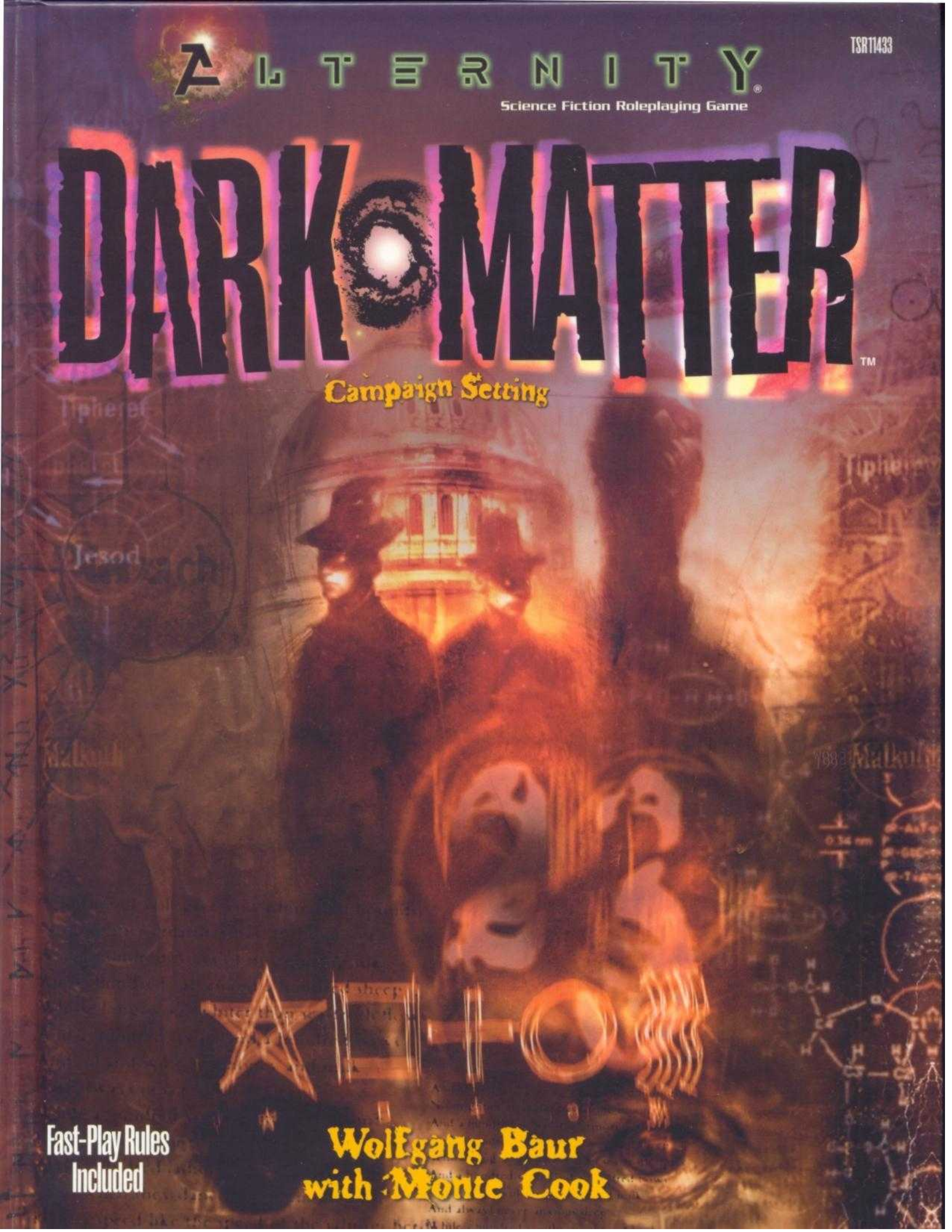
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Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

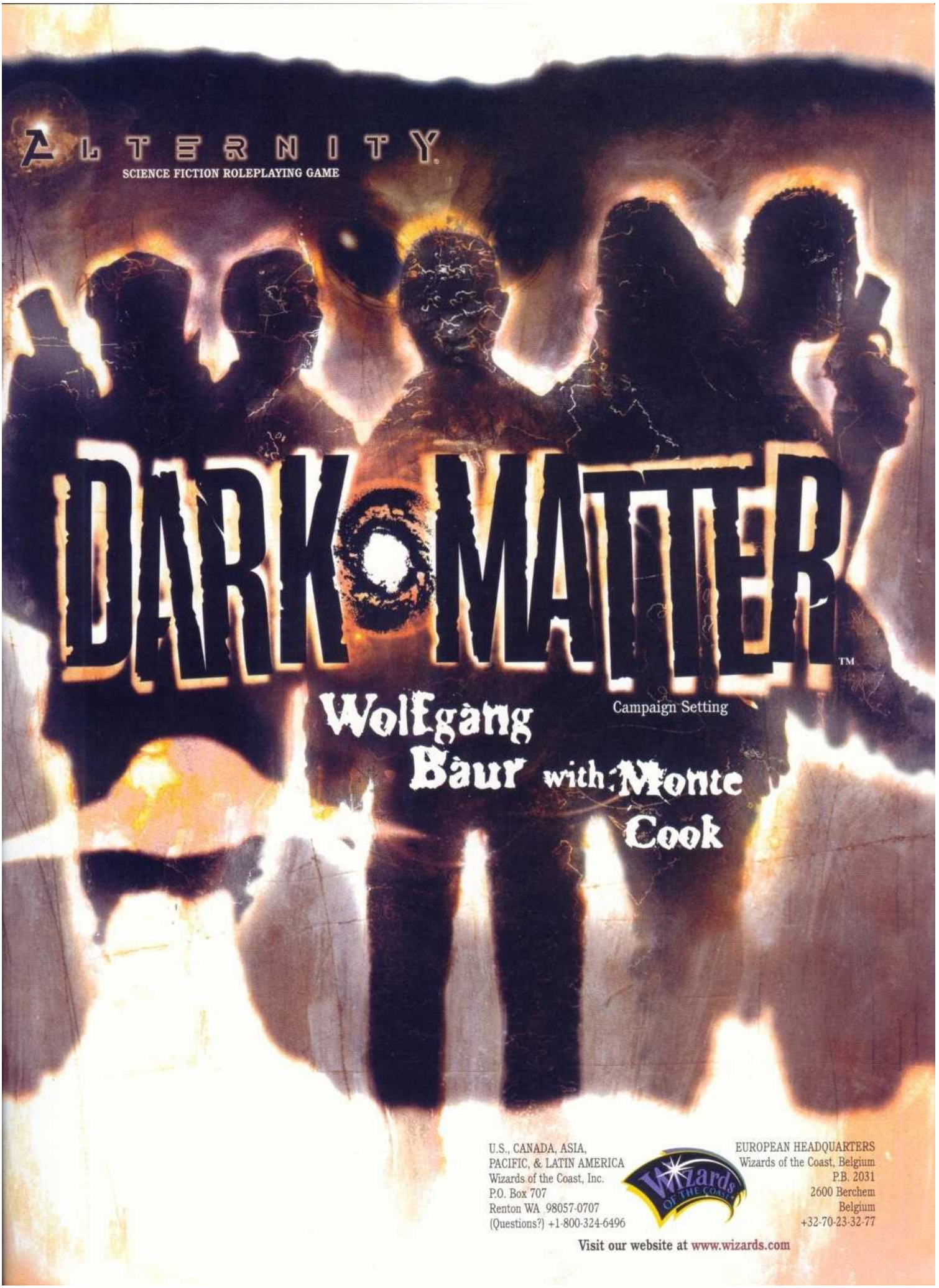
DARK MATTER™

Campaign Setting



Fast-Play Rules Included

Wolfgang Baur
with Monte Cook



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Foreword

Monte Cook, April 1, 1999

If you've come here looking for truth, you've come to the wrong place. If you've come looking for possibilities . . . welcome, friend.

