Law are possible depending on the previous victims).

Arcane: ****

Willpower: 1

Liquid people seems to almost completely lack willpower. If confronted with a problem, they just give up and walk away. They don't have any thoughts or emotions, and their memories are hazy and "soft".

Arete: 4

Life magick has trouble dealing with their liquid flesh. They have 2 extra dice countermagick against Life magick.

Health: 0, 0, 0, -1, -2, -3, dissolved (immune to non-aggravated damage)

Powers

Merge: Their liquid flesh will merge with any other flesh it touches, immediately growing into it. This doesn't feel anything, the victim just feels a strange numbness in the area. The two persons will be inseparably joined unless the link is severed in some way. To be able to merge, the liquid person has to touch skin to skin (its clothes doesn't work very efficiently for this, taking several turns to merge with flesh). When a victim has been more or less completely attached, the liquid flesh flows around and into him, turning him into liquid in a few turns.

All attacks done by the liquid person (who usually uses its fists) which touch an unprotected person will cause a merging. The same is true for all brawl attacks against it. Its enough that the attack hits, not that it does any damage (if a dodge manages to evade the attack nothing happens). Instead of doing any damage to either the victim or liquid person, the attack results in a partial merge or a more complete merge. When the total "damage" reaches 10, both have merged totally and start to unite completely. The only way to escape the merging is to sever the connections, all attempts to push away will just result in further merging.

Regeneration: The liquid people are fairly immune to damage. Penetrating damage like guns or knives simply heal directly, just causing the flesh to flow together. If a cutting weapon manages to sever a limb or a head, it will fall off and dissolve in a puddle, doing just one point of aggravated damage. Aggravated damage (magick, fire and acid) work as normal, destroying parts of the person which fall off. It will take seven aggravated wounds to completely destroy it.

Undetectable: Liquid people are normally practically impossible to spot in a crowd. They blend in completely, leaving no trace. When among other people, increase their Arcane to 6.

"Little Nasties"

By Anders Sandberg (nv91-asa@nada.kth.se)

"Little Nasties" are minor beings which tend to be attracted by the activities of mages, usually harmless and merely annoying. The near umbra of a mage's home can be a very strange place...

Some mages wage a virtual war against unwanted presences, building wards and performing exorcisms. Others accept them, and claim they belong to a home just like rats belong in a house (It is worth mentioning that cats often seems to be able to perceive the beings and hunt them). Anyway, they are very hard to keep away for long.

The Eaters of Dust

These Entropy-minions are quite common, they feed on quintessence from the scraps left by mankind. The usually manifest as dust in the corners, stains or sticky patches and feed on cookie crumbs, spilled liquids, dirt or lost objects as they vanish into the Shadowlands. They are both ubiquitous and harmless; they appear in large numbers in places where people forget and spill things, like bars, untidy rooms or in gutters. They are naturally attracted to Entropy mages.

Huulh

This is a somewhat more powerful relative to the Eaters of Dust, a spirit attracted by sex. Huulh is invisible in the material world, but in the Umbra it manifests as a ball (around 30 centimetres in diameter) of sexual organs, dribbling fluids and quivering slightly. It seems to feed on the emotions of stale sex, hovering around prostitutes or neurotics and subtly encouraging them to get involved in more sex. It is actually repulsed by true passion, and prefers to keep its distance

from many Cultist Mages.

Abbyss Hunters

The Hunters are a mixed groups of minions who only exist for the hunt. They are able to hunt down their quarry across space and time, finding even the most clever hiding places. Usually a pack of Hunters are summoned by a mage or another spirit and given the task to find someone; the hunt itself and its dangers is their payment.

Hunters can look like just about anything, but physically they usually manifest as hound-like shadows, suggestions of faces in the wallpaper or woodgrain, the sound of heavy steps closing in or a distant howl. They can hunt just about anywhere; in the physical world, in the Umbra, in the Shadowlands, and pursue their victim relentlessly, feeding on its paranoia and growing fear (quite often the victim is given glimpses or hints that he is hunted long before the Hunters arrive). Finally they appear, surround the victim and wait for their master to arrive.

Lurkers

Lurkers are quite discreet beings, who quietly hide in shadows, behind furniture and in inaccessible places. They are usually only felt as a presence watching people in the room. While many mages are a bit paranoid about having spirits spy on them (not to mention how much cats likes to hunt the lurkers), they are usually harmless and merely curious. Sometimes they appear just before something important is going to happen, watch it and then vanish again.

The Watchers

The Watchers are an enigmatic group of beings, apparently unable to cross the Gauntlet by themselves. They see and hear just about anything; they constantly keep track of what happens in the world using Correspondence and Spirit, quietly watching what the humans are doing. According to some theories they are an older race than mankind, they were created before the physical world and are unable to enter it of their own power. Instead they silently watch over it, hoping/fearing to somehow find a way in. Both the Ahl-I-Batin and Order of Hermes agree that this would be a bad thing, although they are unsure of exactly why. Many mages communicate with the Watchers, hoping to gain valuable information from the elder beings. A few conservatives frown on this practice, warning that such an exchange could be harmful for both parts.

"Don't Think About It, Because It Will Get Worse"

This is one of the most bizarre entities from the High Umbra, apparently recently unleashed into the Near Umbra. It personifies the concept of something you should not think about, but of course are unable to avoid ("Don't think about a white elephant!"). When people fail to avoid thinking of something it gets stronger, and gradually take on the form of whatever one shouldn't think about. When it manifests, its shape is undefined until it is formed by the fears of someone present (everybody in the vicinity intuitively realises its true nature and the danger). One could guess that the Imp of the Perverse would be very fond of this being, who could serve as a Mind-Paradox spirit.

Emotrophic Growths

These are among the lowest minions, hardly more than umbral plants, feeding on emotions (a wraith would say Pathos), using their energy to grow and reproduce. They look differently depending on the type of emotions they feed on (and the paradigm of the viewing mage, of course); growths around a building filled with rational thoughts become clear and crystalline, while an old and homely flat might contain baroque polyps reminiscent of brown corals.

Emotrophic Reefs and Psychic Vampires

While the Growths are harmless and merely annoying, sometimes they can infect a very weak-willed human under severe emotional stress. The growths absorb every scrap of emotion and memory from his mind, and he becomes little more than their symbiote, a psychic vampire. The vampire begins to absorb emotions and energy from others, bringing them back to the growths which feed on them. In time the growths develop into a complex reef of mixed mentality, while the vampire grows more and more hungry for true emotions. It

is not uncommon for the vampire to be completely unaware of that anything is wrong, they just feel empty and strangely detached from everything while their homes get more and more filled with mementoes, unsorted garbage and things they don't need.

The Living Plastic Creations of Dr. Rhenborg

By Anders Sandberg

One of the most bizarre uses of Matter developed so far is the living plastic invented by Dr. Rhenborg. He has combined the normal properties of plastic with properties of living beings such as movement, healing and instincts, for use as servants and weapons.

The plastic creations are brightly coloured, elastic beings able to stretch immensely before breaking. They are resistant to acids, but become stiff in cold environments and tend to melt when confronted with fire. They are completely mindless, only able to perform the duties stamped into their molecular structure by Dr. Rhenborg when the plastic is polymerised.

Usually he keeps them in the form of plain blocks of plastic, which are then activated by heating them somewhat or ripping away a protective cover. The earliest designs were patterned after dinosaurs and other plastic toys (the doctor had originally planned them as presents for his grandchildren), but today they instead become amorphous beings with hundred of small legs, claws, flapping slits and antennae (possibly a sign of the increasing Quiet of the doctor).

One typical application is the Carrying Creation, a big blue glob able to move heavy objects as indicated by the doctor. Another is the Gripper Plastic, a small block of red plastic which when thrown onto at starts gripping with plastic tentacles. A third kind is the Black and White Destroyer Ball. By combining big blocks of plastics and heating them, they form a huge chequered ball that will aggressively attack anything perceived as a threat; it will bash down walls, roll over cars or crush people. Unfortunately it is also a bit unpredictable weapon. Other experiments have been the Green Guard Spider, the Purple Tyrannosaur-Dog and the Yellow Dance-On-Paper-Pyramid.

The Luggage

By Andrew Weitzman (aweitz@cam.org)

Nature

Fanatic

Demeanor

Curmudgeon

Attributes

Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities

Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 1, Intimidation 4, Tracking 5, Stealth 2

Willpower

9

Innate Countermagic

3 dice

Health Levels

OK x 3, -1 x 3, -2 x 3, -4 x 2, Incapacitated

Attacks

Crush (similar to body slam, but Luggage suffers no Health Level damage); bite (Strength+2, difficulty 6); *Snap* (similar to grapple, but if Luggage scores three more successes than opponent, opponent has been swallowed whole by Luggage).

Powers

Infinite internal volume: Some sort of natural Correspondence Effect inherent to the Luggages' nature allows them near-unlimited internal storage space within their bodies. Assume a Luggage can store anything that can be fit through its opening, and can store any number of things without penalty.

Umbral travel: Luggages possess an innate ability to break through Gauntlets, Horizons, and Pericarps. "Bash through", actually; a Luggage shifting to the spirit worlds literally smashes its way through the barriers. Luggages cannot botch this sort of roll.

Owner link: The Luggage *always* knows which direction its master is, no matter how far away she is. At worst, the Luggage will have a general sense in which direction to go to rejoin its owner.

Description

The Luggages are among the most coveted trade goods among merchants plying the Deep Umbra. Fashioned in some far-off Realm, the method of their construction and even their true nature remain mysteries. Mysticks who have attempted to classify them label the Luggages as "part talisman, part fetish, part familiar, and completely homicidal."

At rest, a Luggage appears to be an ordinary steamer trunk made from a blondish wood that resembles pine. The sole indication of its unusual characteristics is a tendency to *stare*; though they have no eyes, Luggages have a peculiar ability to give one the sense that they are regarding you with the same attention a pin has for a butterfly. Their bizarre qualities make themselves clear when the Luggage begins to move. Stubby wooden legs, like those of a centipede, sprout from the base. These allow it to trot -- or, if angry, charge -- across almost any terrain imaginable. When in battle, Luggages have a disconcerting habit of licking their chops with a tongue the color of mahogany.

These abilities stem from the material Luggages are made from: sapient pearwood. This plant grows in areas left unstable by magical Effects; as far as can be determined, they "solidify" the reality of areas of their native Realm that have become too chaotic for any other form of life to colonize. Sapient pearwood has been likened to Primium in the way it can shrug off magical interference. Sapient pearwood also has a primitive intelligence that prefers stable situations -- a "rootedness" if you will.

This trait carries over into goods constructed of sapient pearwood. Curious mages who have used Mind to delve into the alien psychology of the Luggages have discovered that they form a close bond with their owners. To serve its owner is the reason for a Luggage's existence; the absence of the owner from its life causes a Luggage great mental distress. In the usual run of events this simply means that a Luggage will always trail on the heels of its master unless specifically ordered not to. This does not mean that a Luggage *likes* its owner, merely that it is supremely loyal. Luggage owners have likened the experience to owning a rather grumpy dog.

The notorious reputation of Luggages stems from their fanatical devotion to their masters. A Luggage will follow its master to Hell...literally. Nothing will stop a Luggage from finding a lost owner. The longer it misses its owner, the angrier and more stubborn it will get. Anything that gets in its way -- people, Umbrood, mountains, continents -- will be summarily trampled over if the obstacle even hints at getting in the Luggage's way. Luggages have trouble with the concepts of "over," "under," and "around." The meaning of "through" is crystal-clear.

Luggage combat is pretty forthright, involving a frontal assault that leaves its opponent in small pieces. They are capable of low cunning when the situation demands it; most Luggages simply don't go to the trouble. One nasty trick is their use of their vast internal volume to...well...eat their enemies. Opponents gulped down by a Luggage are never seen again. No one knows where they go -- presumably they are banished to a far region of the Luggage's innards. Attempts to find them end in failure as the Luggage innocently shows the owner's clean underwear instead.

MATERIAL BEINGS (GREMLINS)

By Anders Sandberg

These beings lack their own bodies, and when they manifest in a physical form, they animate dead matter. Using their powers, they can make otherwise rigid objects bend and move, and they can control machines. For example, a being can animate a marble statue, giving it the power to move and act. It is still hard marble, but the marble changes shape when it moves. A being possessing a car can make it move as it wishes, override what the driver does, lock the doors and possibly make it crunch together. A being possessing a knife can make it jump through the air at a target, and burrow into its flesh.

An Entity doesn't see the world very well (except using the senses of the possessed object, if it has such). They see it from an Umbral level, noticing mostly life and magical things but having great trouble distinguishing material things. They are attracted to strong negative feelings like fear, pain and death, and seek out sources of them directly. On the other hand, they feel Paradox as pain, so they try to avoid sources of paradox.

Nephandi sometimes use these beings to attack their enemies, defend their labyrinths or just set them loose in the world to cause suffering. Often they appear in large schools, hunting together. They are not very bright, and don't understand much. They follow orders to the letter, often without any imagination at all. Subtlety is above them, and they prefer blunt, direct approaches. As soon as their victim begins to feel negative emotions (like fear when glass shards start to creep around), they will zoom in on the source, often causing even more negative emotions (like combined fear and pain when the shards pierce the flesh). This makes them even more active, and they will continue trying to cause more negativity as long as possible. When they cannot extract any more, they go dormant if there is no other sources in the vicinity. Dormant entities can remain so for a long time, but often succumb to the paradox they have garnered during the wait.

Arete: 3

Animate matter (Matter 3): the being can animate a material object and make it change shape to move, or control its actions. Most beings can't use the more subtle functions (like reprogramming a computer), and prefer simple physical actions (like strangling a victim with the power cord).

[The number of successes will equal the beings physical traits, modified by the nature of the animated object. For example, a statue will increase strength and stamina with 2, a car strength, dexterity and stamina with 4 and a pane of glass decrease the stamina with 2.]

Mind 2: The being can feel sources of negative emotions in the vicinity.

Mind 1: The being will always understand the capabilities of any

object it possesses. If it becomes a car, it will know all functions of the car (but no traffic rules).

MANICHAENS

By Arthur-Trevor D.M. Lasher, for [The Southron Republic](#)

Nicknames

Serials

Description

Fully processed Serials are identical to the original template, right down to the finger and retinal prints. In non-processed form, however, a Manichaen is a blank slate with nondescript, sexless features.

Manichaens are specially-designed Revenants, modified by Progenitor procedures and Tzimisce Vicissitude. They are born *tabula rasa*, with no personality engrams or even much dura matter, outside of a residual medulla and brain stem. An individual's brain is surgically placed inside the Manichaen body and molded to a perfect fit and it is only then that the Revenant's true nature comes to fore.

The transplantee's brain triggers the Revenant body, causing its latent Vicissitude to shape itself to conform to the brain's self-image. This image may not necessarily be identical to the original template. Often it is an idealised image. The finger and retinal prints, however, remain the same as the template. The Manichaen now is a stirring near-carbon copy of the transplantee's original body...with a twist. For now the template can live to several centuries of age and benefits from the body's low-level Vicissitude (limited to Flesh and Bonecrafting to him or herself, only).

Mages who transplant their brains into Manichaen bodies find an additional benefit: the full use of True Magicks. Being alive and not undead, the Manichaen's Avatar is identical (or so they think...) to the template's. Whether this is accomplished through transplantation or some kind of 'soul cloning' is unknown, though it is certain that the Tzimisce hold the key to this process and it is the culmination of several centuries of experimentation along the Path of Death and the Soul.

Appearance

Whatever the template's original appearance was, though many Manichaens tend to have idealised features. All Manichaens, however, are identifiable by a single gene implanted in their genome by Progenitor technicians. Otherwise, they are indistinguishable from humanity as a whole.

Family Estates

Not applicable as a group, though many of the first numbers of Manichaens were high-level Cabal and Southron Republic dignitaries and members of society. Most of them had estates in the southern tip of Africa. Today's Manichaens have no real estate pattern.

Backgrounds

Most Manichaens are high-society; the upper upper classes of the Republic. As the price of a Manichaen transplant goes down, however, more and more of the middle classes--including the burgeoning and swiftly growing black middle class--are opting for the procedure.

Character Creation

Dilattantes, Fanatics, you name it. Any Nature/Demeanor combination is applicable these days, however many of the older generation tend to lean towards Director/Architect types.

Disciplines

Only one, a minor form of Vicissitude. Also, the use of True Magicks for those templates who're already versed in it.

Weaknesses

There's a hidden weakness in the Manichaen, though it hasn't yet been discovered and probably won't for another decade or so. Manichaens, like all Revenants, must breed within their community to keep their line together. However, fertility rates are low and not many Manichaens have yet been born since the process was introduced. Those who have been born, however, bear a striking resemblance to one of the parents. Soon it will be discovered that Manichaens produce only copies of themselves. There is no genetic mixing of gametes. They sire clones. And not just clones, but clones with the full range of memories of the sire. When this is discovered, much thought will need to be put into whether or not something need be done. While a hundred Mozart-like Manichaens might be enjoyable, a hundred Hitlers is a frightening thought, even to the Cabal.

Preferred Paths

Varies from individual to individual.

Family Organisation

None, though there is an attempt among the younger Manichaens to organise politically, 'networking' with others of their kind. Since there are no real ties of kinship, however, this seems an odd proposition to some.

Gaining Family Prestige

Not applicable.

Sabbat Duties

None.

THE MONITORS

By Michael Moolick (moolick@shrsys.hslc.org) (24 Nov 94)

In the earliest fights against the Order of Hermes and the Traditions, the technomancers and their earthly allies were not alone. They had the aid of several spirits, making deals with them to gain their support.

These spirits received much for their aid. They have been fed with quintessence, given dominion over spirits that joined the cause later, and access to the physical world. More importantly, the technocracy has pledged that with the defeat of the traditions, the Monitors will not be swept over and conquered by the hordes of man. They will become friendly alien races, and powerful AI systems, and many other things, while those who did not join will be hunted to extinction.

Over the centuries, the once diverse and naturalistic spirits that were originally recruited have changed to meet the technomancer paradigms. They have abandoned roots in the natural world and become more technological in nature. They have become entrenched in the technocratic command structure and are among the

technocracy's most valiant defenders of the gauntlet and horizon against the horrors of the umbra.

The Monitors are still widely varied. Some are small and weak, while others are virtual leviathans. Many are unique, while others have standardized to the extent that they are identical. Many have specialized to heed the calls of specific Void Engineer roles, and fight in the ascension war at their command. The following are a small sample of their vast diversity.

The Satellite Monitors

Ever since before Sputnik, the Void Engineers have had their own satellite systems girding the earth. Sleepers think of satellites as complex machines and marvel at their abilities. The technomancers know their true capabilities. They are massive techno-fetishes, enabling Monitors near the horizon to sense the physical world. A few allow them to attack in the physical world too, but none allow them to actually materialize. Types of satellite monitors follow.

Communications Monitors

These indispensable devices provide sleepers and technomancers alike with an easy means of moving information around the globe. All kinds of transmissions are carried, from TV to phone conversations to computer information. Naturally, all is recorded and beamed to the NWO.

Technomancers access the higher functions of these devices and the spirits attached to them. In the umbra, the Communication Monitors appear as fractal balls made of metal with lightning playing over their surfaces. The satellites skirt the inside of the Horizon, and are connected by arching beams of energy which form a web of light that stretches farther than the eyes can see. There are rumors there this "Horizon Web" has an internal reality, much like the Digital Web has one in the gauntlet. Contact with the beams causes violent force effects. The Communications Monitors are not very effectual in a fight, but defend themselves and the Horizon Web.

Attributes: Str 1, Dex 3, Sta 2, Cha 1, Man 2, App: 0, Per 4, Int 3, Wits 2.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Computer 4, Enigmas 3.

Spheres: See Magick below for specific abilities.

Willpower: 5

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 3

Paradox: 0

Health levels: OK / -2 / -3 / -5 / incapacitated

Attacks: Ram - the only physical attack these spirits have is to ram an opponent. This causes damage equal to their strength, but their powerfully electrified surface causes three additional dice to bring the total to four dice.

Magick: The Communications Monitors can use the following rote effects: - Secure Transmission Web (Entropy **, Forces ***, Mind ***, Prime **) This is used as a massive communal magick that maintains the Horizon Web. It gives the web's strands the following properties:

- 4 Countermagick Dice vs. attempts to interrupt, read, or alter inter-monitor signals.
- Monitors are aware at activation of the Countermagick.
- A Forces three general-spectrum attack is made one anyone that contacts the Horizon Web.

Injection (Correspondence ***) - The Monitor self-digitizes and moves through the Horizon Web to a distant satellite.

Spy Monitors

These spirits are highly valued by the Technocracy. They spy on both

the earth and the Deep Umbra, looking for enemy action. By circulating stories about the accuracy of spy satellites and having authorities refute them, sensor acuity is enough to read license plates and the like without fear of paradox.

The Monitors associated with these satellites have a number of sensory abilities. In the umbra they appear as metal, many-eyed insectoid creatures. They are slightly larger than man-size, and have beautiful solar-panel wings.

Attributes: Str 3, Dex 3, Sta 3, Cha 2, Man 2, App 0, Per 5 (photo-realistic), Int 4, Wits 3.

Abilities: Alertness 5, Awareness 4, Computer 3, cosmology 3, Enigmas 3

Spheres: See Below

Willpower: 5

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 5

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK / -1x2 / -2x2 / -3 / -5 / Incapacitated.

Armor: The metal exoskeleton of the spirit gives it two dice of armor.

Attack: The spirit can attack with its razor-sharp proboscis, causing Str + 1 damage.

Magick:

- Monitor Gauntlet (Correspondence **, Entropy *, Spirit *, Time **) This rote lets the Monitor scan the gauntlet and the horizon. The rote searches out and predicts weaknesses and rifts, reporting them immediately to Void Engineer teams.

- Monitor Earth (Correspondence **, Forces *, Mind *, Spirit *) This lets the Monitor extend its senses to the earth. It can sense the entire electromagnetic spectrum with incredible accuracy and evaluate all it sees. Developing technologies to allow this to operate through weather disturbances has been an area of constant research.

- Alert (Correspondence **, Forces ***, Prime **) With this rote a Spy Monitor accesses the Horizon Web and downloads information to technocrat computers. Problems are red-flagged as are assaults on the Monitor itself.

"Killer" Monitors

The Void Engineers have relatively few of these combinations of huge spirits and powerful devices. They were launched during the Reagan "Star Wars" era and are orbital battle stations. None have been launched since SDI was discontinued and the VE's are disgruntled when their allies deemed it necessary to discontinue the sleeper projects which helped them place these without paradox.

In the Umbra, a single spirit is associated with each ASAT. These are shaped like thick, bloated worms. They are covered in metal to the extent that only they and the VE's know if they are not entirely technological. They have beaked mouths surrounded by a ring of clawed tentacles. They have various powerful weaponry.

They are universally guardians of areas of importance. Places where the Horizon is very weak, where an Umbral assault is predicted, where "white holes" the VE's have tapped are located and in the center of clusters of other monitors are likely locations for them.

Attributes: Str 7, Dex 2, Sta 8, Cha 2, Man 2, App 0, Per 4, Int 3, Wits 4.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawling 5, Firearms 5.

Spheres: see below

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 15+

Paradox: 4

Health Levels: OKx3 / -1x3 / -2x2 / -3x2 / -4x2 / -5x2 / Incapacitated

Armor: The metal plating gives the Monitor three extra soak dice.

Attacks:

- Bite - The killer Monitors can Bite for ten dice of damage, but must grab the victim and put them in their mouth first.

- Tentacles - A Killer Monitor's six tentacles can be used without dividing its dice pool. The tentacles cause seven dice of crushing damage with a difficulty seven attack. Attacking with more than one tentacle causes one more die of damage per tentacle. The claws can be used to cause eight dice of damage with a difficulty seven attack in place of a crushing attack.

Magick:

- Over-Monitoring (Correspondence **, Entropy *, Time **) This allows the killer monitors to watch over a large number of lesser monitors. Time allows it to predict where it will be needed. It is also receptive to messages sent by other Monitors and Void Engineers with high clearance.

- Shock (Forces ***, Prime **) - This simple forces attack electrifies the spirit's skin in a Forces 3 attack. This causes six dice of damage. Any thing grappling it that takes three dice or more will have let go. It does affect those in its tentacles, but it can't crush at the same time without splitting its dice pool.

- Laser / Particle Beam (Forces ****, Prime **) This powerful attack can only be used on distant targets or those in front of the creature's mouth. It causes 24 dice of damage and burns five points of quintessence in the blast.

- Assign Aura Monitor: (Forces 5, Prime 2, Spirit 2) This allows the Killer Monitor to assign an Aura Monitor, a type of monitor with less power and authority, to a target. Any one killer monitor will only have command of three of these at a time.

Aura Monitors

These Monitors traditionally have been the guardians of Void Engineer umbral research stations. Recently, at the urgings of fellow technomancers to become involved in the pogrom, the VE's have been using them as magickal assassins.

These spirits are composed entirely of complex energy fields, and can be "projected" into the physical world through special VE equipment. They are often directed by Killer Monitors or high level Void Engineers to attack individuals who threaten their goals.

In appearance, these spirits are very beautiful. They are floating, shimmering curtains of multichromatic light. They are believed to originally have been nature spirits associated with the northern and southern lights, and are most populous at the poles even today.

Abilities: Str 0, Dex 5, Sta 4, Cha 3, Man 1, App 5, Per 2, Int 2, Wits 4.

Abilities: Brawl 3, Cosmology 3

Spheres: See Below

Willpower: 5

Arete: 4

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 3

Health Levels: Ok / -1x2 / -2x2 / -3x2 / -5 / Terminally Disrupted.

Attacks: While an Aura Monitor has no physical existence, it can cause the energies about its edges to briefly solidify, a quick slash while doing so makes a whip-like attack that causes four dice of damage with a difficulty of six.

Magick:

- Manifest (Spirit ***) - Unlike most Monitors, the Aura Monitors can make themselves seen and act in the material world.

- Quantify Avatar (Prime *) - The Monitor can sense strong avatars. If attacking a group it attacks them preferentially.

- Reform (Correspondence ***, Spirit ***) - The Monitor can fade from its present location, dispersing its energies and re-forming elsewhere in the Umbra.

- Radiation Attack (Forces ***, Prime **) - To perform this, the Monitor must perform a grapple (it has no strength, but this lets it superimpose itself over another). Once this is done it intensifies its own energies, causing damage due to radiation and microwaves, as well as electrical disruption. They prefer this attack, for it kills cleanly and leaves no external evidence as to the cause of death, as the damage is entirely internal. Progenitors can hush up any "natural-looking" death like this very easily, faking autopsies and the like.

The Hubble Monitor

To sleepers, the Hubble Space Telescope has been viewed alternately with hope of its promise, dismay at its cost, rage of it not working properly, and finally acceptance that it's fixed. Sleeper scientists are now convinced it is a success, and they've convinced the public.

To most mages, the telescope is regarded as another example of the conventions punishing the Void Engineers. To most technocrats, it is a waste of money. To the Void Engineers, the Hubble Space Telescope is a front for an Umbral physics project of startling success despite frequent paradox problems and some major setbacks.

The Hubble Monitor is a singular, powerful spirit now associated with the Hubble Space Telescope, existing in the same umbral areas as the scope does in space. A site of research for a number of Void Engineer masters, they have been pushing their technologies and theories to the bare edge at the site.

In the Umbra, the Hubble Monitor is visible as a huge spirit shaped like a thick worm; over one hundred and fifty feet long and thirty feet in diameter. It seems to be made mostly out of metal and plastics. The major exceptions being its spread solar collector wings and its ominous lens facing directly outward from earth. The whole is just within the horizon.

The Hubble Monitor is known as "the Big Eye" or "the Reality Cannon" among the Void Engineers. The device can peer into the Deep Umbra more efficiently than ground-based VE scopes, and most outsiders assume this is its function. The true main function of the Hubble device is to operate as a "static cannon."

The static cannon is a complex, powerful magickal effect. Upon sighting a Deep Umbral Realm, it can selectively co-locate it with a part of the physical world. Space is distorted so that a large area of physical space is co-located with a small area of the Umbral Realm. The co-location is screened with spirit, mind, matter, and prime magick so that only limited sections of the properties of the spaces are combined. The paradigm of the physical world is imposed upon the area of the Umbral Realm strongly, static reality is slammed into effect in the Umbral Realm.

When the static cannon is used, any physical or magickal aberrations from the physical world's paradigm immediately begin to attract, cumulate, and suffer from paradox. Often, this creates a powerful paradox storm that has, in test runs, decimated or destroyed large areas, even entire small realms. The Void Engineers are still trying to perfect the process. Currently, the process causes paradox, results in paradigm anomalies in the physical space used that increase as the duration of the firing increases, and consumes prodigious amounts of quintessence.

The Hubble Monitor can defend itself if attacked, spending large amounts of quintessence in its own defense. The Void Engineers do go to great lengths to ensure this does not occur. The area near the scope is patrolled by Void Strikers, the small combat versions of Void Engines. A small Umbral research station is nearby, with competent mages and Iteration X guardians. The entire area is scoured by Spy Monitors, as are all approaches. Preparations have also been made against attacks from the physical world.

The Hubble Monitor's nuclear reactor serves as a node of power, providing it with quintessence and Tass in the form of thruster fuel, which the spirit stores in internal tanks.

The Hubble Monitor is very intelligent, and an active participant in the research that it is involved with.

Attributes: Str: 7, Dex: 2, Sta: 8, Cha: 3, Man: 3, App: 0, Per: 6, Int: 5, Wits: 3.

Abilities: Alertness: 2, Brawling: 5, Computer: 4, Cosmology: 4, Etiquette 4 (technomancer), Firearms: 4, Science: 4, Spirit Lore: 5 (monitors), Spirit Names: 3.

Spheres: Correspondence: 5, Forces: 3, Matter: 3, Mind 3, Prime 4, Spirit 5, Time: 2

Willpower: 8

Rage: 8

Arete: 7

Quintessence: 20

Tass: 100+ (will use it too.)

Paradox: 5

Health Levels: OKx4 / -1x3 / -2x3 / -3x3 / -4x3 / -5x3 / Incapacitated

Attacks:

- Tentacles: The Hubble Monitor has eight tentacles to attack without dividing its dice pool. The tentacles cause seven dice of damage and are used with a difficulty of seven. Attacking with more than one tentacle increases damage by one die per tentacle used. They can be used to bash a victim or grapple them.

- Armor: The heavy Primum armor of the Monitor gives it three extra soak dice. The Monitor also has two dice of counter-magick against any magical attack.

- Regeneration: The Hubble Monitor is self-repairing, and regains one health level per round so long as the damage isn't aggravated.

Magick:

- Static Cannon (Correspondence 5, Matter 3, Prime 4, Spirit 5): The static cannon is the main experimental function of the Hubble Monitor. Initiating the use of it is a prolonged process, involving at least 20 points of quintessence and several hours.

Once the effect is established, Paradox is incurred in the Umbral Realm as if it was an area of the physical earth. The corresponding space of the physical world is destabilized and the force of paradox there greatly reduced. This is in outer space however, and changes with each firing. The static cannon is only effective on Deep Umbral targets, and if it became effective against Horizon Realms the Traditions could be seriously endangered.

- Umbral Sighting (Correspondence 3, Spirit 1) As a prelude to firing, the target must be sighted and precisely targeted. The locations viewed can be at almost infinite depths in the umbra.

Unlike other Monitors, the Hubble Monitor is capable of producing a variety of magical effects to defend itself and attack others with relative spontaneity.

Digital Monitors

Many of the defenders of technoturf are really daemon Monitors. There are also some monitors akin to electrical elementals. The Void Engineers have a number of interests on the Digital Web, and it is not surprising that they have a number of allies spirits which inhabit the web. The technocracy spirits are the Digital Monitors. One of which is the Surge.

Surge

Surges are among the most violent Digital Monitors. They have been shaped by time and magick from primitive electrical spirits. They act as Black ICE and assassins in the technomancer controlled portions of the Digital Web. They spend most of their time in a passive resting state, going into action only when noticing a security breach or being sent tracking an icon by a Void Engineer.

In the resting state these spirits disperse into a "Surge-net", a form that is difficult to detect. Only a mage using Forces 1 and Spirit 1 will be able to detect the diffuse, spirit-charged current that compromises the

Surge in this form. Those using Prime 1 as well will notice quintessence concentrated into a rapidly moving point within the web.

The Surge-net is often placed at or within the entrances to technocracy controlled areas of the web. When an unauthorized icon enters the Surge-net, the spirit flows into the icon and the net collapses. The Surge Monitor stays within the icon and waits for an opportunity to attack, preferring to do so when the icon is alone.

The Surge Monitor may attack the icon directly or the mage's body. For the first, a duplicate icon "steps out" of the cybernaut and attacks. The icon quickly loses individual form and reverts to a standard technocratic icon, complete with neon red/blue/green color scheme, in mere minutes. The surge's physical attacks are backed by raw electric voltage. For the second, the Surge attacks the mage through his VR equipment, blasting him with light, sound, and possible electricity to blind, deafen, and kill.

The Surge Monitor's quintessence can be collected as Digital Web resonant electrical tass. Virtual Adepts prize the utility of the tass, but getting it is seldom worth the fight.

Attributes: Str: 3, Dex 4, Sta 4, Cha 1, Man 1, App 1/As Icon, Per 4, Int: 3, Wits 4.