The DARK•MATTER campaign setting is about possibilities. It's how our own world might be—if we knew everything. Of course, since we don't know everything, DARK•MATTER becomes only a shot in the dark, based on observations and research. The weird thing is, once you start looking into, say, the Loch Ness Monster, you read a fair amount about Bigfoot too. Bigfoot sightings often occur in conjunction with UFO sightings. While looking into UFOs, you come upon government cover-up conspiracies. These lead the researcher to all sorts of scary things, like the JFK assassination. So now, after starting to read up on the Loch Ness Monster, you're researching the Kennedy murders. Does that mean that Nessie was in on it? Of course not. But the point is that there does seem to be some sort of common undercurrent among all these topics: possibilities of truth, out of the reach of most people. The unknown.

The unknown doesn't come in simple, easily digestible bits. It's not really like a puzzle, because all the pieces don't fit together. Moving lights in the sky often exhibit properties that we would think an alien spacecraft might also have, but not always. Sometimes it just doesn't make any sense, and no explanation can cover it. Why do fish and frogs sometimes fall from the sky? No one's even come up with a plausible guess. That's *high strangeness*—and that's what will keep a paranormal investigator on his toes. Examining the unknown and unexplainable never becomes routine. The more you learn, the less you understand.

That's what makes it so much fun.

"For every complex problem there is a solution which is simple, neat, and wrong." —H.L. Mencken

Wolfgang Baur, April 1, 1999

DARK•MATTER is a game about terra incognita, and about the part of the world ordinary people never see. It's a setting that assumes the world is anything but dull and predictable; in fact, we live in an occult world, full of secrets and invisible forces we can't readily understand. And that's a delightful way to see the world. Deep mysteries and the unraveling of the truth are at the heart of DARK•MATTER.

Indeed, our real world remains largely inexplicable, despite our best efforts to study and categorize it. Humans need secrets, need some sense of awe about things that lie beyond our everyday experience. And yet despite our need for secrets, some of our greatest heroes are the ones who pursue things that, almost by definition, lie beyond human understanding. The occultist, the explorer, and the adventurer seek just that grail: something better, something hidden, something beyond the limitations of an ordinary life.

DARK•MATTER lies at the intersection of many different genres: fantasy, the genre of our dreams; science fiction, the genre of our future; and horror, the genre of our fears. The DARK•MATTER campaign setting combines all three in a mixture of dream, possibility, and fears: a potent brew of the paranormal and the paranoid.

Writing DARK•MATTER has been a lesson in appreciating the mysterious. It's also been proof that you can find good help in the depths of the paranormal; the final campaign setting is the result of the dedicated efforts of a great many people. The design help of Monte Cook, Steven Schend, and dozens of playtesters, the crucial contribution of the editors in rearranging and in many cases redefining the book's structure, Sean Reynolds's bold rewrite of the FX rules, and the fantastic work of the many artists and graphic designers involved in the project have brought it to life. I've enjoyed the opportunity that DARK•MATTER provided to search for the invisible. By their work, everyone involved with DARK•MATTER has shown they aspired to make it something beyond the ordinary and beyond the everyday. It's been our pleasure to shape this world together; now we hope you will help us shape it even further, and make the setting yours.

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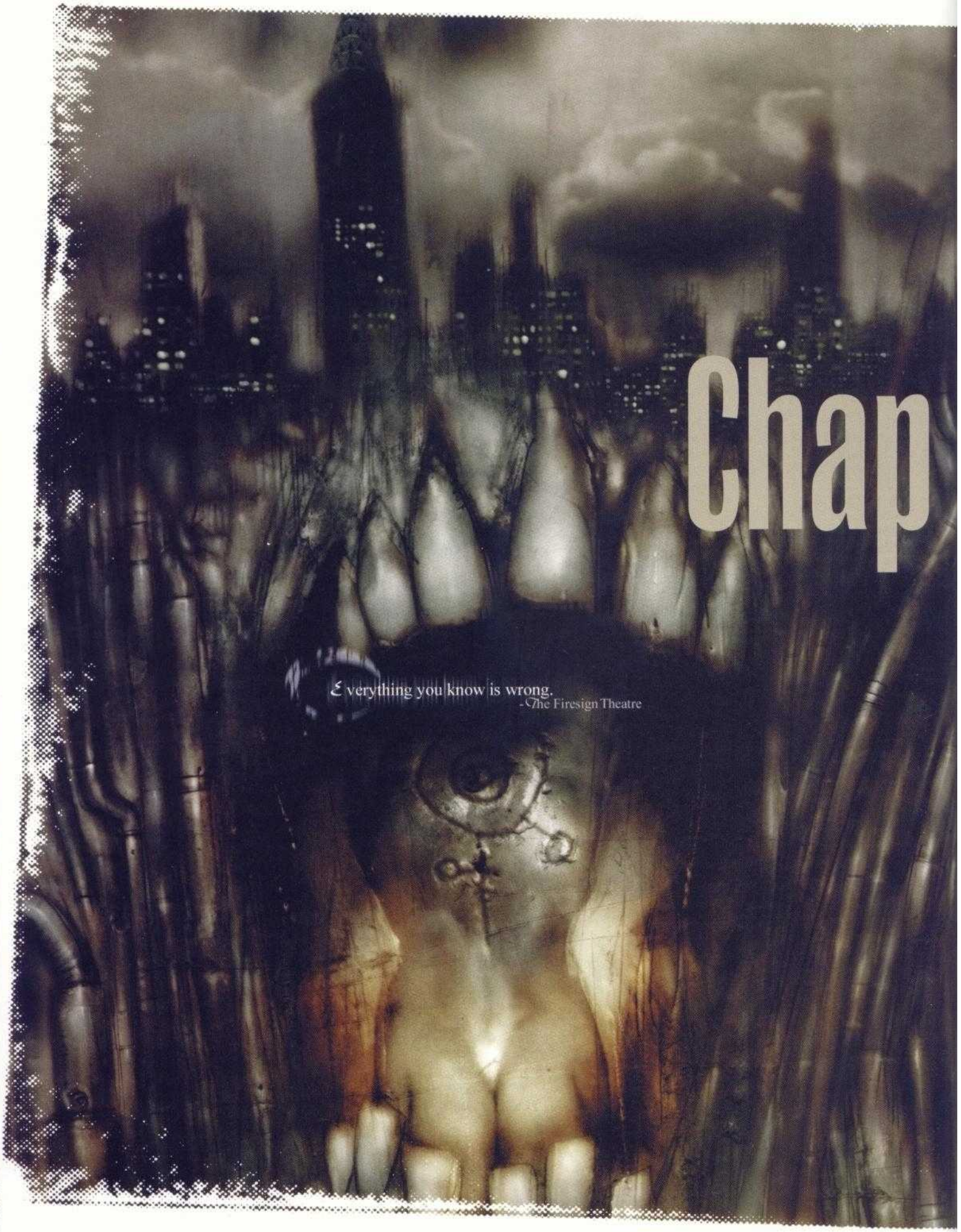
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Chap
Everything you know is wrong.
-The Firesign Theatre

ter 1 an introduction to dark•matter

WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE SUSPICION HAS DISPLACED TRUST, A world where belief in the strange is replacing belief in the normal. When pressed, most laugh off such claims, or at least ignore the greater implications of such beliefs. But every now and then, something unexplainable occurs—something that shouldn't have happened the way it did, or that surely can't mean what it seems to suggest. It is at precisely those moments when the facade of comfort drops, and we can't help but wonder:

What if it's all true?

What if the crackpots are right? What if the strangeness really is out there? And what if it's getting worse?

Welcome to a world of the peculiar and unexplainable, a world where the "can't be true" has been replaced by the "anything is possible," a world where mysterious players weave a drama of secrets and disinformation. A Dark Tide is rising, and danger and intrigue lurk in every shadow. The only weapon capable of holding back the darkness is knowledge: knowledge of what's out there, what it's trying to accomplish, and how to stop it.

Welcome to the world of DARK•MATTER™.

A World Like Our Own

The DARK•MATTER campaign setting takes place at the dawn of the twenty-first century. On the surface, Earth appears much the same as it does today. Nations, corporations, and famous individuals are all the same—at least at first glance. The world is as familiar as the one outside your own window, but with subtle twists just beneath the surface.

Of course, that's the whole point. The DARK•MATTER setting isn't about grandiose visions of the future. It's about what you already know—or what you think you know. Strange things lurk at the fringe of societal awareness, and the DARK•MATTER setting falls firmly within that fringe.

Heroes of DARK•MATTER

Unlike many other science fiction roleplaying games, DARK•MATTER heroes are, to a large extent, just like the people around you. They're teachers and cops, scientists and businessmen, reporters and soldiers. They are otherwise normal individuals who have been awakened to the realities of their world and thrust into decidedly abnormal circumstances.

DARK•MATTER heroes do have one thing in common: the Hoffmann Institute. For reasons perhaps known only to itself, this private organization (detailed in *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*) has sought out the heroes and gathered them together to learn about the growing darkness and, if possible, to stem the tide.

For more information on how to create heroes for the DARK•MATTER campaign setting, consult *Chapter 3: Heroes of DARK•MATTER*. In addition, the Gamemaster may allow players (especially those playing heroes wielding occult powers) to read *Chapter 4: Arcana*.

Keeping Secrets

As with any roleplaying game, someone must take the role of "keeper of secrets"; that is, the Gamemaster. DARK•MATTER Gamemasters can learn what they need to know about the significant events, people, and places of the campaign setting by reading *Chapter 5: History of the World*; *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*; and *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*. *Chapter 8: Xenoforms* details some of the strange creatures that walk the Earth—creatures of myth and legend, creatures of dream and nightmare.

Chapter 9: Running a DARK•MATTER Campaign helps the Gamemaster get a handle on all the information in the book in order to run a first-rate game of mystery and strangeness, while *Chapter 10: Campaign Options* presents some interesting optional rules for experienced Gamemasters to consider. Finally, *Chapter 11: Raw Recruits* provides an appropriate starting adventure for the Gamemaster's DARK•MATTER campaign.

Players should resist the temptation to read these chapters. After all, once you know the secrets, exploring the mysteries isn't much fun. Anyway, a canny Gamemaster will just twist the truth, rendering your so-called "secret knowledge" into useless—even dangerous—falsehoods and lies.

If you've never played the ALTERNITY roleplaying game before, continue reading this chapter. If you're familiar with the game, skip to *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*.

What Is This Book?

The DARK•MATTER campaign setting is a specific world designed for use with the ALTERNITY science fiction roleplaying game. The book you're reading right now is divided into two parts. The first section (Chapter 1) consists of a set of fast-play rules to introduce you to the basics of the ALTERNITY science fiction roleplaying game and the DARK•MATTER setting. If you've never played a roleplaying game before, or if you don't know the ALTERNITY game system, you'll want to try out the fast-play rules first before you try to figure out the rest of the book.

The chapters following Chapter 1 describe the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. Much of the material in the rest of the book assumes that you're familiar with the ALTERNITY game. You can read through the rest of the book anytime you want, but some of the game rules might not make a lot of sense to you if you haven't played the fast-play game first.

What Is ALTERNITY?

The ALTERNITY science fiction roleplaying game is the game system or set of rules that the DARK•MATTER setting was designed to use. In computer terms, the ALTERNITY rules are the hardware, and the DARK•MATTER setting is the software. While the ALTERNITY game system embraces a variety of science fiction genres, ranging from super-spy technothrillers to far-future space opera, the DARK•MATTER game places you in a more specific role—you're a modern-day ghosthunter, criminologist, conspiracy theorist, or UFOlogist investigating the weird and disturbing world of paranormal events.

By learning how to play in the DARK•MATTER setting, you will learn how to play the ALTERNITY game. In fact, when you finish the fast-play adventure in Chapter 1 of this book, you'll probably want to check out the ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook* and *Gamemaster Guide* before you try to play your own DARK•MATTER game. The fast-play rules can get you started, but you won't enjoy all of this book until you have the ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook*.

What Is a Roleplaying Game?

So, how is this a game? Basically, it's a game of imagination. For an hour or two, you will pretend you're someone else—in this case, an investigator of the paranormal.

When you were young, you probably played games like "Cops and Robbers" or "Cowboys and Indians." You created props and stories out of nothing more than your imagination. It was lots of fun, but it was totally free-form. Sometimes you'd disagree about what happened next, and the game would be over. After all, there aren't any rules to say who's right and who's wrong.

You've probably played console games or computer games, too. You decide where the character in the game goes, which enemies he or she fights and what weapons he or she uses against them. You might even solve puzzles or have a couple of menu-driven conversations with story characters. The computer definitely has rules in a game like this. But the computer doesn't have any way to respond when you want to do something the game designers didn't plan on, like trying to bribe or bluff a tough enemy when you're out of ammo.

A roleplaying game like ALTERNITY combines the best features of a game of Make-Believe and a good computer game. You've got enough rules so that you can figure out what happens in most situations, but you can improvise to your heart's content. If you can think of it, you can try it. Better yet, you're not just playing to win. You're playing to have a good time and to tell a story.

The Gamemaster

One player in the game acts as a referee, or Gamemaster. Everyone else takes on the role of a character (a hero) in the story the Gamemaster tells. The Gamemaster narrates the story, creates the challenges the other players must face, and plays the role of every other character or creature the player-controlled heroes interact with during the adventure.

It's a big job, but it's a lot of fun, and every roleplaying game needs a Gamemaster. If you think you'd like to be the Gamemaster, finish reading the fast-play rules for players—which includes everything up until the hero templates on page 13—and then read through the section titled "So You Want to Be the Gamemaster" starting on page 20.

Getting Started

Here's what you need to do to start playing:

- Read through the next few pages of the fast-play rules, but stop when you get to the Gamemaster section on page 20.
- Find a few friends to play with. You'll need one person to be the Gamemaster, and anywhere from two to six players to make up heroes and play them in the game.
- Find a set of polyhedral dice—four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, twelve-sided, and twenty-sided dice. Most hobby stores sell sets of polyhedral dice pretty cheap.
- Find a good place to play. You'll want someplace you can stay for a couple of hours.
- Pick a hero from the hero templates in this fast-play chapter. You can photocopy the hero sheet if you like.
- If you're the Gamemaster, take some time before the game to read the Gamemaster's fast-play rules, beginning with "So You Want to Be the Gamemaster."

The Player's Role

As a player, your primary job in any ALTERNITY game is to portray one of the heroes in the story your group decides to play out. The heroes are the stars of the unfolding adventures that make up a Gamemaster's ongoing DARK•MATTER campaign.

To do this, you need a hero—an imaginary character who serves as your "connection" with the Gamemaster's setting and the other players' heroes.

Your hero starts out as a collection of numbers and descriptive terms; from then on it's up to you to make that hero come alive through roleplaying. By reacting as you think your hero would react and interacting with the other characters using your hero's voice and opinions, you're doing your job as a player. You need to be clever, resourceful, and more than a little bit paranoid if your hero is going to discover the truth about what's going on.

Key Concepts

Let's take a look at the key concepts behind the ALTERNITY game. These concepts include basic game mechanics, fundamental character information, and a few special terms that players need to become familiar with.

Hero: An imaginary character controlled by a player.

Gamemaster: The participant in the game who acts as the moderator, narrating adventures and representing other characters in the adventure who aren't controlled by the players.

Supporting Cast: These are the aforementioned "other characters," including the heroes' friends and enemies, as well as any other characters the heroes come into contact with. Although the heroes are the stars of the show, it's possible for members of the supporting cast to be just as powerful as the heroes—or some-

times even more powerful. Villains, supernatural monsters, and dangerous alien creatures are supporting characters who may defeat the heroes outright in a game confrontation.