Abilities: Brawl 3, Computer 3, Stealth 5

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Forces 3, Mind 3, Prime 2, Spirit 3, Time 2.

Willpower: 7

Rage: 7

Arete: 4

Quint.: 5

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: As Human

Attacks: As a Surge is fully on the web, its physical abilities are used in combat, not its Per and Int. Its strikes have the additional property of causing four dice of non-aggravated electrical damage.

Magick:

- Monitor Web (* Forces, * Mind, * Prime): This effect Monitors Icons that pass through or near the Surge. It indexes the icon's force and prime structures against those allowed access (memorized with mind 1). Because of the Prime component, altering an icon's appearance is not enough to fool the spirit.

- Surge-Net (** Forces, ** Prime): This allows the Surge to disperse itself into a Surge-net form and re-condense itself.

- Infiltrate Icon (** Forces, *** Mind): With this a Surge can enter an icon. It has no control over the icon, but receives all the sensory input the icon's user does for as long as it remains, including magical senses.

- Trace Icon: (*** Correspondence, * Forces, * Prime, ** Time): This allows a Surge to track an icon that it has sensed or been given a full data-set about.

- Equipment Surge (*** Correspondence, *** Forces, ** Prime): A Surge can channel its spiritually charged electrical body into any electrical device, though only computers and VR gear are routinely entered. They can then cause the device to overload and burn out, obliterating stored information. It is with this ability that a Surge can most viciously attack a cybernaut. By entering VR equipment, it can cause the equipment to release damaging levels of light, and sound. Those systems that use electrical stimulation to simulate touch (like most VA systems) can also deliver possibly lethal electrical damage. Its nasty nature lies in the fact that a Mage already projected into the web is not using his body's senses unless an additional Co-locate Perceptions magick is used. Thus, the mage will probably not be aware of the effect before being rendered unconscious or seriously injured.

Note: A mundane "surge protector" will not prevent a Surge's Equipment Surge from having effect. They were introduced by Virtual Adepts so that they could manufacture co-incidental talismans to ward against Surge attacks.

Restriction Monitors

These Digital Monitors are a type of guardian spirit which are incorporated into many of the technocracy's secure systems. Their purpose is not perimeter defense, but the defense of the data the systems contain.

Any time guarded information is accessed, the transaction is monitored. If an unusual or unauthorized use of the data occurs, the monitors acts to apprehend the culprit. Because these precise-minded spirits can be an annoyance to any operator besides the equally precise Iteration X mages, they are only used to defend data that is either very important or seldom accessed.

Restriction Monitors appear as faceless humanoid technocratic icons. Their icons carry unusual pistols which shoot metallic rays. If sensed with the spirit sphere, they appear as man sized metal spiders

Attributes: Str: 2, Dex: 3, Sta: 4, Cha: 1, Man: 3, App: 1, Per: 5 Int: 3, Wits: 4.

Abilities: Computer 5, Investigation 4, Research 4. **Spheres:** Correspondence 4, Forces 2, Mind 4, Spirit 4.

Willpower: 6

Rage: 4

Arete: 6

Quint: 3

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: As Human

Magick:

- Monitor Data Flo (*** Correspondence, * Forces, *** Mind): This allows the Restriction Monitor to watch over it's assigned data in technomancer computer systems. Any use of the data brings its attention. Unusual manipulations begin investigation, unauthorized ones bring attacks.

- Relocate Data (**** Correspondence, * Mind): When data is accessed, the Restriction Maintains an unadulterated copy in its files, as well as a running log of alterations made. This allows these files to instantly be sent to a "vault" computer, one that is not otherwise connected to the web or technocracy machinery. Such files can then be consulted by skilled mages. This prevents most VA program-traps and isolates computer viruses for study.

- Data Scan (* Forces, *** Mind): An apprehended Cybernaut is scanned with this rote to determine what information he has taken and where this information is located.

- Data Wipe (**** Correspondence, ** Forces, **** Mind, *** Spirit): Armed with a victim's knowledge of where information has been moved to, this effect allows the Monitor to immediately attempt to delete it from computer files and make persons forget it. The second application is vulgar and incurs paradox.

- Icon Suppression (**** Correspondence, ** Forces, **** Spirit): This is a technomancer version of the classic spirit charm Calcify. With it, the Restriction Monitor attempts to anchor an icon firmly to its present location in the Digital Web. A Willpower roll is made against the target's own Willpower. Each success decreases the victim's effective physical attributes (or Willpower in the case of spirits) by one and establishes 1 die of counter-magick against Correspondence or Spirit attempts to move. When the successes decrease the abilities to ero and counter-magick dice exceed the mage's Arete the victim can no longer move.

- Icon Ejection: Restriction Monitors can activate the icon-dump parameter of technocracy controlled areas of the Digital Web. They roll their Arete against difficulty 6 against the victim's willpower to send icons offline.

The Void Engineer spirit 2 effects often call upon Monitors for many tasks. One such task is self-guided weapons, in which the Void Engineers even surpass the Iteration X convention. Void Engineers have smart weapons as small as tranquilizer darts and small-caliber

bullets. They also have very small, one-shot, anti-personnel missile pistols, with brilliant-level micromissiles.

NIGHTSIDE ENFORCERS

By Michael Moolick

The Progenitors in charge of damage control have, over the years, developed a number of effective enforcers. Unfortunately, the use of many of these in any form of public capacity as yet is not in keeping with the technocratic aims. By the mid seventies, it was apparent that an internal conflicts would eventually take to the streets as the Pharmacopiests went to the street with the drug trade. At the 1976 progenitor Symposium, special grants were established for laboratories who produce reasonably intelligent, normal appearing, efficient enforcers.

A number of chantries began competitive research in hopes of obtaining the grants. Many approaches were tried, from bioengineering "controlled carriers" that could expel arsenals of diseases to enhancing Superior mentality. Several of the grants have been taken. One such grant was taken by a technomancer Amalgam in Philadelphia for their development of the Nightside Enforcers.

One of the more ambitious Enforcer programs was "Project Nightside". It involved a coordinated attempt to capture, analyze, and exploit the abilities of the vampire population which the progenitors have been aware of for some time.

The project's initial phases were unsuccessful. The vampires eliminated no less than three progenitor students in the first years, and it soon became apparent their magick didn't affect the creatures normally at all. However, by late 1978 three professional individuals were determined to be covering up evidence of the vampires' presence, one of them a Doctor in the medical facilities the Progenitors monitor. The three were promptly captured and taken to a research chantry for analysis.

The simplest Pharmacological and Genetic testing showed a number of extraordinary anomalies. The mages immediately proceeded with interrogation. It was soon apparent the subjects had been subjected to very deep-rooted mental conditioning, and were entirely devoted to the vampires. The Progenitors gained little more information than that they were of the "Grimaldis" and had powerful friends before the escape attempt occurred.

The individuals had apparently been able to place hypnotic commands in the minds of several technicians, opening the chantry to attack by a group of vampires. The chantry would have been overthrown if not for some Iteration X defense droids.

It was decided the prisoners were too dangerous to be allowed to remain conscious, and were placed into a drug induced coma. The study of the biological properties of these "samples" continues to this day. However, the Chantry has learned many things from them. New ways of heightening a subject's physical abilities, healing rate, and natural immunity were gained. Presently research is trying to assay the reason the individuals were able to hypnotize loyal technicians, though progress is slow.

The application of the things learned from the subjects has led to the development of the Nightside Enforcers. There are made from clones of certain hired enforcers, with extensive memory alterations.

The process of creating a Nightside Enforcer requires special genetic modification of the embryo and exposure of the fetus to certain fractions of the "samples'" body fluids (which were difficult to culture). After their accelerated growth takes them to adulthood, their bone marrow is irradiated and replaced with that taken, again, from that cultures from the original samples. Certain artificial organs must be implanted and a regimen of drugs maintained to keep the enforcers in fighting condition.

The progenitors have made the enforcers genetically dependent on dispensed medications which sleepers have no concept of, and use this

to ensure against any who think they can betray or leave them.

The Nighthside Enforcers are still psychologically unstable, but their intelligence has been stabilized at satisfactory levels by memory implants. Progenitors are still trying to eliminate an apparent impurity in the samples which causes a slow softening of the body's connective tissues. Because of this, Enforcers have a life span of less than Seven years after deployment.

The Enforcers are presently in normal use against rogue Progenitors, and have been for three years. Production has been stepped up as the chantry has been given the go-ahead to try them against the traditions' mages.

Attributes: Str: 4, Dex: 4, Sta: 4, Cha: 2, Man: 2, App: 3, Per: 3, Int: 3, Wit: 3.

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawling 4, Dodge: 4, Drive: 2, Firearms: 4, Melee: 4, Occult: 2, Research 3, Stealth: 3, Streetwise: 2.

Disciplines: Potence, Celerity, Fortitude (3 dots total)

Willpower: 4

Arete: 0

Quintessence: 0

Paradox: 5

Health Levels: OK / OK / -1 / -1 / -2 / -2 / -5 / Incapacitated.

Life Countermagick: Nighthside Enforcers receive three dice of countermagick against any magick involving the Life sphere because of manipulations to allow them to hunt renegade Progenitors.

Blood Pool: 10 max, can spend 1 / round.

Nighthside Enforcers use modern weapons and Progenitor supplied equipment similar to those used by DNA operatives (See the Werewolf: The Apocalypse Storyteller's Handbook).

They are effectively magickally-produced Revenants. They gain one blood point a day from their metabolic processes. Progenitors can synthesize and injectable Vitae product, but don't often because it takes quintessence to do so. They would need to contact actual Vampires or wait on Progenitor research to learn additional disciplines.

THE PRODIGIES

By Anders Sandberg (nv91-asa@hemul.nada.kth.se) (11 Oct 94)

The Progenitors stated goal is to perfect mankind, both physically and mentally. While the superiors are attempts to create physical perfection, the prodigies are an attempt at perfecting the human mind.

Early progenitor experiments focused on drugs which increased the mental abilities of their users. Although they had some serious drawbacks, they led to the nootropic drugs of today. Their next approach was genetic: first through selective breeding of intelligent people and later through direct genetic manipulation. The prodigies are the result of a combination of genetic engineering and the use of careful hormonal control during infancy.

Prodigies are usually cloned from genetically altered cells, usually from highly talented people. During their incubation in the clone tanks the Progenitors give them measured doses of morphogens, designed to expand the potential of their brains by increasing the neural connectivity and growth. Early experiments had very enlarged heads to house immense brains, but their extra neural capacity was offset by the increased strain on their bodies which usually led to very short life spans. Today the researchers have opted for a more conservative design, and just increased the brain volume by a few percent. Instead they have concentrated on maximising the interconnectivity of the neurones and their speed.

Prodigies are geniuses from birth. Their education starts already in the clone tank, and continues for several years. It is common to simply link up their brains to computers which feed them with relevant information around the clock. When the prodigies are less than two

years old they have reached mental maturity and usually surpass most unaugmented humans in intelligence. This leads to several problems. The prodigies have a tendency to go insane in various ways. Most common are psychoses, especially paranoid schizophrenia, but many succumb to catatonia or develop complex personality disorders. To avoid this the Progenitors handle them with great care, placing them in calming environments and constantly monitoring their mental activity. Another way of making them more stable is to make them retarded in most areas except their specialisation, turning them into Idiot Savants. Although this makes them less flexible, they become much more predictable.

Another problem is the fear that a prodigy could turn against them. This is usually solved by placing biological failsafes in their bodies, making it possible to terminate them if they should start to malfunction. Despite that, many progenitors are worried that their creations could outsmart them. Therefore they do their best to condition the prodigies to not only be loyal, but to actually love their "parents". Many live in happy families in the countryside together with their beloved (surrogate) parents. From time to time the nice people from the city come and test them or ask them for advice. Many prodigies soon understand the real situation, but that doesn't mean they lose faith in their friends.

The mental capacity of a full prodigy is amazing. Most are extremely fast learners and can handle enormous amounts of information without forgetting anything. Their mental processes are lightning-fast, often both highly intuitive and strictly logical at the same time (the Progenitors pride themselves in being able to resolve contradictions machines cannot solve). Many prodigies function as living computers for the convention, solving advanced problems in their heads or pointing out relevant information gathered from their computers. Others act as advisors and assistants to the technocrats. A few are placed in mundane society, often in academic circles to act as scientific geniuses used to disseminate new ideas.

One problem with prodigies is the possibility of Awakening. Due to their extreme mental capacity, they would make excellent mages, but there are many problems. Many prodigies simply lack Avatars, probably due to their cloned nature. Another problem is that most prodigies quickly become autistic when they Awaken, apparently turning inwards with their new powers into inescapable Quiet. Some prodigies awaken spontaneously, usually under great stress, with unpredictable consequences.

The Progenitors regard the prodigies as a great success, and relish on not having to be dependent on computers from Iteration X to do their work. However, the two conventions have working together in developing a artificial intelligences consisting of prodigy brains combined with the latest computers. Another current project is to disseminate prodigy genes among the sleepers, usually through sperm banks or by infecting fetuses with certain viruses. Another current experiment is to combine prodigies with superiors, to create a true master race. So far they have not succeeded, but recent breakthroughs in mental stabilisation have been hopeful.

A Typical Prodigy: Gilbert Priestly

Gilbert lives on an isolated farm somewhere together with his two parents (two progenitor psychologists) and his little sister Anne. He is a young boy, apparently around five but somehow looking much older at the same time. He always wears a baseball cap, which hides the scars on his head from the computer link he was connected to until he was decanted. He is fairly frail and doesn't like to go too far from the house, where he spends much time reading information in the progenitor databases. He is honest to the point of absurdity, absolutely never lying and always becoming very upset when other people lie to him. His main interests are psychology, programming and linguistics, which he seeks to formalise into a science of intelligent processes on his spare time.

During the weeks he and his sister spend most of their time studying and working on their assignments (Gilbert develops information-gathering systems for the Progenitors and New World Order). Their work is interrupted at regular intervals by obligatory physical training,

which both children loathe but their parents think is absolutely necessary for their health. The same goes for the healthy food they are given (Which contains a compound both children are dependent on; if they don't get it for over 48 hours, they will die).

Gilbert is fairly alone. He loves his parents, but they are so stupid and don't understand much of his ideas. His sister is obsessed with her proteins, and only wants to talk about them. From time to time progenitor scientists visit, and although they often have interesting problems for him to solve, they are not that sociable. His best friend is his dog, a genetically altered Doberman (which in reality is his bodyguard) which he calls Octavius. Another way to pass the time is to write novels. So far he has written several huge, baroque creations with far too many levels of meaning and symbolism to be readable.

Essence: Primordial

Nature: Visionary

Demeanour: Conformist

Str: * Cha: * Per

(intuitive):*****

Dex: * Man: * Int

(brilliant):*****

Sta: * App: *** Wit

(lightening-fast):*****

Alertness:*** Research

(academic):***** Computer

(programming):*****

Expression:** Technology:***

Culture:***

Subterfuge:*****

Enigmas (verbal):*****

Investigation:***

Linguistics:*****

Medicine (neurology):*****

Occult:***

Science:*****

Willpower: 10

Allies (parents and Octavius): **

Library: **

Dream (inspiration): ****

Gilbert has mental abilities corresponding to Mind 1 (including 2 dice of counter-magick against Mind). He is especially good at controlling his own mental processes, effortlessly multitasking or concentrating single-mindedly on one task.

Progenitor Nightmares

By Boris (tonys@pacificrim.net)

Prelude: The Grey Nation and MJ12

During the early 1920s, a captured "alien" craft was recovered from its crashsite in Roswell, NM. From the mostly destroyed remains, which the Technocracy had immediately seized and moved to a secret base, Iteration X extracted enough genetics-related technology to forever cement the shift from "natural" to current machine and chemical related medicine.

The "Grey" race responsible for the crashed ship are a breed of

Nephandi beings from somewhere in the Deep Umbra intent on altering Gaia to the extent in which they may suitably inhabit and dominate the planet.

The Technocracy, aware of the potential threat posed by such an "advanced" race, created a joint Void Engineer/Iteration X/NWO coalition, known alternately as Majestic, or MJ12. Their purpose: to reinforce through the dissemination of "alien"-related information and conspiracy theories the outer-space paradigm, to escalate the readiness of Sleepers to accept radical new technologies, and to create a general atmosphere of fear of "invasion from Beyond." Later, in the 40s, when more crashed ships and a handful of bodies were recovered, their objective was to keep the sleepers from knowing of the Technocracy's involvement with the Greys, thus the Men In Black. In the mid-80s, contact was finally made. MJ12 became the official emissaries of Earth in "Alien Affairs." They are currently engaged in the wide-spread use of Syndicate-controlled media to covertly prepare the sleeping masses for "alien" contact.