Adventure: A scenario in which the heroes interact with the supporting cast to create a group story. Every adventure is built around a situation (typically a mystery the heroes need to solve), and it concludes when the heroes have either achieved their goal or failed to do so. When you sit down to play the scenario described in the Gamemaster section of these rules, you're playing an adventure. It might take an hour of the players' time, or it may take several play sessions.

Campaign: Just because the heroes solve one mystery or defeat one villain, their story isn't over. In a roleplaying game, the heroes may undertake a number of adventures. A campaign is a series of adventures in which the same group of heroes take on new challenges. As long as the Gamemaster keeps running new adventures for the same heroes in the same imaginary world, he or she is running a campaign.

Setting: The backdrop against which an adventure or campaign takes place. The fast-play adventure presented in the Gamemaster's fast-play rules section takes place in a rest stop in the mountains of Idaho during a winter storm.

Profession: Every hero in the ALTERNITY game is built around a profession. A profession is an overarching occupation that describes in general terms what the hero is good at. It's the first defining concept associated with a hero. The four basic professions—Combat Spec, Diplomat, Free Agent, and Tech Op—are introduced in these fast-play rules.

Abilities: All characters (heroes and members of the supporting cast) have six Abilities. These are Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Will, and Personality.

Ability Scores: Each Ability is expressed as a number, called the Ability Score. A high score (11 or better) means that a character excels in that area; a low score (6 or less) indicates that a character is definitely below par.

Skills: Ability Scores represent a hero's natural aptitudes, but skills tell you what your hero has been trained to do. Think of your hero's skill list as a summary of his or her education and professional training. Skills are based on your hero's Ability Scores, just as training adds to a person's natural talents. A hero's proficiency with a skill is expressed as a number, which is known as the skill score.

Actions: When a hero wants to use a skill or an Ability to accomplish something, he or she attempts an action. There are different types of actions, each involving the use of different skills and characteristics.

Dice: When the outcome of an action is in doubt, or when the Gamemaster needs to measure a character's degree of success, dice are rolled. The ALTERNITY game uses two kinds of dice: a single control die and situation dice of various sizes. The control die and a situation die are rolled together to determine the outcome of an action.

Note: The lower the roll, the better the chance that the hero succeeds in what he or she tries to do. The following section contains more information on how to use the dice.

Playing the Game

The basic rule at the foundation of the ALTERNITY game is a simple one. Your hero has some important game statistics, including Ability Scores, skill scores, and an action check score. In many cases, when your hero attempts to accomplish something, the Gamemaster asks you to roll dice. You then try to roll a number that's *equal to or less than* the appropriate score. If you roll higher than your hero's score, your hero fails. Whenever a hero tries to do something that might fail, this dice roll determines if he or she succeeds.

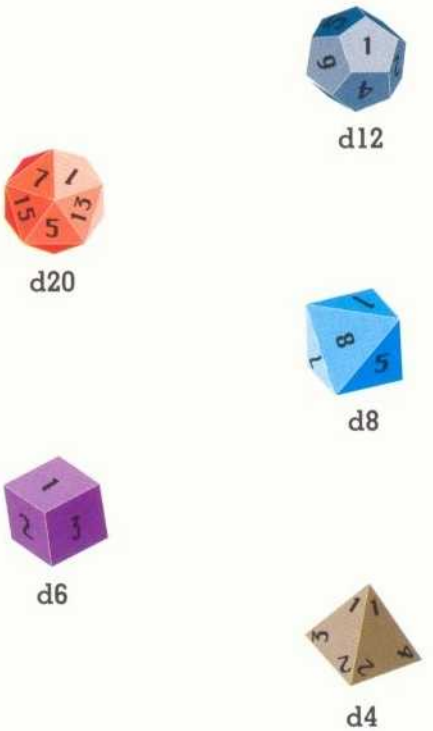
As you read through this section, refer to the hero templates in this chapter. You'll see how a hero's characteristics work in the context of the game system.

Rolling Dice

The ALTERNITY game system uses a set of polyhedral (many-sided) dice. The set includes four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, twelve-sided, and twenty-sided dice. These are almost always abbreviated as d4, d6, d8, d12, and d20. If you don't own a set of dice like this, you can pick up a set at your local hobby store or game store. The illustration on this page shows what these dice look like.

Sometimes, you may need to roll several dice and add the results together; in this case, you'll see an abbreviation such as 2d4 (roll the four-sided die twice, adding the results) or 2d6 (roll the six-sided die twice, adding the results). If you have enough dice, feel free to roll both six-siders or four-siders together.

Finally, you'll also run across die modifiers, such as d4+2 or d6–1. All you have to do here is roll the appropriate die and then modify the result by adding or subtracting the given number. For example, you're rolling d4+2 wound points because your hero shot a werewolf with a silver bullet. If you roll a 3 on the d4, the result is 5 wound points.



Skill Checks, Action Checks, and Feat Checks

In a roleplaying game, dice determine the outcome of a character action with uncertain results. In the ALTERNITY game, there are three types of common die rolls: skill checks, action checks, and ability feat checks.

Skill Checks: When your hero attempts to use a skill in play, you must roll a skill check. You'll roll a d20, and you may add or subtract a penalty or bonus die assigned by the Gamemaster. If the total on the dice is equal to or less than the appropriate skill score, your hero succeeds at the skill check.

Action Checks: During combat scenes or fast-paced challenges, it's important to know which character goes first. This is resolved by an action check. When the Gamemaster tells you to make an action check for your hero, you should roll a d20 and compare it to your hero's action check score. The lower you roll, the faster your hero acts

Feat Checks: Sometimes you may want your hero to try something that doesn't have any real skill or training associated with it. For example, you might want your hero to pry open a crumpled car door to help an accident victim, or wriggle through a small space to escape from a pack of slavering ghouls. The Gamemaster may ask you to make a feat check using one of your hero's six Ability Scores to determine success or failure.

The Most Important Rule: Not every action requires a dice roll! Gamemasters call for rolls only in dramatic situations to determine the success of an action whose outcome is in doubt, or when they need to judge the degree of an action's success.

If your hero wants to walk across a street or carry a small pack, no dice rolls are necessary. But if she wants to cross the street carrying a wounded companion, while being shot at by snipers, then the situation is dramatic, and dice should be rolled.

A pilot hero trained to fly a spacecraft and read star charts doesn't need to roll dice to perform the normal duties associated with his or her area of expertise. But when these actions go beyond the call of duty and lives hang in the balance, the Gamemaster may call for skill checks or feat checks.

The Control Die and Situation Dice

The ALTERNITY game uses two kinds of dice: a control die and a situation die. Whenever the Gamemaster calls for a roll, you roll one control die and one situation die. The sum of the die results indicates a success or a failure.

When you roll the dice, in game terms you're making a check for your hero—in effect, "checking" to see how the dice roll compares to one of your hero's scores. In any case, you're looking to get as low a result as possible—the lower the roll, the better the chance that your hero succeeds at what she is trying to do.

- The control die is always a 20-sided die (d20).
- The situation die for any particular check is one of the following: a four-sided die (d4), a six-sided die (d6), an eight-sided die (d8), a 12-sided die (d12), or a 20-sided die (d20). There is also a d0, a placeholder to represent the situation die in a case when success is determined only by the roll of the control die.

Further, the situation die on any check is either a plus die or a minus die. A plus die, such as +d4, is bad for the roller, because it tends to produce a higher result. A minus die, such as –d6, is good for the roller, because it helps to achieve a lower result.

Add or subtract the situation die from the control die as instructed by the Gamemaster. If the result is equal to or less than the score related to the hero's action, the action succeeds. If the result is greater than the score, the action fails. The degrees of success are explained on the next page.

Example: Your hero wants to make a quick repair to his motorcycle so he can stay on the trail of the fleeing criminals. Fortunately, he's carrying a small tool set in his backpack. This action is a skill check using your hero's Technical Science–*juryrig* skill score. The Gamemaster tells you to roll the control die and a –d4 (the hero has the right tools for the job, so the Gamemaster decides that the situation is moderately favorable). Your hero's *juryrig* skill score is 13.

You roll the dice, and these numbers come up: 14 on the control die, 3 on the situation die. The result is 11 (14 – 3), which is lower than your hero's *juryrig* score. The action succeeds!

Situation Die Steps

The Situation Die Steps Scale can help you quickly determine what situation die to roll with the control die. It's printed on this page and on the templates that appear later in this chapter.

Your Gamemaster tells you what bonus or penalty applies when you roll to see if your hero can perform a certain action.

A +1 step situation penalty means you start with your hero's base situation die (see the sidebar on this page) and move one step in the "Penalty" direction to find the die you'll be rolling. For instance, if your hero's base situation die for an action is +d4, then a +1 step situation penalty changes the die to +d6.

A –2 step situation bonus means you find your hero's base sit-

Base Situation Die

Before you can slide up or down on the Situation Die Steps Scale, you need to know where to start. That starting point is called the base situation die.

- For an action check, the base situation die is +d0, or no modifier to the control die.
- For an ability check, the base situation die is +d4. Roll the d20 and add a d4, adding the results together.
- For a skill check against a specialty skill, the base situation die is +d0.
- For a skill check against a broad skill, the base situation die is +d4.

If the Gamemaster tells you to apply a bonus or a penalty to your hero's roll, start at the base situation die and move the proper number of steps in the appropriate direction to determine which situation die to roll.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS												PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

uation die on the scale and move two steps in the "Bonus" direction. For example, if your hero's base situation die for an action is +d4, then a –2 step situation bonus changes the die to –d4.

Degrees of Success

Every dice roll has one of five possible results: Critical Failure, Failure, Ordinary success, Good success, or Amazing success. The lower your dice roll, the greater the degree of success your hero achieves. The three numbers associated with every skill score and action check score (the base score and two smaller numbers) represent the dividing points between the degrees of success.

Regardless of what number comes up on the situation die, a roll of 20 on the control die always produces a Critical Failure. Generally, this means that bad luck has befallen the hero, and no matter how high his or her skill score or Ability Score is, this action doesn't succeed.

A result greater than the score is a Failure; equal to or less than the score is an Ordinary success; equal to or less than the second number is a Good success; and equal to or less than the smallest number is an Amazing success. For example, if your hero has a skill score of 12/6/3, a roll of 1 to 3 is an Amazing success; a roll of 4 to 6 is a Good success; a roll of 7 to 12 is an Ordinary success; and a roll of 13 or higher is a Failure.

On the hero templates, the "Action Check Score" line begins with a number that represents a Marginal result. A hero can't get a Failure or a Critical Failure outcome when making an action check; if the dice roll yields a number greater than the action check score, the "Failure" is a Marginal result instead.

Scenes

Every adventure your Gamemaster sets up is built out of scenes. A scene is a distinct episode that has a beginning and ending. The three types of scenes are combat, encounter, and challenge. A combat scene lasts from the start of a battle to its conclusion. An encounter scene lasts from the moment characters meet to when they part company. A challenge scene lasts as long as it takes the heroes to identify the challenge, and then overcome it or be defeated by it.

Action Rounds

For the purpose of determining who acts when in a scene, every scene is divided into action rounds. During an action round, every hero performs one action.

A round is divided into four phases. Each phase relates to one of the degrees of success that are achievable on an action check: Amazing, Good, Ordinary, and Marginal, in order from the first phase to the last. Heroes can attempt only one action in a round.

To determine who acts first in a round, every participant makes an action check by rolling a d20 and comparing the result to the hero's action check score. The result determines the earliest phase in which a hero can act. So, if a hero rolls a Good action check, the earliest phase he or she can act in is the second, or Good, phase.

All actions in a phase occur simultaneously, with the results of those actions being applied at the end of the phase.

Example: Your hero has an action check score of 11. At the beginning of a round, the Gamemaster calls for action checks. If you roll a 5 (a Good success for a score of 11), the earliest phase in which your hero can act is the Good phase. He can't do anything in the Amazing phase since his action check wasn't low enough, but he can take one action in the Good phase. If you roll a 13 (a Marginal result), your hero can't act until the Marginal phase (the last phase of the round).

Damage

Heroes lead dangerous lives. Eventually, your hero will suffer damage. As indicated on the hero templates, damage comes in three forms: stun, wound, and mortal.

Stun Damage

Stun damage is the lightest type of damage your hero can sustain. It represents shocks and bruises that rattle a hero but don't result in lasting injuries. When your hero suffers stun damage, mark off one stun box for each point of stun damage she sustains.

Knockout: When all of her stun boxes are marked, your hero is knocked out and can perform no actions until she recovers.

Wound Damage

Wound damage is more serious than stun damage. It represents injuries that cause lasting harm to the body. When your hero receives wound damage, mark off one wound box for each point of wound damage he sustains.

Secondary Damage: Wound damage causes secondary stun damage. For every 2 points of wound damage inflicted on your hero, he also receives 1 point of stun damage.

Knockout: When all of his wound boxes are marked, your hero is knocked out and can perform no actions until he recovers.

Mortal Damage

Mortal damage is the most severe form of damage. It represents massive injuries to vital body parts. When your hero receives mortal damage, mark off one mortal box for each point of mortal damage she sustains.

Secondary Damage: Mortal damage causes secondary stun damage and wound damage. For every 2 points of mortal damage inflicted on your hero, she also receives 1 point of wound and 1 point of stun damage.

Dazed: Mortal damage takes a toll on a hero immediately. For every mortal box marked, your hero receives a +1 step situation penalty to any actions she attempts.

Death: When all of your hero's mortal boxes are marked off, she dies. Don't worry; you can always make up another hero and rejoin the adventure when the Gamemaster deems it appropriate.

Recovery

How heroes recover from damage depends on their condition (conscious or not) and the type of damage they have suffered.

Stun Damage: Stun damage is fleeting and disappears at the end of a scene. It can be repaired during a scene by the use of Knowledge–*first aid*, Medical Science, or some other form of medical treatment.

Wound Damage: Wound damage remains until it is healed by rest and/or medical attention.

Mortal Damage: Mortal damage requires the use of the Medical Science–*surgery* skill and medical attention to repair.

Knockout: In the fast-play rules system, assume that if a hero is knocked out from stun damage, he remains unconscious for the rest of the round in which he was knocked out and all of the following round. At the start of the round after that, he recovers 1 stun point and awakens. If a hero is knocked out from wound damage, he can't awaken until at least 1 point of his wound damage is healed through medical attention.

The Hero Templates

Take a look at the hero templates in this chapter. The compilation of numbers and game terms on these one-page descriptions makes up a hero template. All the information that you need to know about the hero to play the ALTERNITY game is listed here.

The ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook* contains extensive rules for creating your own hero from scratch. In fact, *Chapter 3: Heroes of DARK•MATTER* in this book is all about using the rules in the *Player's Handbook* to build a DARK•MATTER hero. We've taken the liberty of creating six characters for you. All you have to do is pick one that you'd like to play in the game.

Flip back and forth between the hero templates and this section as we explain what these terms and numbers mean.

1 Name and Gender

We've come up with names, genders, and personality notes for each hero in the template section. You don't have to use any of this material if you don't want to. Feel free to think up a new name for the hero you want to play, change the gender indicated on the sheet, or play the hero with a different personality than the one suggested on the template.

2 Profession

Four distinct hero professions are available in these fast-play rules.