The Grey Nation

The Grey Nation originated on Mars some 5 1/2 million years ago, shortly before they were forced to flee to the Orion Galaxy, and after a long period of evolution and unification as a species. At the time of their departure, they were at least as technologically advanced, comparatively speaking, as the current state-of-the-art of Iteration X knowledge. Their time in the Orion Umbrae was mostly a period of stagnation, ideologically speaking. What we refer to as science and technology had already been taken to their upper limits, following almost the same methodologies responsible for the Technocracy and their paradigm. The Greys, like us, imposed the artificial state of rigidity (rigidness of thought, body and spirit) known to us as the Gauntlet, and this was responsible for the eventual destruction of Mars. The Greys' technology was/is just as destructive to themselves and their environment as ours is now. First, carbon-based fuels polluted and weakened their atmosphere, weakening their life patterns on a wide-spread basis, reducing their exposure to the energies of prime and stunting the evolution of their avatars. This, in turn, reinforced the rigidity of the species further on the path of their downward spiral. With the advent of nuclear-based technologies, the energies of the prime of their realm were further tainted. As silicon-based technology was introduced, static reality "crystallised" further. Everything exists as vibration, whether you call it prime, quantum waves, ether, or the unified field. Just as radioactive vibrations are harmful to organic vibrations and carbon monoxide vibrations are lethal to ozone vibrations, silicon vibrations are harmful to human vibrations. The closing of the gauntlet cuts off the perception of the etheric body. It can be considered analogous to a block between the 1st chakra (your grounding cord, "rooting" you in the organic dimensions) and the 2nd chakra (the emotional center). Essentially, the gauntlet separates human intelligence from its emotional body. (An interesting sidenote....the archtypal image of a gauntlet is of armor worn for battle, allowing one to inflict pain without having to feel it oneself)

The etheric body, as implied by its name, is composed of the same electrically-charged, supra-interconnected substance as the stuff of emotions (i.e., pathos, gnosis, vitae, quintessence, glamour, etc.) and is the source of magick. The human body, or, more specifically, the nervous system, is capable of out-performing any piece of technology or machinery, however advanced. The mistake of the greys, and likewise the technocracy, was in externalising this form of manipulative control, thus creating duality and exclusion. And so the gauntlet was born, through the replication of the human energy field in a *static* pattern. The greys, even though they knew this, had so totally mutated their life patterns that they had become hopelessly addicted to their destructive paradigms.

This separation between 1st and 2nd bodies, or between physical and psychological bodies, was not complete, as that would have completely killed them, but was rather a separation of misalignment. An analogy can be drawn from the Digital Web, where icons and programs are

actual cognizant spirits, rather than the robotic, mindless functions supported by the technocratic paradigm -- you tend to become what you believe in. Besides the destruction of their atmosphere, the pollution of the gene-pool and the misalignment of their auric fields, another factor had arisen that forced the grey nation to leave the galaxy completely. This was an occurrence similar to the precession of the equinoxes on Earth, but rather on a galactic scale.

(From "Nothing" page 12) "The Earth's axis has 23 1/2 degrees of tilt, which gives us the seasons. At the celestial equator, the plane of the Earth's equator cuts the celestial sphere or the imaginary sphere on which the stars seem to lie. So if you take the Earth's equator and extend it out onto the sphere of the sky, the two points where the sun crosses this celestial equator mark the spring and fall equinoxes. At these points, day and night are of equal length. Now, the Earth's axis is wobbling in such a way that shifts the equinoctial points about 1 degree every 72 years. So every 2160 years, the equinoctial points move into a different zodiacal constellation. Every 25920 years, one full wobble or one full cycle circulates the zodiac. Over 25920 years the tip of the north pole traces an ellipse. At one focus of that ellipse it is closest to the center of the galaxy; at the other it is furthest away."

A similar phenomenon occurs in every celestial pattern among the living realms; every 5 1/2 million or so years, all elliptic foci point to the center of the galaxy, the granddaddy of all harmonic convergences. It is at these times that galactic ascension is possible, as the core of every star sends out an explosive shockwave of prime energy, much like the firing of a nerve cell's electro-chemical transmission. The greys, with their misaligned auric fields would have ceased to exist, shattered into a gazillion pieces, so they opted to leave.

The time during their stay in the Orion galaxy remains mostly a mystery, muddled even in their own collective consciousness. What is known, however, are two things: First, that they brought their problems with them, and that these problems worsened their situation. Due to their life patterns' inability to assimilate and process prime energy, their polluted genepool could no longer produce healthy new bodies for themselves. They were forced to rely on defective clones, reproduced from their own polluted genestock, among other similarly self-limiting processes. It was for this reason they returned to the Solarian Umbra. After the last galactic ascension, the center of life moved from Mars to Earth, riding the shockwave's return to the solar core. (Another interesting sidenote.....this is why the next leap in consciousness is supposed to be a "return" to the intuitive, beautiful, female mother aspect of consciousness, as we return to the energies associated with the planet Venus.)

The original inhabitants, who lived exclusively in the Gaian dream-time, were the Lemurians, and the coming of the Greys altered life on Gaia permanently.

As the first Grey scouting party "translated" itself into the living Gaian matrix, the Realm accordingly assimilated the Grey "reality." The distinction between spirit and body was introduced, and beings formerly existing solely in the Gaian dream-time were forced into the organic dimensions. Here lies the answer to questions of the Atlantean Plague -- the Atlanteans, as the Greys came to be called, were themselves the plague.

Approximately 25900 years ago the last Solarian shockwave ascension took place, an event second only to the galactic ascension. "Coincidentally," this time period corresponds to historical accounts of the fall of Atlantis, the great crystal which was aimed through the heart of Gaia. Some philosophers theorize that the coming of the greys was the reality behind the symbol of the great crystal, and that the guardian at the heart of the garden was Gaia herself; all the killing that took place was the translation from dream-time to the organic dimensions, the only plane where death is possible. Other philosophers take a more literal view of historical mythology from this period. Without more information from the greys themselves, confirmation at this point is impossible. The greys encountered on Earth at this time are of two varieties: the artificial and the genuine. The technocracy, upon recovering some specimens from crashed ships, have attempted to model human bodies after the grey "drones," the perfect Umbral travelers. Keep in mind that the greys are subject to the same

restrictions imposed by the horizon gauntlet as we currently are -- they can't, for instance, walk to the nearest moon and back, like the garou. Consequently, with millions of years of time to experiment with their genetic manipulation, they have created the most perfect bodies for travelling the technocratic void of "space."

Of the other varieties of grey aliens beyond the drones we have already encountered, we know very little. Their societal structure has evolved into a sort of insectile hive-mind, with the drone and warrior castes, and we have concluded that in theory, one or more queens exist, probably somewhere in the Orion belt. Their telepathic abilities are truly impressive, they are able to communicate with each other instantaneously, read the complete consciousness of any being they come across, and even communicate with their home galaxy from ours.

Physically, they are rather weak, comparable to pre-pubescent child, but their average telekinetic abilities compensate for this. At this time they are known to have made "diplomatic" agreements with representatives of Earth (or at least the technocracy) and have at least two covert bases on the planet. More are rumored to exist.

Earthlab -- The Facilities

Fifteen miles outside city limits, in the desert east of Austin, TX, lies the well-armoured underground testing facilities known to a select few as Earthlab. Since its inception in 1943, it has been used extensively by upper-circle members of the Technocracy for its superior genetics laboratory facilities. The equipment it is stocked with consists mostly of restored "grey" genetech recovered from UFO crash sites. Top researchers from amongst the Progenitors and Iteration X have spent millions of man-hours deciphering the complex machinery, which rivals even best Autocthonina has to offer. Fertile hybrids, plant/animal crossbreeds and man-sized viruses are but a few possibilities Earthlab is capable of. Earthlab scientists, using their equipment, are capable of taking a single strand of DNA and mutating it through the time-stream to any point on its evolutionary path, past or future, and cloning an entirely new body using the single sample.

Physical Appearance

Approaching the facilities from an out-of-the-way dirt road, Earthlab maintains a fairly innocuous appearance. Two armed soldiers occupy the guardstation where the road ends and the razor wire begins.

Identification is asked for while Forces-warped antigravitational robots monitor from above. These drones use electromagnetic fields to warp light around themselves, affecting invisibility, while hovering 12' or so above the scene. They are armed with miniature laser pulse rifles (zap guns) and are unfriendly to intruders. Beyond the guard station, set into the side of a slight hill, is the huge iron doorway leading to the facilities themselves. Inside the door, security panels demand palm-print scans (DNA signature) and retinal scans (brainwave signature). After security is cleared, a wall slides away, revealing the elevator to the bottom three sublevels.

The genelab itself occupies most of the bottom floor of the converted nuclear testing facilities. It contains equipment for organic manipulations: the "Greytech Manipulator," a machine that filters gamma radiation through tiny, perfectly formed silica crystals into lasers capable of passing through organic material without damaging tissue. The information decoded from the laserscan is processed by the manipulator, altered and/or recombined with other samples by the operator at the control panels, and then translated to the plasma vats, tanks filled with simple proteins capable of self-organization.

The second sub-level contains various specimens the Progenitors there see as having potential for future uses. This is the archetypal "mad scientist monster lab," with rows of cells containing various abominations. Some of these life-forms require liquid environments, and they can be seen suspended in giant tanks of viscous fluids. This sublevel also has the most by way of security systems -- should one of the specimens break loose from its restrictions, tracking lasers appear

from every niche and corner. In the event of total containment breach, the entire floor seals itself off from everything with powerful forces effects and quietly explodes. In the history of Earthlab, this has yet to happen.

The top sub-level contains the living quarters and office space for the 12 resident members. These are all upper echelon members of MJ12, with a few recruits taken directly from the GRUDGE/BLUEBOOK program during the 40s, Drs. Wulfgang Himmel and Karl VonRosenberg. The newest recruit, Dr. Lance Graves, came from a small college town in the Pacific Northwest in 1995. None of the other members have been there less than 25 years.

Relations to Conventions

The New World Order is by far the most distrusting of Earthlab's intents and purposes. Since first contact with the Grey Nation, the Technocracy was forced into an uneasy truce with them. Their technological might gave them no choice, and the NWO is the most resentful of this. They keep a tight watch on Earthlab, to the point of infiltrating the facilities with one of their spies, Dr. Graves. Since 1971 and the arrival of the Gigergene, Earthlab has seemingly been in a lull. This is furthest from the truth, and the eye of Big Brother has been attracted. Iteration X and the Syndicate both have a vested interest in Earthlab. The cross-breeding of technology, from the Grey Nation's and the Earth Nation's, has proven itself fertile ground for previously unconceived ideas. Should the Masses become accepting enough, the Greys would provide a very convenient venue for rapidly pushing previously paradox-prone technology. The Syndicate has pushed for life-forms capable of surviving the ocean's depths ("Oh, the implications...") and self-maintaining "equipment" for mining and other operations in Deep Space.

The Progenitors are the most supportive, naturally, among the Conventions of the Earthlab program. Since its opening in 1943, breakthrough after breakthrough into genetics and the nature of organic chemistry has come from Earthlab. Few Progenitors know of their source, however, as Earthlab has maintained an extremely low profile, preferring to disseminate information through other channels. It is rumoured that Proteus was first conceived here, by mixing genetic tissues from a sea-sponge with that of a human brain.

The Void Engineer Convention owes a great debt to Earthlab. The Greytech Manipulator, when it first arrived, already contained the genotype for one of their drones, and the first replication of a grey alien for space travel was accomplished here.

Amalgams

ICOS (Internal Community Operating Systems) is the only amalgam within the Institution.

Organization

Drs. Himmel and VonRosenberg are the acting directors. They work closely together on most projects, supervising the work of others. They work *so* closely together that they have momentary lapses, and seem to share great stretches of communication without talking. There are four other doctors involved in creating and studying new species: Drs. Pullington, Forgosa, Schullsom, and Kennard. The other five members work as assistants to Himmel and VonRosenberg. All members, with the exception of Dr. Graves, have lived and worked within the construct since its opening.

As such, in-house meetings and Initiation of new recruits are not an occurrence here. The directors attend the annual Progenitor Symposiums, but have had minimal progress to report. No one other than the two directors know of the successes of Species 016 and 017, but the NWO has come to suspect that something is afoot, and has obtained joint permission from the other Conventions involved to place Dr. Graves within the compound. The closest thing to acolytes here are the two pairs of rotating-shift guards posted at the perimeter check-station.

Notable Personalities

Dr. Lance William Graves

Essence: Pattern Nature:Co-conspirator Demeanor:Conformist

Attributes: Str 2, Dex 3, Sta 2, Cha 4, Man 5, App 3, Per 3, Int 5, Wit 3

Abilities: Alert 4; Brawl/Dodge (Aikido) 4; Express 3; Intuit 2; Streetwise 2; Subter 4; Research 3; Stealth 2; Tech 4; Comp 3; Science (Organic Chemistry) 5

Spheres: Life 3, Mind 2, Matter 2

Arete 4

Willpower 6

Backgrounds: Allies 5(NWO), Influence 2

Lance Graves was born the child prodigy of progenitor parents, taking to Biology and later Organic Chemistry at an early age. He graduated top among his class, completed his doctorate degree and was ripe for initiation into the Progenitor Convention, when the NWO snatched him out of their grasp. He was forcibly awakened by Men In Black, who kidnapped him as he was leaving work and then took him to one of the Grey's established bases in northern Idaho. They then brought him before Mr. X, an army general with MJ12, who educated him about the World of Darkness in general, and the Grey Nation in specific. Lance was detained and observed for six months while they tested his absolute loyalty and taught him the science of Mind. After his six-month probationary period, he was briefed on the Earthlab Project, taught what he needed to know to avoid detection, and delivered to Austin, TX, and the Earthlab facilities.

Roleplaying tips: You're a competent scientist. You do what you're told, looking over your own and other people's shoulders when you think no one's looking, and try to find out what those directors are doing when no one's around. If you manage to get out on furlough anytime soon, hopefully you'll have something to report. From the feel of things here, it should be something pretty interesting.

Drs. Karl VonRosenberg and Wulfgang Himmel

Drs. Karl VonRosenberg and Wulfgang Himmel are no longer human. During the 50s, after seeing the success of the first grey alien cloning experiments, they became fascinated with the remarkable brain capacity of the subjects. These first experiments, replicated Grey Drones, showed amazing intellectual capacities. They were uncooperative, however, and had to be neutralised. Later experiments with cross-matched human and alien genetic tissues produced specimens with similar mental capacities that were linked to the human subconscious, rather than the signal emanating from the Grey Queen somewhere in the Orion Belt. Continued observation of the specimens proved them suitable for Technocracy purposes, and they were handed over to the Void Engineers for their V2 Flying Disk program.

The brain power of the human/alien crossbreeds held the two directors enthralled, and they devised a plan. In a courageous gesture of self-experimentation, Dr. Himmel transferred his consciousness to a specially-prepared clone of himself, with a new brain cultured from the Grey/human mix. The results were astounding. Dr. VonRosenberg followed suit twelve weeks later. Neither of the two directors told anyone of their experiment, partly in order to observe the reactions of unbiased and uninformed observers, but mostly out of fear of discovery by an "unenlightened" world.

As time passed, increasingly unignorable impulses to perform very

specific experiments and to act in increasingly irrational manners caused the two directors to take an unwanted sabbatical. They both left the facilities in separate vehicles, seemingly unaware of the other's intentions, and were surprised to run into each other in the remote foothills south of Santa Fe, both travelling impulsively, on separate paths, where they were greeted by a blinding light. It is here that their memories hit a seeming blank spot. Neither of them mentioned anything to anyone about the incident. This occurred on Oct. 7th, 1971, 4:20 AM.

Immediately afterwards, the two directors began mass-producing clones of themselves, with a wide variety of characteristics and capabilities, which they keep hidden in a secret storehouse below the third sub-level. The only traits they share in common are their physical and social appearances and continuous memories (they are both telepathically linked with each of their clones). The clones take shifts, often changing late at night, so the bodies masquerading as the two directors are often not the same from day to day. None of the clones remember which is the original.

After the arrival of the Gigergene, things changed drastically at the compound. The first of the species experiments was deemed a failure (see Steve Kok and Eric Wicklund's Species file) and work with the Greytech Manipulator was supposedly brought to a temporary halt. The third sublevel was shut down and all personnel were restricted to the upper two levels. In actuality, the clones below were working feverishly day and night to perfect the Gigergene strains.

For purposes of game mechanics, the two directors may have any attribute/ability scores, with the following exceptions:

1: They may not have ratings in either Prime or Spirit--they may use others' tech which uses these powers, but they, like the Greys, are incapable of manipulating these energies.

2: Willpower, Intelligence, & Perception are all at human max.

Artifact--Greytech Manipulator (***)**

The Greytech Manipulator may use all life effects within certain limitations...as a device created from Grey Technology, it cannot channel free Prime to new patterns. Instead, it recycles the pattern-locked Prime energy from within the pre-existing patterns. This energy is supplemented with nuclear/Wyrm/death-tainted energies in the form of electrical power supplied by the onboard fusion power plant. The creatures it creates are inevitably morbid, usually murderous abominations. No one but the two directors are capable of using the manipulator; it is just what it looks like, totally *alien* technology.

Progenitor Nightmares

Excerpted from last received videolog from "Nemesis" Shuttle:
-Houston, this is Roberts...We've got a situation here...

-Roberts, this is Ground Control...Your transmission is breaking up...Check your {static}

-Ground Control, I lost contact...the lifeform is showing signs of some serious activity...Ground Control!...It's broken into the *cabin*. *Oh my God the air its* {screams}

Video records fleeting image of alien ovipositor attacking crew member. He crashes into camera; end transmission.

Aliens/Species: the origin of the "Gigergene"

In 1971, deep in the hills outside California, a high-security Technocracy Void Shuttle, the Nemesis, returned from a routine rendezvous with a satellite monitor that had gone off course after downloading Military information from a Void Engine, the Nostromo, returning from the Grey's galaxy.

A semi-crysaline lifeform had attached itself to the hull of the ship in an attempt to use it as an incubator. Somewhere between the Orion Umbra and the Solarian Umbra, the lifeform had clung to the craft, its

silicate physiology, combined with a deep and truly powerful empathic ability allowing it to avoid detection by both the Engine's computer and the spirit of the Monitor. When the shuttle Nemesis left its rendezvous with the Monitor, the crew in cryogenic sleepchambers, the lifeform was attached. Of the two crewmembers, the first served as a host to the silicon/carbon based incubi, allowing it a rudimentary scan of the human collective Subconscious. The second passenger served as its first meal. The shuttle, operating on computer autopilot, landed at Spacestrip 519 in Nevada at 4:15, November 17, where Technocracy agents eagerly awaited.

Summary: Video Archives, Series 0354967-45-b3476, [Nov 17, 1971, 4:10 AM]

Landing strip, uniformed soldiers with heavy artillery stand at the ready. Camera pans to sky, the blaze of the approaching shuttle looms closer & closer. Pan back to landing strip area, a huddled group of scientists in white labcoats and two men in dark suits, the obvious directors.

{Voice-over from loudspeaker}: Receiving from on-board navigational computer; autopilot functioning in optimal working order...Prepare for landing sequence.

The soldiers shoulder their weapons; a few shuffle nervously. The craft lands without incident. Two "volunteer" soldiers move cautiously toward the craft, blow the airlock and step back from the smoke and falling debris. A dark blur shoots through the opening, slaughtering the first two soldiers immediately. Shots ring out from all sides as the soldiers open fire. Close-up on the lifeform, a simpler variant of Species 016. Bullets ricochet off the exoskeleton as it surveys the assembly, hissing. One shot penetrates and it charges the nearest cluster of soldiers, taking out five more before the heavy-weapons infantry moves in. A Wavefield Generator is raised at the alien; it crumples and soldiers with restraining gear quickly move into place. The lifeform is boxed up, loaded into a van and driven away. Tape ends.

Earthlab

The magnetic videotapes from the Void Engine and Satellite Monitor were viewed in Austin, Texas, approximately sixteen hours before the shuttle landed. Over 50 New World Order and Iteration X strike teams were assembled at the spacestrip where the Nemesis landed. The lifeform was captured alive, stunned, and transferred by armoured convoy to Earthlab, near Austin.

Earthlab is an underground Progenitor testing laboratory, stocked with "Grey" genetech. The only access point on this side of the Gauntlet is a single door at the end of a long dirt road, inside restricted-access Military ex-nuclear facilities, shielded with five foot thick ferrocement Gauntlet-reinforcing walls. It is protected by a wide range of security systems, from barbed wire and armed guards to optical and palmprint scans to closed camera circuits and identocard checkstations.

Using the Grey's genetech, the Progenitor team bypassed the creature's normal means of reproduction (by parasitically devouring its host's nervous system and adapting its own physical shape to approximate its host's) and synthetically grafted the lifeform's DNA to a sample of human genetic tissue donated by one of the participating scientists. The result was, to casual observation, a human child with abnormally slow life-signs, and rapidly accelerated growth processes. During a stressful episode at the the laboratory the child's true abilities were revealed. During an intensive intelligence test, the child (already six days old with the body of a thirteen-year-old) transformed into its biomechanoid form after seducing and mesmerizing the scientist performing the testing. It killed and partially devoured the scientist, and almost escaped before it was terminated by internal security systems.

Later experiments, using cloned cell-samples from the original alien, were conducted under stronger precautionary measures after the damage to the equipment and lab was repaired. Several specimens, while still somewhat uncontrollable, were considered wildly

successful.

-Species 017B proved a more stable variant of the first organism, and was reported to have a high success rate in biologically accepting behavior programming RCC's.

-Species 016, Variant C Class 5, was a joint effort with the Iterators, using a HIT-Mark endo-skeletons and Internal Computer linkage, covered with organic cell-tissue from the original human/alien mutation.

SPECIES 017b (in transformation)

Codename: Project Starfish

| | Standard Profile | | |
|--------|------------------|-------|---------------|
| Attrib | Human | Morph | Health Levels |
| STR | 4 | 6 | OKx4 |
| DEX | 4 | 6 | -1 |
| STA | 5 | 6 | -1 |
| CHR | 2 | - | -2 |
| APP | 3 | - | -3 |
| MAN | 2 | - | -3 |
| PER | 5 | 6 | -3 |
| INT | 2 | 2 | -3 |
| WIT | 4 | 6 | Incapacitated |

Description: Outwardly human unless under duress, these creatures manage to simulate human behavior unless engaged in social interaction, where some discrepancies may appear. Some 17's, during the beginning stages of their moulting phase, may show patches of greenish scales. All 17's are outfitted with remote control chips and extensively conditioned, allowing their human forms some semblance of humanity. These are basically the same creatures as from the "Species" movie; see also the Species file by Steve Kok and Eric Wicklund."

Special abilities: In addition to their human and biomechanoid forms, 17's can assume any in-between combination of forms (Mix-morph at Sta, difficulty 4, 1 success needed). In morphed form, they possess powerful exoskeletons that give them an additional 3 dice to their soak pools. This, and their ability to remain alive beyond the incapacitated level unless aggravated wounds are sustained, is due to their silicon/carbon physiology, which gives them another -2 difficulty modifier to all soak rolls plus a -1 modifier to all Sta rolls; they regenerate one level of damage (aggravated included) per day. Their original genestock comes from a highly telepathic "alien" hive-mind, giving them powerful empathic abilities. Combined with their ability to "smell" heat, they have 4 additional dice to all their location rolls. {This is equal to the Sense Life and No Mind Mage effects}

Attacks: Claws have a difficulty of 6 and do damage at Str+3 aggravated. Bite has a range of 2, difficulty 8, and does Str+3 aggravated wounds. Tail has a range of 4, difficulty 7, does Str+2; it can be used in combination with either attack with no penalties. {Counts as one action}

Other: These are extremely hideous creatures with no social ratings at all. They are so terrifying that Sleepers viewing them suffer effects of delirium. Even magickal creatures must make a will roll to avoid panic/frenzy. They themselves are immune to all psychological and will effects, and vampires cannot dominate them.

Suggested skills: {Human/Morph} Alertness 2/5; Athletics 3/4; Awareness 2/4; Brawl 3/5; Intim 2/5; Leadership 2/-; Melee 3/-; Stealth 2/4; Survival 5/5; Enigmas 3/3

SPECIES 016c/5

Codename: Project Hairball

These are your standard Sigourney Weaver-brand of Alien, augmented with bionics. Using prepared HIT-Mark endo-skeletons, the Progenitors at Earthlab have perfected the process of cloning cell-tissue

around bionic cyberstructures. Most Hairballs (of the ten total 16's at date 11-8-95, 4:15) are only deployed in the Deep Umbra or ultra-secret clandestine domestic "raze-and-burn" operations such as Chernobyl. They are immune to Will and Mind magic attacks.

Description: Like their cousins the 17's, 16's possess strong exoskeletons (+3 to soak pool) in addition to the HIT-Mark internal frame (+4 to soak). They regenerate one wound level per combat round and the acidic concentration of their blood causes 1 wound for every 2 wounds of damage from melee they incur. Like the 17's, their silicon/carbon physiology (+2 more to soak= +9 total to soak rolls; -1 difficulty all Sta rolls) causes them to be able to survive anything not aggravated. They are carnivorous, completely silent (unless fitted with electronic transmitters) and utterly repugnant to everything--vampires included--and incite Delirium. They perceive through their sense of smell; they can sense heat with amazing accuracy.

Str 6; Dex 5; Sta 6; Cha -; App -; Man -; Per 4; Int *; Wit 4 *Computer guided

Health levels: OKx6, -1, -2, -3, Destroyed.

Attacks: Claws do Str+3, difficulty 6; Bite does Str+3, difficulty 8, range 2; Tail does Str+2, difficulty 7, range 4 and can be used with either attack. All wounds inflicted are aggravated.

Suggested abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Tech 3, Enigmas 3, Science 2

Sapphire and Steel

By David Hood (david.hood@stonebow.otago.ac.nz) (3 May 1995)

Introduction

"All irregularities are to be handled by the forces controlling each dimension. Trans-Uranic heavy elements may not be used where there is life. Medium atomic weights are available; Gold, Lead, Copper, Jet, Diamond, Radium, Sapphire, Silver and Steel. Sapphire and Steel have been assigned."--Opening Credits Sapphire and Steel

Werewolves are often described as being the immune system of Gaia. However, they are not the only such expression of Gaia. Another group which defends Gaia are the Elements.

Elements

Throughout the course of time, human beings have characterised the world as being made up of various elements. These elements have a spiritual representation which in mythic times was represented by elementals (Fire, Earth, Air, and Water in the Western tradition). With the growing complexity of the models used to describe the components of the world, the spiritual manifestations too have grown more complex. The modern forms of these elements are in many ways equal to mages. Because they are themselves defined by consensual reality, such self-aware modern forms, known as Elements, serve to help define reality. They serve to protect Gaia, and consensual reality, from intrusions from beyond the Horizon. Some have argued that because the effect of these spirits is to protect static reality, they are a form of Weaver spirit. In fact, because their true function is to protect Gaia from paranormal damage, the best description is that just as the Changers are the Wyld defenders of Gaia, Elements are the Weaver defenders (both springing from Gaia however).

Nature of Elements

Because Gaia and the Umbra are but reflections of each other there is not a direct correspondence between the periodic table of the elements and the spiritual versions. Many elements (the spirits) survive from alchemical times (such as Sapphire), while others appear as the form more commonly thought of by people (Steel rather than Iron, Diamond rather than Carbon).

The home of the Elements lies in the gauntlet rather than in the Umbra. They are sensitive to breaches created in the gauntlet and will emerge to restore any breaks. As they are not true Umbrood, and never actually have to cross the gauntlet, the strength of the gauntlet in the vicinity does affect their materialisation. Indeed, they are unable to manifest in areas where the strength of the gauntlet has been reduced to zero. Rather, they must emerge nearby then travel to the site of the breach.

The Aim of Elements is to stabilise reality -- sealing breaches in the gauntlet, neutralising the source of the breach or otherwise stopping the weakening of static reality.

One danger to mages is that Elements may mistake paradox flaws as disruptions to reality and seek to remove the disruption. This is only going to happen if the flaw (or the mage) is stationary. On the bright side a paradox spirit operating within a very small area could also attract their attention.

Essence

Pattern. They reinforce static reality, what else do you expect.

Appearance

When manifesting, to avoid causing disruption, elements appear as humans. While in human form their appearances (and behaviour) are related to the (physical) element on which they are based (e.g. Steel appears as a man in a grey suit with a cold, rigid manner). Their pupils reflect the color of their element and when using magic their eyes glow brightly in that color.

Tactics

They try to cause as little disruption to reality as possible. They avoid direct confrontation and don't use vulgar magic in front of witnesses. They contain then seal off breaks in reality after first having gotten back anything (that was taken away) that will be missed and sending back anything that has come through (that will be noticed). Elements operate in groups of 2 (or at most 3), each Element having complementary spheres and abilities. In dealing with any particular disruption, the other Elements will defer to the one with most relevant experience.

Attitude to mages

"If they knew of us they would seek to interfere for their own ends. Avoid them, or if you cannot avoid them do not let them know what you are."

Stats

These stats were produced before *The Book of Madness* came out, and even now I wouldn't change much because I find werewolf style powers too fiddly to keep track of when running Mage.

For those who want stats I suggest Attributes 7/6/4, Skills 16/10/6, Background of Arcane 3. Areté 6. Willpower 8. Health Levels: Human + 1 extra O.K.

Power

Manifestation: Elements can move freely in and out of the Gauntlet (Though prefer not to be observed when doing so). While in the Gauntlet (and in spirit form) they can travel very quickly, so often step into the Gauntlet to move from one physical location to another. Elements can look out from the Gauntlet to determine if they will be observed emerging.

Magic

Spheres: Mind 3 + 7 more points in spheres

Foci: None (-1 to Difficulty for Coincidental Magic, +1 for vulgar w. witness)

Elements are subject to paradox as per mages (in the final series of Sapphire and Steel they are trapped in a Correspondence Paradox realm for eternity).

Heavy Elements

Heavy Elements (those relating to radioactive elements of the periodic table) are much more powerful than other Elements. Also, as befits their name, they are somewhat unstable (Dynamic Essence). Because they cannot be trusted to preserve static reality, they are only deployed outside of the Gauntlet deal with powerful threats.

Symbiotic Exotic Biological Organism (Seborg)

By Gregory Deych (gdeych@cs.wisc.edu)

Introduction

L3 Planetary Defense Station hummed with activity. Ken Goddard could feel the subharmonic vibration in his bones. Usually, the hum of activity reassured him, but now the activity seemed to have a bit of a frantic edge to it. He sighed and rubbed his eyes, staring out through the several inches of transparent crystalline steel analogue, out beyond the Lunar orbit. It was a long day, coming after a long week, which itself trailed an even longer month.

A soft chime sounded behind him, and he turned his chair around, facing his doorway. Svetlana, his assistant, was ushering his next appointment, the PDC's Director of Training. Smiling, he stood up and offered him a hand, showing him to a chair.

"As you can see, Mr. Goddard, we're stretched to the limit, and the NWO just mandated we shift some of our and BCD's marine personnel under their operational control. 'Unspecified duration' transfer, they called it. If we shift any more personnel to them, we will not have enough to patrol even the circumstellar space." The DoT subsided unhappily.

Goddard nodded quietly. He pondered the matter for a few seconds, trying to see some alternatives. "I can't do anything about that, Harry" he said slowly "the plans have been made and it would hurt us a lot if we refuse. But, we may be able to salvage the situation. I'm authorizing you to reactivate the Icarus training facility, at 120% occupation levels." He smiled bitterly. "We'll have to go with that SEBO scheme, hell or high water."

Description

The SEBO program was initially proposed by the exobiologists of the Void Engineer R&E division. In their explorations of the universe, VEs have encountered a staggering array of life forms, sometimes

intelligent, most often not. The R&E was ill-equipped to catalogue all of the life forms, let alone determine their capability, but a small fraction of the most promising ones were scrutinized more closely. One such lifeform, inhabiting a class M planet in the Epsilon Eridani system, came to the attention of the researchers by exhibiting a very wide range of symbiote-host relationship. Usually, a symbiote or a parasite will restrict itself to a single species or a related group of species. Even more interesting was the fact that the host populations which were not infected by a symbiote appeared to be less vigorous than their infected counterparts. In short, this was a real example of a relationship benefiting both sides.

Since that discovery, research concentrated on medical applications of the newly discovered lifeform, popularly christened "McKiernan's symbiote". The "symbiote" is approximately 3-4 inches when fully grown and nests in the abdominal cavity of the host. By siphoning off some of the nutrients, it relieves itself of the necessity to go out and gather its own meal. Its secretions, on the other hand, act as a general stimulant on the host, making it more likely to catch its own preferred prey. The Progenitor scientists brought in to help the research along have synthesized several compounds from the symbiote's secretions. However the rate of metabolism of those by the patient was rather high and duration rather short. Inevitably, research turned to the possibility of whether Human-symbiote mutuality was possible.

Symbiote Exotic Biological Organism is the technical name for the McKiernan Symbiote whose DNA has been modified to be able to meld with humans. The human hosts who are usually called Seborgs, receive a number of powers from their symbiote along with a few inconveniences as well.