- **Combat Specs** (short for specialists) are gunmen, brawlers, martial artists, and soldiers who rely on physical power and endurance to supplement their training in the tactics and techniques of battle.
- **Diplomats** are negotiators, managers, deal-makers, merchants, clergy, and any others who use interaction skills and personal resolve to accomplish their jobs.
- **Free Agents** are troubleshooters and field operatives who rely on agility, interaction skills, and natural independence to get a job done. They're agents who may be for hire, or they may have ties to a specific government or organization.
- **Tech Ops** (technical operatives) are skilled in the use of particular equipment or have been specially trained to create or maintain high-tech equipment. They rely on natural genius, agility, and expert training to accomplish their goals.

Pick a profession that fits the kind of hero you want to play, then select one of the corresponding fast-play hero templates in this chapter.

3 Career

The career entry on the hero template is a description of what kind of professional the hero is. During hero creation, the career guides your selection of skills appropriate to your hero. In these fast-play rules, the entry is nothing more than a tagline to identify what your hero does for a living.

4 Abilities

The six Ability Scores rate your hero's natural aptitude or capability for meeting physical and mental challenges. These scores range from 4 to 14; 10 represents the average for a hero.

- **Strength** (STR) defines a hero's physical power and prowess. Donna Truitt, one of the hero templates, has a Strength score of 9, which is slightly below average for a hero.
- **Dexterity** (DEX) measures the quality of a hero's agility, coordination, and reflexes. Donna's Dexterity is 12, so she's significantly more agile than the average hero.
- **Constitution** (CON) describes a hero's overall physical fitness and toughness. Donna's Constitution is only 8, which is lower than that of an average hero, so she's not very tough.
- **Intelligence** (INT) indicates a hero's mental quickness and learning ability. Donna's Intelligence of 12 means that she's pretty sharp.
- **Will** (WIL) gauges a hero's mental fortitude and intuitive capacity. With a Will of 9, Donna's slightly less strong-willed than an average hero.
- **Personality** (PER) indicates a hero's social abilities and charisma. Donna's exactly average here, with a Personality of 10.

Untrained: The "Untrained" score is equal to one-half of the full Ability Score, rounded down. This is your hero's skill score when she attempts an action that requires a skill she doesn't possess. For example, Dr. Akens doesn't have the Unarmed Attack skill, which is based on Strength. If Dr. Akens tries to throw a punch, his skill score is half his Strength—4, in this case.

Resistance Modifiers: Resistance modifiers affect the type of dice your hero's opponents roll when confronting your hero. Positive modifiers (such as a +1 step penalty) are good for your hero, because they provide a penalty to the opponent; a negative modifier (such as a –1 step bonus) is bad, because it makes it easier for your hero's opponent to succeed. These modifiers apply when the opponent is using a skill that your hero could resist because of her natural aptitude in one particular ability score. Refer back to "Situation Die Steps" in the previous section.

Example: A hero with a Dexterity score of 11 has a +1 step resistance modifier for that Ability. If an opponent fires a pistol at her, that +1 step is applied as a penalty to the opponent's chance of successfully hitting his target.

5 Action Check

The *action check* is a game tool for determining when your hero gets to go in the course of an action round. See the section called "Skill Checks, Action Checks, and Feat Checks," above.

6 Durability

The "Durability" section of each hero template provides a means for keeping track of any damage your hero might sustain over the

course of an adventure. Your hero's stun and wound ratings equal his Constitution score. Your hero's mortal rating equals one-half this score, rounded up.

As your hero suffers damage during an adventure, mark off open boxes to keep track of how much damage he has sustained and how much more he can afford to take.

7 Skills

Each hero template has a selection of skills printed on it. There are two kinds of skills: broad skills and specialty skills. Specialty skills are printed in *italic* type to differentiate them from broad skills. Think of a broad skill as general training in a particular field (medical school). A specialty skill, on the other hand, represents a particular task or focus (surgery or internal medicine).

A character must possess a broad skill to learn a specialty skill associated with it.

Rank: Rank is the amount of advanced training the hero has in a particular specialty skill. If a hero possesses a specialty skill, she automatically has a rank of at least 1 in that skill, but some heroes may have 2 or even 3 ranks in skills they're very good at. Broad skills don't have ranks, since they represent more general education and training.

Skill Score: The skill score is the total of a character's natural aptitude—her Ability score—and any special training she possesses in a particular skill—her skill rank. Broad skills have scores equal to their associated Abilities, since they don't add ranks. The higher the skill score, the more likely it is the hero will succeed when she attempts to use that skill.

All skill scores are presented with the full score, half that score, and one-quarter that score. This represents the numbers needed to achieve an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success when the Gamemaster asks you to make a skill check for your hero.

If a hero wants to try something but doesn't have the proper skill, she must use her untrained score for the associated Ability.

8 Combat Information and Equipment

Each hero template includes a selection of equipment the hero has access to—weapons, tools, body armor, and other gear.

The numbers identifying a weapon indicate how much damage the weapon inflicts on an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success. This damage is either stun (s), wound (w), or mortal (m) damage.

Skill Descriptions

This fast-play chapter doesn't have enough space to contain details of what a particular skill enables a hero to do. Those details are provided in the ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook*. However, for the purpose of learning how the game system works (and for putting heroes through the fast-play adventure), complete skill descriptions aren't necessary. You and your Gamemaster should have little trouble determining when a certain skill comes into play.

In most cases, the name of a skill is a pretty strong clue to how the skill can be used. For example, a hero with the Manipulation broad skill is talented at performing actions that require a high degree of eye-hand coordination, such as picking a lock.

On the next line, "Range" gives the distance at which a weapon can strike a target, either "Personal" if physical contact is necessary, or a series of numbers representing short/medium/long range (in meters) for a gun.

"Type" refers to the kind of damage a weapon inflicts, either low impact (LI), high impact (HI), or energy (En). Fists, knives, clubs, and other muscle-powered weapons are low impact; firearms are high impact; and energy weapons discharge electricity or some other form of energy.

For armor, the die ranges preceding "LI," "HI," and "En" indicate the amount of damage the armor stops when the wearer is hit by a weapon that does this type of damage. If a subtraction from a die roll produces a result less than 1, the armor failed to block any damage on that attack.

Ready to Go?

Now that you understand the basic structure of the ALTERNITY game, you're ready to send your hero into action.

You'll probably play through the adventure presented in the Gamemaster's fast-play rules (the rest of Chapter 1), but if your Gamemaster has experience in designing original adventures, she may have something else planned for you and your companions.

Is there something that doesn't seem as clear as it should? Sometimes you can solve a problem by simply rereading the section of text that's giving you trouble. Often, an even easier way to clear things up is to jump right in—sit down with your friends, get an adventure under way, and start rolling dice.

What Do I Do First?

If you're new to roleplaying games, you might be wondering how things get started. Basically, it's pretty simple: After you've created a hero and gotten together with the rest of your group for your first adventure, your Gamemaster presents a situation—maybe something like this:

You're viewing an exhibit in a museum when a man you've never seen before staggers through the entryway. He stumbles around the room until he reaches you. "Help me, please. You can't let them get this," he whispers, pressing some kind of amulet or pendant into your hand—then he collapses to the floor, a knife sticking out of his back.

In the hallway outside, you can hear running footsteps, and the click of someone pulling back the action of a gun . . .