Powers

The usual secretions of the symbiote act as a general stimulant, enhancing the usual human physical abilities by about 20-30%. In game terms, the subject receives a +1 to all 3 physical attribute permanently. The host's endurance is increased even more than all the other attributes, with additional +1 to Stamina for any tests involving endurance, like long-distance running, holding your breath etc. (not the soak pool). The healing factor of the host is also much accelerated. If well fed and rested, the subject heals lethal damage as if it was bashing.

| Health Level | Recovery Time |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Bruised-Wounded | 1 hour |
| Maimed | 3 hours |
| Crippled | 6hours |
| Incapacitated | 12 hours |

The symbiote is able to partially filter many kinds of poisons, toxins and diseases out of the host's bloodstream, automatically subtracting a single success from the adverse effect or adding one success to the resistance roll (this may include Life magick if it's stated as a viral or toxicological attack). Research is ongoing to modify the symbiote's DNA structure further, in order to enhance this ability.

In addition, the symbiote senses when the host is in danger, by her altered neurochemical balance, and responds accordingly. While in a dangerous or threatening situation, the subject gains the following abilities:

- +2 Strength
- +2 Stamina
- Hyperagility (+1 extra action per turn)

Disadvantages

Unfortunately, the Symbiote-Human meld is far from well understood. The Seborgs have encountered a number of specific problems, among them:

- The demand on the host's and symbiote's metabolisms require drastic increase in food consumption. If not involved in vigorous

activity, the Seborg requires approximately 50% more food than a normal human of his body type. If he is involved in vigorous activity such as combat, her food requirement jumps to 200% of normal or twice the normal amount. There are some implications that the increase in metabolism may reduce the subject's maximum lifespan, though an Enlightened medical practitioner should be able to compensate for the effect.

- Also, the symbiote requires certain mineral substances which humans do not consume as part of their daily diet. Those specialized substances are usually stored in a subcutaneous dispensers, sufficient for 15 days of operations.
- The overdrive effect may have mildly deleterious effects on the human body. If the attributes are permanently increased above 5, the host may (Storyteller's discretion) exhibit adverse reactions, like muscle aches, torn ligaments or hypertension.
- Lastly, and potentially most significantly, the symbiote sufficiently alters the mindset of the user to block him from using Inspirational Science. Technocratic Devices remain usable.

Field Experience

The Seborgs are part of the Void Engineer convention, but are often assigned to alongside NWO Men in Black and ItX Hit Marks. They are recruited from the same candidate pool as VE marine contingent. DSTAC members figure it's better to field test them along the more controllable conditions on Earth (and where other Conventions can pick up the slack if something goes seriously wrong). If the field tests prove successful, they will be assigned to VE teams in space operations as well.

Game Statistics

The effect is a Life 4 Spirit 4 rote, requiring 10 successes to be completed.

Shadow Moths

By Stuart Ellis (s.ellis1@lancaster.ac.uk)

Description

These spirits are no bigger than the insects they resemble and rarely harm living creatures, but their presence in an area can be enough to terrify veteran technomancers and Euthanatos. Less experienced mages who think of all the inhabitants of the Deep Umbra as tentacled monstrosities often underestimate a swarm of black moths, but only once.

In their home realms Shadow Moths are just mindless scavengers that consume the remains of anything which has become too corrupted by entropy, and are probably eaten in turn by other entities. On Earth they can be devastating because a swarm will rapidly cover and absorb any object which is already tainted by entropy. Strangely, contact with Shadow Moths accelerates the rate at which entropy increases. The result is similar to a powerful Erode Matter (Entropy 3) effect as the moths land on the oldest or most decayed object in the vicinity and reduce it to dry powder before flying on to the next meal.

Items with unusual amounts of Quintessence appear to be particularly attractive. Talismans are often the first target, especially if they use Entropy magicks or their physical form is weakening, but the traces of power which cling to Foci also make them choice morsels. Spirits and the living are safe unless they are severely corrupted, like terminal cancer patients, mages of Entropy and Fomori. If there is nothing more tempting in the vicinity then such beings will be engulfed and slowly absorbed. This is quite painless but does one die of aggravated damage per dot of Entropy or Taints that the victim possesses as the dark threads in their Pattern grow and the moths feast.

Swarms do not have Traits as such because they don't do anything except eat and fly. Individual moths will be killed automatically by any attack which hits them, but they have good enough instincts to dodge (swatting a moth has a Difficulty of 9) and each swarm consists of several dozen. Entropy, Life and Mind magicks are probably useless, but Forces could be helpful, and sunlight repels them (although it does no damage). In most realms Paradox will stop the moths reproducing and totally annihilate them within hours.

Not surprisingly, the more reckless and knowledgeable Nephandi often consider using Shadow Moths against the Technocracy. However they can only be summoned in areas with a low Gauntlet by characters with the appropriate Lore, Spirit 2 and Entropy 1. A separate Spirit 4 effect is needed to actually control them, and without it the summoner is likely to become the first victim.

Shadowing Lemmas

By CD Skogsberg (cd@alfakonsult.se)

What with all the "2d vs. 3d" and "what can you do with 2d" debate going on on the list, I decided to post this little tidbit of a beastie.

Author's Notes

Shamelessly stolen from Terry Pratchett. I of course have no intentions of infringing Mr. Pratchett's copyright etc.

Correspondence paradox spirits

Willpower

6

Rage

7

Gnosis

4

Power

30

Description

Shadowing Lemmas are two-dimensional beings from the High Umbra. Their two-dimensional nature makes them invisible when viewed "on edge," as it were. Natural behaviour for a Lemma on this side of the Gauntlet would be to "slither" along the ground, seeking an unwary mathematician, for the Shadowing Lemmas stalks and eats mathematicians. No-one knows why. It may be that this allows them to return to their home Realm. Anyway, many a mathematician's last sight was of a patch of shadow rising from the floor, perfectly flat,

engulfing him.

Their presence can be sensed with Corr. 1.

Charms

Airt Sense, Engulf (Transfers the Engulfed person *elsewhere*, probably to a Correspondence paradox realm; costs 15 Power to use), Materialize, Two-dimensionality*

*Two-dimensionality is more of an inborn property than a "charm" as such, but it has certain side-effects, among them invisibility (on a successful Gnosis roll, diff 6).

SHARDS

By John Thompson (thompson@scripps.edu)

Description

Shards are people who can influence the local paradigm. They are not quite mages, and not quite human either. Shards are about as common as wielders of True Magick -- quite rare. Most are unaware of their ability.

In game turns, if a Shard is a witness to a Magickal event, she causes the difficulty to be biased as one toward her paradigm. If Michael Walks-Far, a Shard that follows the Dreamspeaker paradigm is around, technomagick is a +1 difficulty, and animist magick is at -1 to difficulty, because of the Shard's belief. This does not change the overall modification of no more than +3/-3 as stated in the rulebook.

Shards can follow any Magickal Tradition or Craft.

They are unable to influence the paradigm by their will alone; rather they can modify the local consensus. A shard has no other innate abilities. Like Mages, they could be ghouled and retain their ability, but being Embraced destroys the ability.

Being a Shard is a +7 Merit. You must choose a paradigm to follow, and your beliefs could change over time, but it is as difficult as changing Nature. Shards are very valued companions to Mages, and when discovered, rarely have boring lives.

It is hypothesized that Shards are the pieces of Avatars either shattered by Gilgul or Avatars becoming weaker and no longer able to do Magick, yet still have some power. Others see them as sentient Nodes.

Superior Modifications

By Peter Sears

Introduction

Gentlemen. Recently it has been my privilege to go on a cross-country trip. And in doing so I have had an opportunity to meet with, and inspect a number of our Laboratories. Some of the Modifications that our inventive young minds have created for the use with our standard Superior templates were to my mind astonishing. I have taken the liberty of compiling a list of these for our common use and I hope that they will expedite the ascension war and your own research. Accreditation of the Doctors involved, and genetic blueprints are in the appended file.

-- Lionel Fisk (Aneurism@prog.lab.1138.web)

1) Increased Countermagick

As most of you who have worked in Damage Control know. The

standard Superior has CounterMagickal Symbols drawn on the protein of the D.N.A. This is what gives them their magical resiliency. Of course this makes them resistant to further tinkering. Many of these permutations unfortunately require the Erasure of these symbols. However, A lab in tuscon,Az. has discovered a way to increase the magickal protection for these clones for long term spying. Often a number of these clones can be used to create a magick-proof lynch mob or strike team. Would that we had access to these lovely creations during the Burning times. The process involves ritual Scarification of the internal organs and scripting countermagickal symbols on the interior of the flesh and the exterior of the bones. It has been further theorized that a comprehensive tattooing process could yield further Countermagick but this theory is unfortunately impractical and has yet to be tested.

System: I.C. clones possess 4 dice of countermagick instead of 2. Most other forms of enhancement will not work in conjunction with this one. However, Progenitors normally use I.C.clones with other forms of altered clones.

2) Regeneration

One of our labs in Montana has had recent difficulties with local Werewolves. These trials did yield some viable samples of genetic material. The program director has managed to crack the regenerative Gene with some success.

System: Regen Clones are capable of regenerating 1 non-aggravated wound level per turn. Regen clones are often fitted with other forms of enhancement and can occasionally kill garou if they attack in swarms. Aggravated damage, asphyxiation, decapitation and total systemic shock are the only ways to destroy these clones. Unaccountably, Regen Clones often possess bad tempers and they have inherited a vulnerability to silver.They suffer aggravated wounds against these weapons. Regen Clones cannot have counter magic, but do not take Unbelief damage.

3) Increased adrenaline:

Often used on strike team and sentinel style clones, This form is often mated to a number of other Enhancements.

System: These clones possess 5 "charges" of super-charged A.C.T.H. Each turn that they wish to use this they must make a stamina roll. One success is sufficient, but the diff goes from 4 to 9 as each use increases the diff by one. The effect is similar giving the clone Celerity 2, Potence 3,and Fortitude 2 for that turn only. Clones of this sort are often irritable and easily provoked. After combat, these clones will be ravenous and sleepy and will be unable to initiate many actions involving heavy physical action. They also are unable to spend willpower. Clones of this sort do not have countermagick and may take unbelief damage if witnessed in action.

4) Reduced Pain Receptor

An idea taken from one of our Iterator Colleagues. This kind of enhancement is often used in conjunction with most types of combat Clones. This Type of enhancement removes pain receptors from the clone's body. The clone can feel no pain and is thus hard to slow down in a combat situation. The downside of this is that often the clone will take damage and simply not be aware of it. There is an anecdote about a clone that had set itself on fire and did not become aware of what was going on until it's vision became obscured. In the process of walking around, the flaming clone destroyed most of a laboratory.

System: These clones do not take penalties from wound levels at all. Penalties might be otherwise imposed though.(such as a clone attempting to sprint on a broken leg.) These clones may have countermagick as the Attenuation of pain receptors is a simple Neurosurgical process. In addition they do not take Unbelief Damage.

5) Abrasive Skin

Often used only on Horizon realm clones. this was achieved by splicing in Shark D.N.A. Less than pleasant to look at, but they do get the job done. The Void Engineers have found a multitude of uses for these Clones in their Aquatic theater Operations. Coupled with gills, and a few of the other enhancements, these make excellent underwater shock-troops.

System: The flesh of the clone has a number of rough hook-like projection. Touching the flesh can do a health level of damage and in Hand to hand combat add +3 to brawl damage. Countermagick cannot be taken, and the clone will take unbelief damage if observed. Note that damage taken from these does count as aggravated.

6) Chromatophores

Of only limited use as the clone must be nude to be effective. This is a common enhancement for other non-humanoid creatures. A South Carolina Amalgam has created Aquatic clones with this enhancement with a great degree of success for use against offshore targets.

System: The clone has dermal cells which adapt to their surroundings. Countermagick cannot be taken; the clone does not take unbelief damage. When in use add 3 dice to stealth pool.

7) Sub-dermal armor

Used often for heavy attack troops. Not recommended for use with clones that are a substitute for people unless that person is an extreme Endomorph. Confers an amount of damage reduction via the introduction of Bio-silicates in pockets under the flesh and in the hollows of the body. Clones of this sort will sink in water.

System: This enhancement protects the clone as if he were wearing class four armor. Subtract 2 from dex; the clone does not take unbelief damage and cannot have Countermagick.

8) Natural weaponry

This covers a bewildering array of physical attack mechanisms that have been bred into strike clones, the most common variety being retractable fangs and claws. With a bit of de-melination and some metabolic tinkering, we can make ersatz vampires and with otherforms of enhancement, Ersatz Werewolves. Although, natural weaponry doesn't stop there. I have been informed of doctors who have created clones with prehensile tails, Patagia and even one doctor who is attempting to give a clone Quills.

System: Some of the clones with the wilder forms of enhancement will take unbelief damage, whereas others with subtler manifestations will not. Ersatz Garou and kindred are usually spottable by those races although they could pass to the uninitiated or to others outside that race. Ersatz Garou have been known to trigger the Delirium but this is a lesser version and has a +3 on the scale. Clones attacking with natural weaponry do count as supernatural beasts for the purposes of Aggravated damage.

9) Emitters

Doctor Nedra Sellars came up with a clone that had been engineered with its own set of super-concentrated Musk sacs. From what I understand, this modification has been used against Garou and Tradition mages alike with great success. The effective range is 40 feet.

System: No countermagick and no unbelief damage until exposed. The effects identical with Vomit gas.

10) Gills

A natural for underwater operators, often combined with increased visual spectrum, and pressure hardening for a more complete package. Also good to combine with abrasive skin and/or Chromatophores.

System: The gills are often hidden in the hair, the pelvis, and the armpits. No countermagick; no unbelief damage.

11) Poison Sacs

I have seen Clones that could sweat virulent contact Hemo and Neurotoxins. There are also modifications that enable a clone to spit contact poison up to 30 feet and there are clones who can make their blood extremely poisonous to kindred. There is a research project jointly held between us and Iteration X to create clones that can broadcast non-organic compounds.

System: Spitters cause 3 dice of aggravated damage and possibly blindness; they have 4 charges before they must rest to replenish. Sweaters and "chalices" natural replenish their toxins. Chalices cause 2 levels of aggravated damage to their drainer for each Bp drained but there is an onset time of several hours. Often they are in their coffin by that time and may never rise again. (torpor) Sweaters Cause tear gas symptoms in those who come in contact with them in addition to normal damage Unbelief damage is entirely dependent on exposure. Spitters sustain it most often, while sweaters rarely do and Chalices never do. No countermagick.

12) Carrier Agent

You must receive prior approval of your project director before implementing one of these clones. If you are not very careful, you could cause a widespread epidemic. This is basically a clone that carries powerful versions of many types of Virus that it is immune to. The clone retains control of its own release vectors, but unfortunately once the virus is passed on, the cat is out of the bag. Often these clones are equipped with many different types of Virus. Seducers are often equipped with a pheromone control package and A.I.D.S. While infiltrators are often equipped with anthrax, polio, or Chaos Agent.

System: This is one of the few types of clone that can possess countermagick; this is because the virus has a separate life pattern and many are custom tailored to fit their host. Unbelief does not affect these clones as there is precedent in history (Typhoid Mary, an experimental subject who got loose.) Approval for the use of these clones is very rare and termination of that clone's life is personally overseen by Damage Control.

Terror

Great Epiphling

By Anders Sandberg (nv91-asa@void.nada.kth.se)

Description

This entity has been with life ever since the first animal realized that it was trapped with nowhere to run and horror fast approaching. It filled the darkness of paleolithic nights, it accompanied wars and defeats, it manifested at the death of billions of people. Just like all other epiphlings it seeks to manifest its idea in the world, causing total terror with no escape. Ever.

Normally Terror resides in the High Umbra, only manifesting in the minds of people when it is invited by circumstances. But it has for a long time sought entrance into the physical world to truly bring terror to everyone. The rise of panic anxiety is partially its work, a sign that it moves closer to the real world now than before. Another region of

the mind it has always prowled is the deepest dreams. It hides outside the dreamworlds and its smaller nightmare cousins, in the grey limbo of dreamless sleep where it causes night terrors, the formless horror that occasionally brings children and adults screaming awake, still filled with terror but with no clear threat. But the [Guardian of Dreams](#) has always prevented it from using this avenue -- so far. If given a chance it will manifest to cause widespread terror.

Terror has one main weakness: it cannot directly hurt anybody who doesn't fear. But that doesn't mean it can't make others run amok with terror carrying heavy firepower or lead the fearless into a trap. Its strategy is to fill as many people with terror as possible; killing is just a way to achieve it. If it can induce terror better in some other way it will use it: Terror is completely impassionate about who gets hurt as long as people fear.

Willpower

8

Rage

8

Gnosis

6

Power

60

Powers

Terror will regain power from terrified people, at a rate of one point for every terrified person in its vicinity each turn.

Darkness (Power cost 5): Terror can fill an area with *total* darkness, where no sight is possible at all. The darkness is cold and impenetrable, and seems to cling to people like heavy mist. If the victim is claustrophobic it will feel like it is closing in on him, while agoraphobes suddenly feel all alone in a huge threatening openness.

Terrify (Power cost 5): This power allows it to fill anybody inside its aura of influence with terror; in the Umbra it uses its Rage, in the physical world Charisma + Intimidation against a difficulty of 6. The victims roll their willpower against 6 to resist the overpowering fear they feel. If Terror wins they will be terrified; a botch will lead to complete catatonia and perhaps post-traumatic stress disorder (Terror gains 5 points of power from such breakdowns). A multiple botch might cause derangements.

Hide (Power cost 5): Terror can hide inside a terrified mind, like smoke pouring back into a bottle. The victim will not notice anything amiss, although his or her nightsleep will be a sequence of truly awful nightmares which are very hard to awake from (actually they are the creations of Terror and not true dreams; the fear generated by them will feed Terror even more at a rate of one point of power per hour's sleep). Terror can slightly influence the host in this state, but not really control his or her actions. When needed (especially when the host is frightened) Terror can re-manifest in the physical world.

Manifest (Power cost 33): Terror can, if allowed into the physical world, manifest physically. Its exact shape is undefined as it hides in total darkness, but it is a towering presence with huge claws able to disembowel a werewolf that moves soundlessly through the darkness, impossible to stop or escape. In this form Terror is practically unstoppable, and will if wounded just hide away.

Str: 7 Sta: 7 Dex: 7 Cha: 6 (terrifying) Man: 6 (cunning) App: - Per: 6(omniscient) Int: 6 (warped) Wit: 6 (sudden)

Alertness: 4 (ready) Brawl: 6 (claws) Intimidation: 6 (total terror) Stealth: 6(unexpected)

Claws: Str+2 difficulty 5

Since the manifested Terror always surrounds itself with darkness and lacks well defined shape it is quite hard to hit with anything (+3 to all difficulties to hit it). Bright beams of light don't damage it, but forces it to strengthen the darkness, costing it power.

T'Kra

By Stephen Johnson (sjwriter@netcom.com)

Prelude

"Sir?"

Coordinator Shing looked up from the console abruptly, at the PDC Marine who had just entered the data analysis room of the Deep Universal Explorer Isaac Newton. "Yes? Ah, those are the catastrophic monitoring tapes?"

"No Sir, both units have been destroyed. These are more log tapes from the ruins of the personnel quarters Sir!"

"Relax Marine, whatever hit this Outpost is long gone by now."

"SIR!"

With a sigh Coordinator Shing silently dismissed the Marine, muttering after she had left.

"Espri deCorps is all fine and well, but thinking is what keeps you alive out here."

"It didn't keep the Co-op of this Outpost alive." Investigator Levi said as she closed the door behind her. "Of course overwhelming firepower is a little hard to sidestep."

Coordinator Shing shrugged. "They were slaughtered and the Outpost looted, we knew that much coming in. It fits the pattern."

"Eight Outposts in fifty years, same pattern, no clues. The official explanation isn't cutting it any more."

"Shhh! The Hall Monitors back dirtside might hear you." Coordinator Shing said, rolling his eyes.

"This is not the work of a Marauder!"

"Or the Traditions or the Nephandi, agreed. Nor any of the other Outsiders we've encountered thusfar out here. Too methodical, too focused and too bloody interested in our Technologies."

"It would have been nice to get a tissue sample for our Progenitor friends, how is the Syndicate?"

"To replace this Outpost I'm going to have to talk to the Ivory Tower types and make the threat real to them. Then maybe the next time we can have a fortified Outpost waiting and get some information out of that next raid."

Description

The Void Engineers have a problem moving in from the Deep Umbra they really don't understand yet, the T'kra. Slowly but steadily they have been losing strategic Outposts monitoring the approaches to the Gaia Tellurian. Each Outpost displays a similar pattern of events. Emergency Assault Alert, usually cut off in mid transmission. The rush to move something in for reinforcement, always too late. Discovery of the remains of the Outpost, no survivors, no records. The Investigation, always useless because there is too much damage. The Report, a listing of people and equipment lost and questions. The Rebuilding, another Outpost with more firepower, useless. Emergency Assault Alert at another Outpost.....

It's the Deep Universe/Umbra, resources are tight and stretched thin. If there was a real threat the fund would be made available, but the T'kra are nothing if not cunning. There is no evidence, just all the mystery of missing people and equipment. So the Void Engineers suspect something, but in the absence of facts can do little more. The

T'Kra have good reason to insure the Void Engineers have no facts... yet.

The T'kra are the Wanderers of the Deep Umbra, and rightly feared by all who have encountered them and survived. In a now decayed, desiccated and dead Tellurian they were born millions of years ago. Like Humanity some amongst them Awoke and began to shape the reality around them with the sheer force of their will. Like Humanity they discovered the dichotomy of internal/external foci and fought a War over it.

The T'kra had always been warriors from their point of view, conquering and enslaving their lessers to provide those things Warfare can not. Like Humanity they turned their external foci, their tools, to killing but even the most savage killers in Human history would be amateurs compared to the average T'kra. In time the T'kra attained their vision Ascension, to become the perfect warrior society. Unfortunately the cost of their Ascension was the draining dry of their Tellurian's supplies of Quintessence and other resources as well.

With their tools, Their Technology, they pushed out into the Deep Umbra and found a new Tellurian, rich with resources and Quintessence as well as a primitive people ripe and ready for enslavement and use. The T'Kra reached out and conquered this new Tellurian, it was not an easy task and the very process of abandoning their own Tellurian changed them. They became more corrupt, ruthless, cruel and vicious; even the Nephandi will find them to be a bit... extreme.

Time passed and their rapacious use of their new Tellurian rapidly drained it of Quintessence and other resources as well. Once again the Deep Umbra beckoned and once again they sought out another Tellurian to rape, use and discard. Thus they have been for time out of mind, growing and spreading as they go. Leaving a trail of decayed, desiccated and dead Tellurians in their wake.

At some point early on they encountered a Tellurian with beings following a course of tool use evolving into a unique technology. The conquest of the Ja!Ku'pok almost broke the T'Kra and forced them to split into several... well Tribes or Clans are words that will serve as well as any, though truly they do not fit well at all. Each Tribe/Clan owns a Tellurian they are in the process of using to pursue their vision of Ascension, the perfect warrior society. In fact the T'Kra have become so corrupt honor means nothing to them, victory is their only measure of worth and it has been very long indeed since they last faced an equal opponent. The T'Kra still fear the Ja!Ku'pok in fact though they believe them destroyed.

Few Tellurians have been spared by the T'Kra, only those of such utterly alien a nature to be unnoticeable to them as a rule. They are powerful enough to enforce their paradigm on the Tellurian they are invading and make it change to suit them. Still that can take time with the more alien of paradigms so the closer or more primitive a paradigm is, the more the T'Kra prize it and rush to take the Tellurian and make it their own.

They also prefer those Tellurians with someone to... resist them and to provide them with a crushing victory. Nomadic tribes are good, stone age savages are better. Civilization is bad, civilizations with Awakened individuals are very bad, Technological Civilizations are worse, Technological Civilizations with Awakened individuals are the stuff of T'Kra nightmares. In short the T'Kra have descended away from their ideal of Ascension to become secret Cowards. Still they pursue the ideal of Ascension, if not the actual thing any more.

The first T'Kra scout found the Gaian Tellurian around 1100 CE, noticed that there were inhabitants and moved on. It was only an initial survey after all and the majority of the Tribe/Clan had just settled down in freshly conquered Tellurian and were still busy finding out just how satisfying a splat the local inhabitants could make when dropped from some height. The T'kra finished their leisurely survey around 1270 CE and settled down to serious decadence and barbarism for the next few hundred years. The local inhabitation not only splatted in such a satisfying manner, the sounds they made as they were consumed alive were entertaining too!

About 1435 CE another scout passed by the Gaian Tellurian and

noticed a particular upswing in Quintessence flow in the Tellurian. Before they could investigate further however they were attacked and destroyed a band of Fuoji (see below) who promptly backtracked the scout's path through the Deep Umbra and found the main body of the Tribe/clan. They sent out messengers to other Fuoji and then attacked the T'kra with everything they had. Which wasn't much really but they managed to get in amongst the local inhabitants and Awaken a few of them. This plus a continuing stream of fanatic hate filled Fuoji finding them and then, of course, promptly attacking. Kept the T'kra well occupied for the next five hundred years or so.

By the early 1900's the T'kra Tribe/Clan was beginning to see the signs that it was time to move on to another Tellurian. Fewer and fewer resources to find, Quintessence flows slowing to a trickle, no more locals to amuse themselves with, an unbreathable atmosphere, water so polluted it was poison, a dead ecology. Little clues like that told them it was time to move on. So they dusted off the old scouting reports and picked the Gaian Tellurian as a prime candidate for conquest. They sent out scouts and were horrified to discover a technologically advanced civilization in the Gaian Tellurian, worse it contained Awakened individuals.

The T'kra took an early Void Engineer Outpost intact, stripping it bare before retreating back into the anonymous depth of the Deep Umbra. The technology was primitive by their standards, but it was better than even the dreaded Ja!Ku'pok had possessed. The T'kra next attacked a mixed Tradition Horizon Realm, they were a War Chantry in the midst of Summer, the T'kra almost lost, it was a very, very close run thing. It scared the T'kra, scared them enough for the Tribe/Clan to send out messengers of warning to the other Tribes/Clans scattered throughout the Depths of the Umbra.

Each Tribe/Clan contacted has responded, capturing a Void Engineer Outpost and discovering the terrific pace of technological advance the Technocracy is pursuing. The truth is that if just one Tribe/Clan of T'kra had attacked the Gaian Tellurian would have fallen. By now however the Technocracy is getting suspicious and the Void Engineers are in controlled panic, they Know something is out there. The Fuoji have noticed the sudden concentration of Tribes/Clans and have begun to attack as well. Even worse for the T'kra they have begun to infiltrate the Gaian Tellurian, delighting in the discovery of such an Awakened community. Some of them have even managed to begin associating with some of these Awaken inhabitants on a regular basis and have a small but growing influence on them.

But the nightmare for the indecisive T'kra are rumors that the Ja!Ku'pok may not be dead, or even worse the Gaian Tellurian may contain the survivors of the Ja!Ku'pok. With Fuoji bands gathering strength and internal politics to distract them the T'kra have yet to move on the Gaian Tellurian. However the Nephandi have yet to discover and contact the T'kra, though some are actively pursuing rumors. All in all interesting times lay ahead...

The Fuoji are surviving mages and acolytes of Tellurians the T'kra have conquered and destroyed. They take their name, which is only how Humans would pronounce it by the way, from the mages of the first Tellurian to fight back against the T'kra and survive to help other Tellurians. Many of the Fuoji are so insane they would make a Marauder nervous, they are one and all however dedicated to the extinction of the T'kra. Most of them have stolen T'kra ships or created vessels of their own to move within the Deep Umbra in some safety, comfort and swiftness.

When they find a T'kra Tribe/Clan they send out messengers to other Fuoji bands of their discovery and immediately attack. Usually they are so vengeance driven they can't even wait to plan and just fling themselves headlong into the slaughter. Some rare ones however can hold back and make plans and coordinate to do more damage. There are legends amongst the Fuoji of three Tribes/Clans that they have managed to destroy to the last T'kra, when such leaders emerge. Such Fuoji are usually major spirits (Incarna, Lord or better) or Oracle level mages.

A great many Fouji have a terrifically difficult time "tuning-in" to the T'kra reality to do any serious damage. Think in terms of an octopi

type being who, when stiffening it's limbs causes horrific social, psychological and even physical damage in it's own reality and culture, standing up in the midst of a firefight and stiffening it's limbs. Or a being that screams deadly curses that actually translate as rather funny jokes. The disconnect between the realities can be that great.

Yet, experience teaches the Fuoji what works and experienced Fuoji can teach less experienced Fuoji the fundamentals. This is one of the Fuoji's greatest strengths, their very diversity allows them to find "someone" who can slip into a conquered Tellurian and Awaken the inhabitants and begin a resistance to the T'kra. They are also, quite simply, the finest intelligence network in the Deep Umbra. They have to be to find the T'kra in the limitless depths between the Tellurians.

The T'kra are a tough opponent to anyone they run into. They breed easily and quickly, the smaller Tribes/Clans number in the low billions while the largest number in the tens of trillions of individual T'kra. Add to this that about one in a million of them is Awakened, and the rest have access to a Technology able to move their entire population across the Deep Umbra and conquer Tellurians at will. Also by sheer numbers they are able to shift the paradigm of any Tellurian they enter.

Still they have their weaknesses. The T'kra worship victory and this has led them to avoid any difficult or costly fights if they can, it's also led to vicious internal fighting. Also their entire existence is based on stripping an entire Tellurian of it's resources and available Quintessence and then moving on, thus they are vulnerable whenever it comes time for them to move on. Their ruthless cruelty and arrogance is legendary, it makes them enemies where ever they go and enemies can pile up. Witness the Fuoji. Their technology is another, abet subtle, weakness even though it is also their strength. They have never faced an enemy with a comparable technological expertise. For example somewhere out in the sea of unformatted sectors of the Digital Web are connections to the T'kra computer systems and the T'kra don't even have a clue to the existence of the Digital Web... yet.

Vampire Bygone

By blake1001@technologist.com

Description

As a Bygone, this Vampire is a Thaumavore. However, it can extract Quintessence from its victims' blood, so it is not dependent on Nodes or Mages for its existence in physical reality. The Vampire needs about 1 Quintessence per week to maintain its unlife. In civilized areas, this can increase to 1/day, while very superstitious or appropriate surroundings (Transylvanian Castles) reduce it to 1/month. In addition, the Vampire uses up extra Quintessence when it has accumulated Paradox; each day when it sleeps it loses one extra Quintessence which cancels one accumulated Paradox.

Statistics

Attributes: Strength 5 (Inhuman), Dexterity 3, Stamina 5 (Inhuman), Charisma 2, Manipulation 5 (Compelling), Appearance 4 (Fascinating), Perception 3, Intelligence 4 (Experienced), Wit 5 (Cunning)

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4 (Grab and Bite), Dodge 2, Intuition 3, Intimidation 4 (Gaze), Subterfuge 4 (Urbane), Etiquette 4 (Old Fashioned), Melee 4 (Sword and Shield), Stealth 4 (Silent as Death), Culture 3, Enigmas 4 (Wisdom of the Ages), Linguistics 4 (Old Forms), Occult 5 (Ancient Secrets), History 4 (Personal Experience)

Backgrounds: Followers, Resources, Avatar, Destiny

Willpower: 10

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK,OK,OK,OK,OK,-1,-2,Becomes Mist

Image

The Vampire is a tall, pale, imposing, nobleman. There is something fascinating, exotic, almost hypnotic about him. He exudes power and confidence, yet great restraint and patience, as well. When he does lose his temper he is as ferocious as any wild beast.

Weaknesses

- Repelled by crosses, holy water, etc, cannot walk on consecrated ground, cannot recite from the scriptures.
- Cannot cross running water (natural streams and rivers), though he can be transported over such in his coffin.
- Sleeps, helpless, in his coffin (which must contain earth from his grave) during the day (during which time his soul is tormented in Hell).
- Cannot enter a dwelling unless invited (but only needs to be invited once).
- Cannot consume normal food or drink.
- Casts no reflection.
- Repelled by garlic or wolfsbane.
- Takes Agg damage from fire.
- Takes Agg damage from (direct) sunlight as if engulfed in flame.

Powers

- Recovers any non-Agg damage upon awakening each night (Agg damage is also healed but uses 1 Quint/HL)
- Can only be permanently slain by fire, sunlight, a stake through the heart followed by decapitation, or the consecration of all his coffins and the earth they contain.
- Will: the Vampire has a remarkably developed Will; he can Countermagick any direct effect without using up his Arete pool.
- Curse: anyone drained of blood by the Vampire is cursed to rise as a Vampire within three nights. Such Vampires are little more than beasts (Mental and Social Attributes of 1, no skills or knowledges and their only powers are 'Scent the Life' and 'Drink the Life' below). If the Vampire drains a willing victim over three nights, it becomes a fully sentient, fully powered Vampire, like himself.

Effects

Drink the Life

Prime 5, Life 4

This effect allows the Vampire to obtain the Quintessence he needs to maintain his mockery of life by drinking the blood of the living. [The effect costs no quint to use, the Vampire must succeed in a STR + Brawl contest to grab and bite a resisting victim. Each success on the Vampire's Arete drains 1 HL (Aggravated) from the victim, and gives the Vampire 1 Quintessence.]

F/X - doesn't draw Paradox (oddly enough)

Hypnotism (Willforce)

Mind 4

The Vampire's dread gaze can overwhelm the will of nearly any Mortal. The Vampire can command the Hypnotized victim to perform nearly any act, can plant post-hypnotic suggestions, and alter memories. Multiple uses can leave the victim insane, or a 'broken' puppet of the Vampire, or both. The victim has no memory of what occurs while she is Hypnotized. [Costs one Quint, and requires an Arete roll, Diff 7. If it works, instead of normal Resistance, the victim and the Vampire make contested Willpower rolls each time a new command is given. The Vampire's difficulty is always 6; the victim's varies based on the command, from 8 for simple commands she might be tempted to obey anyway, to 4 for unspeakable acts.]

F/X - Coincidental.

Reveal the Beast Within

Life/Matter 3

The Vampire is not really a human being anymore. If he chooses, he can abandon his human form for one that more accurately represents his inner nature: a blood-drinking bat or predatory wolf. [Costs one Quint, and requires an Arete roll, Diff 7, 8 with witnesses; only one success is required, and there are no penalties for assuming the animal form (it is 'natural' to the Vampire). As a bat, the Vampire loses two OK HLs but, has +2 DEX, can fly at twice his normal running speed, and has a -2 on his dodge and stealth difficulties. As a Wolf, he has enhanced (-2 diff) senses of smell and hearing, can run at twice normal speed, bite for STR+1 Agg damage (but not use 'Drink the Life,' above), and has +1 STR, +1 DEX, and +3 STA.]

F/X - Vulgar.

Blush of Life

Prime/Life/Mind 2

Though the Vampire is a creature of the night, he can move about during the day, though it is not his natural time, and his powers are weak. [Costs one Quint per scene, no Arete roll required. The Vampire appears completely human, and, in fact, takes damage as if he were human for the duration of the effect (though he will still vanish into mist if taken below Incapacitated) and can be affected by Life Magick, as well. This effect temporarily suspends the Vampire's vulnerability to sunlight (though it is still unpleasant to him). While using this effect, no other Vampiric power can be called on, and the Vampire's STR and STA are both reduced to two.]

F/X - Coincidental. There's no such thing as Vampires.

Scent the Life

Life/Prime 1

The Vampire can smell blood in even the tiniest amounts, and has the predator's instinct to track his prey once scented. He can also tell much about any person whose blood he tastes. [Costs no quint to use. The Vampire roll PER + Awareness (difficulty 4 to note the presence of fresh blood, 6 to track or identify a specific victim, or 8 to infer the magickal powers of a victim).]

F/X - Coincidental.

Werewolf Bygone

By Blake1001 (blake1001@technologist.com)

Wolfman

Description

The more modern version of the werewolf, the wolfman is an individual cursed to kill on the nights of the full moon. This is the Lon Chaney Jr. type of lycanthrope, that becomes a hairy brute, but never actually turns into a wolf. Like most werewolf bygones, the wolfman has no human memories or compunctions when transformed -- in fact it is supposed to be driven to murder those it loves the most -- and no memory of what has transpired once it has returned to human form.

The Curse is generally transmitted by the bite of another wolfman. However, plagues of werewolves are not common, as the wolfman is extremely homicidal, and victims rarely survive to suffer the effects of the curse, unless they kill or otherwise drive off the wolfman after being bitten.

Statistics

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wit 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 4 (Claws), Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Melee 1, Stealth 3, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Science 1

Backgrounds: None

Willpower: 5

Arete: 0

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK,-1,-1,-2,-2,-5,Incapacitated

As Wolfman: OK,OK,-1,-1,-1,-2,-2,Incapacitated

Image

The Wolfman looks like a perfectly normal, though possibly haunted or disturbed, human being. It may show some of the classic signs of the werewolf, but this is far from certain. As the Curse progresses, the Wolfman often acts less and less human, becoming more prone to violence and anger. Even more sinister is the Wolfman who gains a measure of control over the Curse, coldly deciding when to transform and whom to kill. A Wolfman suffering from Pattern Bleeding becomes a physical and emotional wreck, as the starving beast within him tries vainly to reassert itself -- he may be unable to eat, or crave raw meat, neglect to change (or wear) clothes, visibly sicken and waste away, or evince symptoms of paranoia, manic-depression (bipolar disorder), schizophrenia or other form of violent madness. A Werewolf who gets more than enough kills (has 10+ Quintessence), on the other hand, is vital, self-assured, and occasionally even particularly charismatic.

Weaknesses

The Curse: The Wolfman involuntarily changes forms on the nights of the full moon (this is approximately three nights out of the 28 day lunar cycle). And resumes his human form by daybreak.

Bloodlust: The Wolfman is driven to kill on nights of the full moon. It will prefer to attack solitary victims by surprise, but may also be drawn to stalk those it particularly loves or hates. Once the Wolfman attacks, it always tries to kill, retreating only if confronted with Wolfbane or Silver.

Bestial: The Wolfman loses all of his human intelligence and memories while transformed, acting on instinct. It avoids bright light, loud noises, crowds of people, and the like much like a normal animal would. But, it's bloodlust overcomes even those instincts eventually.

Repulsed by Wolfbane: The Wolfman cannot approach the herb, wolfbane, though it will not be easily kept at bay with a single sprig (Willpower roll to attack).

Side-effects: The Wolfman may have one or more of the classic signs or marks of the werewolf such as hairy palms, brows that meet in the middle, a prominent widow's peak, etc. Victims of this form of lycanthropy become increasingly agitated on the days before the full moon, and are given to anti-social behavior, explosive temper, odd cravings for raw meat, and the like, during that time. Most wolfmen are also wracked with guilt and self-loathing, once they realize what's happening to them. **Dependent on Quintessence:** Since the Wolfman is a Bygone, it needs Quintessence, which it gets by killing innocent victims, or in some cases, specifically, those he loves. A Wolfman who does not kill at least one human victim during the three nights of the full moon suffers Pattern Bleeding. The effect of the Pattern Bleeding is not simple wounds, but illness or madness: the Wolfman loses Willpower and Stamina, instead of HLs. Each transformation uses up 1 Quintessence or 'bleeds' a Willpower or Stamina point (ST's choice), if none is available, and the Wolfman also needs one Quint per month just to live. A kill yields 10 Quintessence, so a Wolfman can kill once a month and survive quite easily, and can even miss a kill in one month out of three or four.

Powers

Transformation: On nights of the full moon, the Wolfman turns into a bestial fusion of human and wolf. This ugly fur-covered humanoid form is larger and stronger than the human form (STR +2, STA +2), has claws and fangs (STR + 1 Aggravated damage), and heightened senses of smell and hearing (-2 PER rolls). The Wolfman can only be killed by silver, though there can be specific conditions. Any other form of normal damage is regenerated at 1HL/turn. Aggravated damage other than silver hurts the werewolf, but may not be enough to kill it permanently (ST's option). The effects of silver vary. Silver weapons do Aggravated Damage. Silver bullets do Aggravated, Unsoakable, Damage. A Silver bullet through the heart (+2 diff, minimum 3 successes), or one fired by someone who loves the wolfman, is instantly fatal.

Voluntary Change: Some Wolfmen can control their transformations; assuming the wolfman form voluntarily requires a Willpower roll (base difficulty 8, +1 during day, -1 if the wolfman is particularly angry) and uses up a point of Quintessence. A difficulty 9 Willpower roll allows the Wolfman to resist changing on the 1st night of the full moon. The difficulty is 10 on the 2nd night, and the transformation cannot be resisted on the third night, unless the Wolfman has voluntarily changed, and killed, before then.

Self-Control: Some Wolfmen can maintain some level of conscious thought while transformed. The Wolfman can spend a point of Willpower to resist attacking a specific person, to seek out a specific victim, avoid a trap he knows of as a human, or otherwise use his human intelligence or memories. If he also has Voluntary Change, the Wolfman can spend a Willpower and make a difficulty 8 Willpower roll to resume human form at a time of his choosing.

Contagious Bite: If the Wolfman attacks and injures, but does not kill, a victim, that victim will in turn become a werewolf. This effect is automatic against sleepers with no magickal protection. It can be countered by mages with knowledge of Life and Entropy (3 successes) will keep the Curse from being transmitted, but curing one already cursed is much more difficult (Life & Entropy 4, and an extended ritual).

Lycanthrope

Description

The Lycanthrope is the literal man who changes into a wolf. Though the curse can be transmitted by a bite, as with the Wolfman, Lycanthropy, as described here, is more often a family curse or other

magickal punishment. Lycanthropes turn into actual, ordinary, wolves, with no human intelligence or volition and generally have no control over when they change (this is a curse, after all). The transformation seems to draw relatively little Paradox, and never occurs when there are witnesses.

Unbelief is a problem for modern Lycanthropes. Each transformation draws a point of Quintessence from the lycanthrope's pattern, causing Pattern Bleeding if none is available. Since the typical Lycanthrope isn't a mage, he will rarely have Quintessence available. Modern versions of the Curse are sometimes given a pool of Quintessence to draw off of until they wear off. Otherwise, it's possible for the curse to be fatal due to Unbelief-induced Pattern Bleeding (sometimes this is the intent). It is also possible that Unbelief will simply overcome the curse first. Finally, in some cases, the Lycanthrope somehow gains the ability to absorb Quintessence -- perhaps by instinctively sniffing out nodes and other sources, but more often by killing and devouring innocent victims.

Statistics

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wit 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intuition 1, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 1, Etiquette 3, Melee 3, Stealth 1, Culture 3, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Resources/Followers/Status (the Cursed family is often noble).

Willpower: 3

Arete: 0

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK,-1,-1,-2,-2,-5,Incapacitated.

Image

Anyone can be a Lycanthrope. There may or may not be any physical signs of Lycanthropy while in human form. Typically, the Lycanthrope will act nervous and out of sorts when the impetus for his transformation is close at hand, and many are profoundly reclusive or despairing as a result of the Curse. When transformed the Lycanthrope looks like an ordinary wolf, though there may be some correlation with his human appearance, such as human-looking eyes, or fur the same color as the human form's hair.

Weaknesses

The Curse: The Lycanthrope has no control over when he assumes wolf form. The transformation is triggered by the terms of the Curse which could include any of the following:

- Nights of the Full Moon
- Every Night
- Any night when out of doors after dark
- Any night while in the woods or wilderness
- Annually on a certain night (the anniversary of the bestowal of the curse)
- Every night, once married
- Every night of the Lycanthrope's adult life
- Every night until a certain wrong is redressed
- When aroused
- When violently angry
- Whenever he feels an urge to do violence or commit a particular crime
- Etc.

Physical signs: The Lycanthrope may have some subtle physical deformities or other signs that mark him as a werewolf: widow's peak, brows that meet in the middle craving for meat, etc.

Aversions: The Lycanthrope is repelled by Wolvesbane or True Faith. While in wolf form, the Lycanthrope has the mind and instincts of a normal wolf. Any damage taken in wolf form is still present after returning to normal.

Powers

Transformation: While in wolf form, the Lycanthrope has STR +1, DEX +1, STA +3, runs at twice normal speed, and can bite for STR +1 Aggravated Damage. He also has the sensory and mental abilities of a normal wolf. If the Lycanthrope has been suffering from Pattern Bleeding as a result of his transformations it is possible that he will develop the ability to assimilate Quintessence. If he already had some magickal potential, this may manifest as an ability to sense and absorb Quintessence from nodes and ley lines while in wolf form. More often, the Lycanthrope must kill and devour innocent victims (10 Quintessence each). Transmit Curse: The Lycanthrope may, in some cases, be able to pass his curse on to others. He can effectively use the Rote, below, to make more Lycanthropes. This may or may not be voluntary.

Voluntary Transformation: Very rarely, a Lycanthrope has the ability to precipitate his transformation to a wolf at will (Willpower difficulty 9). He still changes into a normal wolf, and has no control over when he will change back. He still changes involuntarily under the conditions of the Curse.

Rote: The Curse of the Wolf

Spheres: Entropy 4, Life 4, Spirit 3

Description: This ancient curse is attributed to European Verbena and it causes the victim to become a Lycanthrope, as detailed above. The Curse must be cast while the victim is present and the conditions that will provoke the transformation are in force (or at least being described to the victim). For instance, if the caster wishes to Curse an evil nobleman so that he becomes a wolf whenever he is about to abuse one of his peasants, she does not have to catch him in the act, but may simply relate one such incident while casting the spell. On the other hand, a Curse to change on nights of the full moon, would have to be cast on a night of the full moon. Animal forms other than that of a wolf are possible.

System: The fourth rank of Entropy is used to perpetuate the Curse, possibly through generations if this is desired. Life, of course causes the actual transformation (Level 4 is all that's required since there is no need to preserve the victim's intelligence while he is a wolf). Spirit 3 is used to awaken the victim's 'Beast' -- the wild, animal spirit that is suppressed by normal humans -- so that he acts like a normal animal while transformed. The victim may resist with Willpower -- though one who knows the Curse is being justly given may have to make a Willpower roll to do so -- and Countermagick (if a Mage). A fairly large number of successes are usually needed, especially if the curse is to last through generations. A shorter Curse -- say one that will last until the Lycanthrope has redressed a particular wrong or otherwise mended his ways -- may require as few as 3 or 5 successes. Prime 4 is needed if the caster wants to give the Lycanthrope the power to transmit the Curse to others (though it is possible that this may happen anyway, as a result of Paradox, or the will of the victim). Prime 3 is required to provide a modern Lycanthrope with a store of Quintessence (up to 20) to power his transformations. Without such Quintessence, the Lycanthrope may well become a man-eater to survive. Though the Lycanthrope bears the burden of Unbelief, the caster is also subject to Paradox, as the Rote causes the victim to suffer his first transformation when it is cast, and is thus Vulgar.

Boxenwulf

Description

The word 'Boxenwulf' is German, but I'm using it here to indicate any

sorcerer who has acquired the power to change into a wolf. The Boxenwulf is a creature of dark magick, typically, a Diabolist makes a pact with a demon that grants him a special talisman that allows the wearer to transform himself into a huge, powerful, wolf. This bygone usually has control over his transformation and becomes a very deadly wolf. The Talisman used to change into a wolf is sometimes called a Wolf-Strap, and similar, non-Diabolistic Talismans existed in some numbers through the 18th century, when widespread belief made them static. Such devices can still be made, though only as actual Talismans.

Statistics

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (Conniving), Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4 (Occult studies), Wit 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4 (Bite), Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 4 (Stalking), Enigmas 3, Linguistics 1 (Occult Language), Occult 4 (Witchcraft)

Backgrounds: Talisman

Willpower: 4

Arete: Varies

Quintessence: 0

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK,-1,-1,-2,-2,-5,Incapitated.

As a wolf: OK, OK, -1,-1,-2,-2, Returns to human form.

Image

The Boxenwulf varies greatly in appearance, as anyone could make the right pact with a demon for such power. A witchy old woman, prosperous merchant, innocent child, devoted wife, violent transient, anyone might secretly own a Wolf-Strap. A Boxenwulf that is an otherwise accomplished Diabolist may have been marked in some way, as a result of other pacts with the Powers of Darkness, but aside from any such evidence, and the possession of a Wolf-Strap, there is no sure way to spot such a creature.

Weaknesses

The Boxenwulf can be forced back into human form by some means, chosen when the pact is first made. Possibilities include:

- Being called by name three times.
- Being called by name by a loved one.
- Treading on holy ground.
- Confronted by True Faith.
- Being struck across the muzzle with a straw broom.
- Being struck by an item of its own clothing.
- Touching cold iron.
- Touching steel.
- Having a piece of steel (like a knife) thrown over its head.
- Being forced to wear any article of human clothing.

Powers

The Boxenwulf can instantly switch between human and wolf form by putting on or removing his Wolf-Strap. While in wolf form, the sorcerer's physical stats are boosted (STR +3, STA +3, DEX +2), his appearance is reduced to zero (huge, monstrous wolf), and he may bite with his huge jaws (STR +2 Aggravated Damage). He also has the wolf's sharp senses (-2 most PER difficulties) and may track by scent. Firearms (and other modern weapons) are of no avail against the Boxenwulf. It cannot be hit with any kind of mundane bullet. However, this protection is circumvented by any sort of magick, including sleeper superstitions (like silver bullets), used to enhance a firearm. In legend, only a few Boxenwulf seemed to have this

protection. Non-Aggravated wounds taken in wolf form disappear when the Boxenwulf resumes his human shape. So the Boxenwulf cannot be slain in wolf form without some means of inflicting Aggravated damage. However, it will take Aggravated Damage from any kind of enchanted weapon, even those merely credited with special properties by sleeper superstition (again, including silver). Unlike Garou, the Boxenwulf does get to Soak damage from silver weapons. [This power is a concession to the Storyteller system, to make the Boxenwulf a more credible threat -- in legend, they were not that much harder to kill than normal wolves.] Since the Boxenwulf is typically a Diabolist, he may have other Demonic Investments or Diabolic powers to call upon. Possibly including Path magick (see WoD: Sorcerer) or even True Magick.

Talisman

Wolf-Strap

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