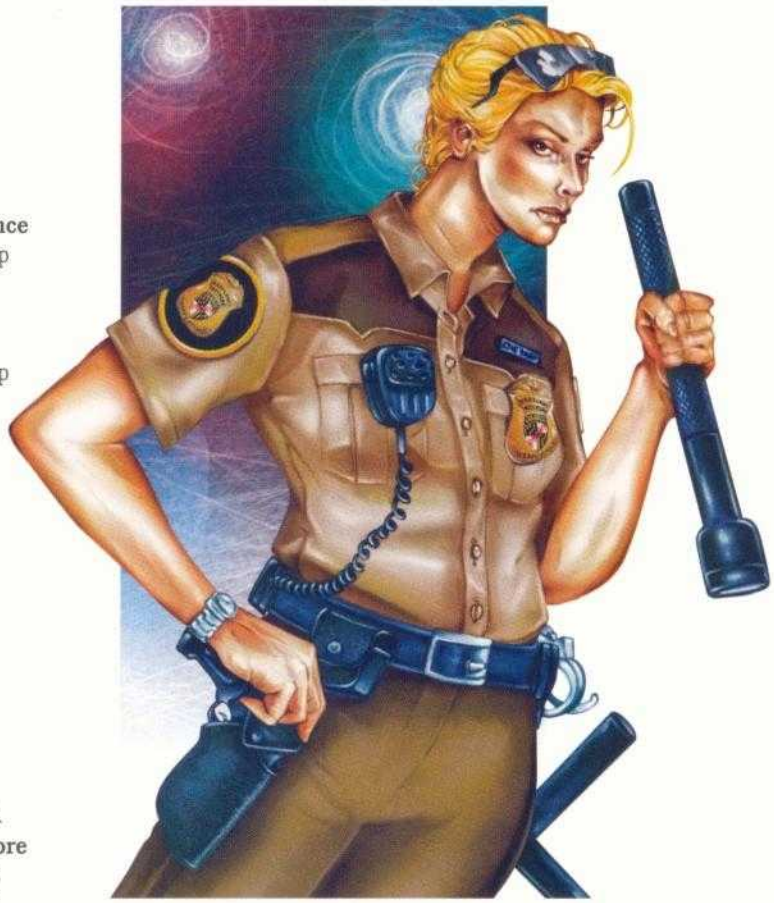
After the Gamemaster sets the scene, she asks, "What do you want to do?" In game terms, doing something is known as taking an action. You might know right away what your hero's action will be, but don't just call out an answer. Wait for the Gamemaster to say it's your turn.

What can heroes do? Almost anything! A hero can say something, move, use a skill, use a piece of equipment, look for clues, duck beneath a table, or anything else you can think of.

After all the heroes have performed their actions and the Gamemaster has had the members of the supporting cast take their actions, the process starts again. Now the situation is different from what it was when the scene opened, and the next actions the heroes attempt might also be different.

Name: Jane McDermott

Profession: Combat Specialist
Career: Law Enforcer (state trooper)



Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	11	5	+1 step
Dexterity	10	5	
Constitution	9	4	
Intelligence	9	4	
Will	12	6	+1 step
Personality	9	4	

Action Check Score: 13+/12/6/3

1–3	Amazing	7–12	Ordinary
4–6	Good	13+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 9 ○○○○○○○○○
Wound 9 ○○○○○○○○○
Mortal 5 ○○○○○

Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	11/5/2
Climb	1	STR	12/6/3
Unarmed Attack*	—	STR	11/5/2
Power martial arts	1	STR	12/6/3
Ranged Weapons*	—	DEX	10/5/2
Pistol	2	DEX	12/6/3
Rifle	1	DEX	11/5/2
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	10/5/2
Land (car)	1	DEX	11/5/2
Stamina*	—	CON	9/4/2
Endurance	1	CON	10/5/2
Knowledge*	—	INT	9/4/2
First aid	1	INT	10/5/2
Law*	—	INT	9/4/2
Enforcement	1	INT	10/5/2
Awareness*	—	WIL	12/6/3
Perception	1	WIL	13/6/3
Interaction*	—	PER	9/4/2
Intimidate	1	PER	10/5/2

*Broad skill checks carry a +1 step penalty.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)*	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Martial arts	12/6/3	Personal	d6+1s/d6+3s/d4+1w	LI
9mm pistol	12/6/3	6/12/50 m	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI
Shotgun**	11/5/2	6/12/30 m	d4w/d6w/d4m	HI

*Attacks at medium range suffer a +1 step penalty; attacks at long range suffer a +2 step penalty.
**The shotgun inflicts double damage at short range and half damage at long range.

Armor

Kevlar vest	d6–3 (LI)	d6–2 (HI)	d4–2 (En)

Equipment

Kevlar vest*, 9mm pistol with 15 rounds, flashlight, handcuffs (two sets), personal radio, police cruiser with 12 gauge shotgun* and 20 shells*, police radio, toolkit.

*The vest is stored in the trunk of her car and can be worn under her uniform. The shotgun and ammunition are also in the trunk.

Background and Personality

Jane McDermott grew up in Boise, Idaho. After attending a local community college for two years, she took the Idaho State Trooper exam and passed with flying colors. She's been out of the academy for about a year and a half now, which is long enough that her peers don't call her "rookie" anymore unless they're trying to get under her skin. In fact, her fellow officers made a point of giving her a necklace with a silver bullet on it to commemorate the time she saved a man from a rabid coyote that attacked him while he was changing his tire on the roadside.

Officer McDermott is tall and athletic. She has always enjoyed physical challenges, and she spends a lot of her off-duty time rock climbing and working on her tae kwon do. She's very stubborn and self-reliant, and strongly inclined to handle situations by herself instead of calling in help if it's at all possible. That might get her into trouble someday. . . .

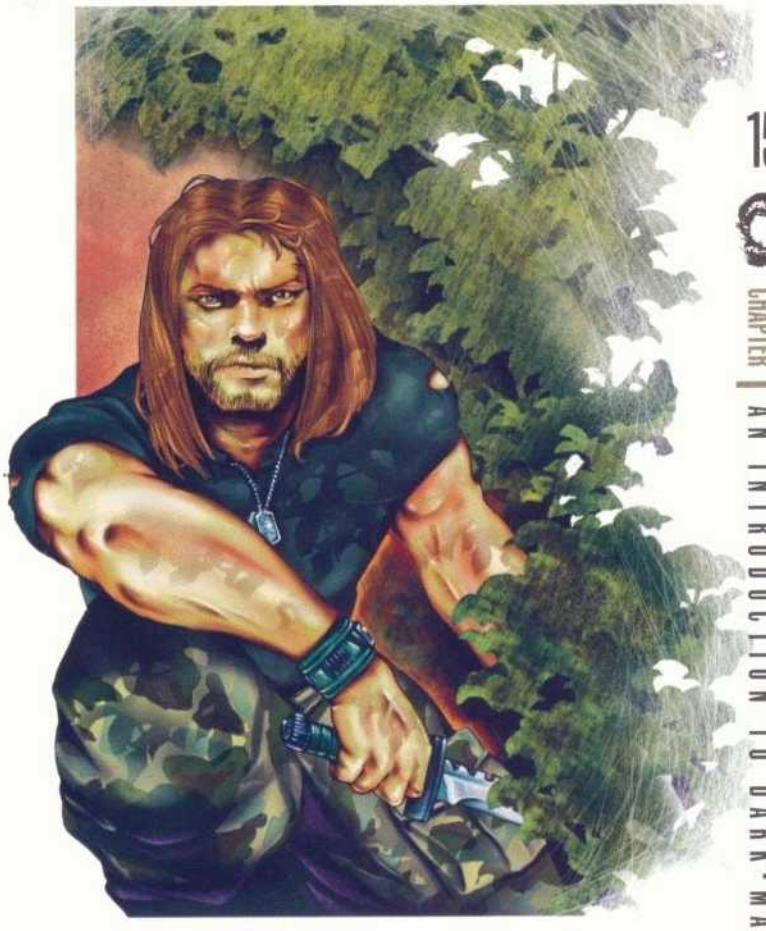
SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS											PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

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Name: Will Wheeler

Profession: Combat Specialist
Career: Militiaman



Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	12	6	+1 step
Dexterity	11	5	+1 step
Constitution	12	6	
Intelligence	10	5	
Will	8	4	
Personality	7	3	

Action Check Score: 14+/13/6/3

1–3	Amazing	7–13	Ordinary
4–6	Good	14+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 12 ○○○○○○○○○○○○
Wound 12 ○○○○○○○○○○○○
Mortal 6 ○○○○○○

Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	12/6/3
Climb	1	STR	13/6/3
Jump	1	STR	13/6/3
Throw	1	STR	13/6/3
Unarmed Attack*	—	STR	12/6/3
Ranged Weapons*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Pistol	1	DEX	12/6/3
Rifle	2	DEX	13/6/3
Stealth*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Sneak	1	DEX	12/6/3
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Stamina*	—	CON	12/6/3
Endurance	1	CON	13/6/3
Survival*	—	CON	12/6/3
Mountain	1	CON	13/6/3
Winter	1	CON	13/6/3
Knowledge*	—	INT	10/5/2
First aid	1	INT	11/5/2
Animal Handling*	—	WIL	8/4/2
Horse riding	1	WIL	9/4/2
Awareness*	—	WIL	8/4/2
Interaction*	—	PER	7/3/1

*Broad skill checks carry a +1 step penalty.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)*	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Unarmed	12/6/3	Personal	d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s	LI
.38 pistol	12/6/3	6/12/40	d4w/d4+1w/d4m	HI
Assault rifle**	13/6/3	60/120/300	d4+2w/d6+3w/d4+1m	HI

*Attacks at medium range suffer a +1 step penalty; attacks at long range suffer a +2 step penalty.
**The assault rifle can be fired in full automatic mode. This lets you roll three attacks instead of one, at a +1, +2, and +3 step penalty.

Equipment

Lighter and pack of cigarettes; .38 caliber pistol with 6 rounds, carried in an ankle holster; assault rifle with 30 rounds, in lockbox in the truck; beat-up 4WD Suburban with police band radio and CB radio; 500 antigovernment pamphlets, in truck.

Background and Personality

Will Wheeler is a native of Moscow, Idaho. He joined the Army right out of high school and served for a four-year enlistment before coming back home to work on his father's ranch. When the ranch failed and tax collectors confiscated his family's land, Will decided that he didn't need to support the government with his tax dollars anymore. He's drifted through a couple of militia groups and is currently living in an isolated "free haven" run by a group calling itself the Liberty Church. Will's also a little bit wanted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, but they haven't posted an APB on him yet.

Will is a short, broad-shouldered man built like a baby bull. He dresses in camo pants, Army boots, and T-shirts, and he wears his hair shoulder-length. He's paranoid and angry, and he's got a lot of guns. But he honestly believes that America could be a better place, and he's willing to do anything to make it all happen.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS												PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

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Name: Dr. Nadine Neary

Profession: Tech Op
Career: Doctor



Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	7	3	
Dexterity	11	5	+1 step
Constitution	8	4	
Intelligence	13	6	+2 steps
Will	10	5	
Personality	11	5	

Action Check Score: 14+/13/6/3

1–3	Amazing	7–13	Ordinary
4–6	Good	14+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 8 ○○○○○○○○
Wound 8 ○○○○○○○○
Mortal 4 ○○○○

Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	7/3/1
Acrobatics*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Defensive martial arts	1	DEX	12/6/3
Tumbling	1	DEX	12/6/3
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Knowledge*	—	INT	13/6/3
Computer operation	2	INT	15/7/3
Deduce	1	INT	14/7/3
Life Science	—	INT	13/6/3
Biology	2	INT	15/7/3
Medical Science*	—	INT	13/6/3
Forensics	2	INT	15/7/3
Medical Knowledge	3	INT	16/8/4
Surgery	1	INT	14/7/3
Treatment	3	INT	16/8/4
Awareness*	—	WIL	10/5/2
Interaction*	—	PER	11/5/2
Charm	1	PER	12/6/3

*Broad skill checks carry a +1 step penalty.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Martial arts	12/6/3	Personal	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI
Gun*	5/2/1	by weapon	by weapon	HI

*Dr. Neary does not have any skill with firearms and doesn't carry a gun. If she picks up a gun and tries to use it, she must make an untrained Ranged Weapons skill check to attack with the weapon.

Equipment

Doctor's bag, personal alarm in purse, beeper, late-model Volvo with cell phone, luggage, road survival kit including 6 road flares, 4 hazard markers, a space blanket, and a gallon of antifreeze.

Doctor's Bag

Dr. Neary can use her training and the supplies in her doctor's bag to help injured characters. She can make Medical Science–*treatment* skill checks to do the following (with a –1 step bonus because of her *medical knowledge* skill):

- Revive a knocked-out character.
- Heal 2, 3, or 4 wound points with an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success on her skill check.
- Stabilize a character with mortal damage.

Background and Personality

Dr. Neary lives in Rochester, Minnesota, where she works at the Mayo Clinic. Her specialty is infectious diseases, and she often consults with the CDC—the Centers for Disease Control. She grew up in Iowa and attended Iowa State on a gymnastics scholarship before she went to medical school; she's still in good shape, and she likes to exercise to get her mind off her work. Dr. Neary is currently headed for Seattle, where she is scheduled to speak at a microbiology conference.

Nadine Neary is a small, slender woman with short-cropped hair and a friendly, open manner. She has a knack for putting people at ease.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS												PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

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Name: Donna Truitt

Profession: Free Agent
Career: Thief



Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	9	4	
Dexterity	12	6	+1 step
Constitution	8	4	
Intelligence	12	6	+1 step
Will	9	3	
Personality	10	5	

Action Check Score: 15+/14/7/3

1–3	Amazing	8–14	Ordinary
4–7	Good	15+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 8 ○○○○○○○○
Wound 8 ○○○○○○○○
Mortal 4 ○○○○

Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	9/4/2
Climb	1	STR	10/5/2
Jump	2	STR	11/5/2
Acrobatics*	—	DEX	12/6/3
Defensive martial arts	1	DEX	13/6/3
Dodge	2	DEX	14/7/3
Manipulation*	—	DEX	12/6/3
Lockpick	1	DEX	13/6/3
Ranged Weapons*	—	DEX	12/6/3
Stealth*	—	DEX	12/6/3
Sneak	1	DEX	13/6/3
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	12/6/3
Stamina*	—	CON	8/4/2
Knowledge*	—	INT	12/6/3
Security*	—	INT	12/6/3
Devices	1	INT	13/6/3
Awareness*	—	WIL	9/4/2
Deception*	—	PER	10/5/2
Bluff	1	PER	11/5/2
Bribe	1	PER	11/5/2
Interaction*	—	PER	10/5/2

*Broad skill checks carry a +1 step penalty.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)*	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Martial arts	13/6/3	Personal	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI
.32 revolver	12/6/3	4/8/30	d4w/d6w/d4m	HI

*Attacks at medium range suffer a +1 step penalty; attacks at long range suffer a +2 step penalty.

Equipment

Break-in bag with lockpicks, grapnel pistol (30 meters of nylon rope), night-vision goggles, magnetic card for door locks, black jumpsuit, .32 caliber revolver with 5 rounds in purse, cell phone, 2001 Chevrolet Corvette (fire engine red).

Background and Personality

Donna Truitt is a professional burglar. She specializes in corporate espionage and similar high-security break-ins, stealing research data, account information, and similar materials on a contract basis. She was recruited and trained by the CIA out of college, but she left the Agency several years ago to pursue a freelance career. While she's capable of defending herself if discovered, Donna is very careful to avoid hurting people; she even refuses to work for people who might use the material she recovers to harm innocent people. Donna currently resides in Seattle, since many of her jobs take her to various high-tech corridors around the Pacific Rim.

Donna is a physically fit woman with long, dark hair and a disarming smile. She's very cynical and suspicious of people representing business or government interests. She usually tells people that she works as a security consultant.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS											PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

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Name: Dr. Phillip Akens

Profession: Diplomat
Career: Parapsychologist

Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	9	4	
Dexterity	6	3	–1 step
Constitution	8	4	
Intelligence	14	7	+2 steps
Will	12	6	+1 step
Personality	11	5	

Action Check Score: 12+/11/5/2

1–2	Amazing	6–11	Ordinary
4–5	Good	12+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 8 ○○○○○○○○
Wound 8 ○○○○○○○○
Mortal 4 ○○○○

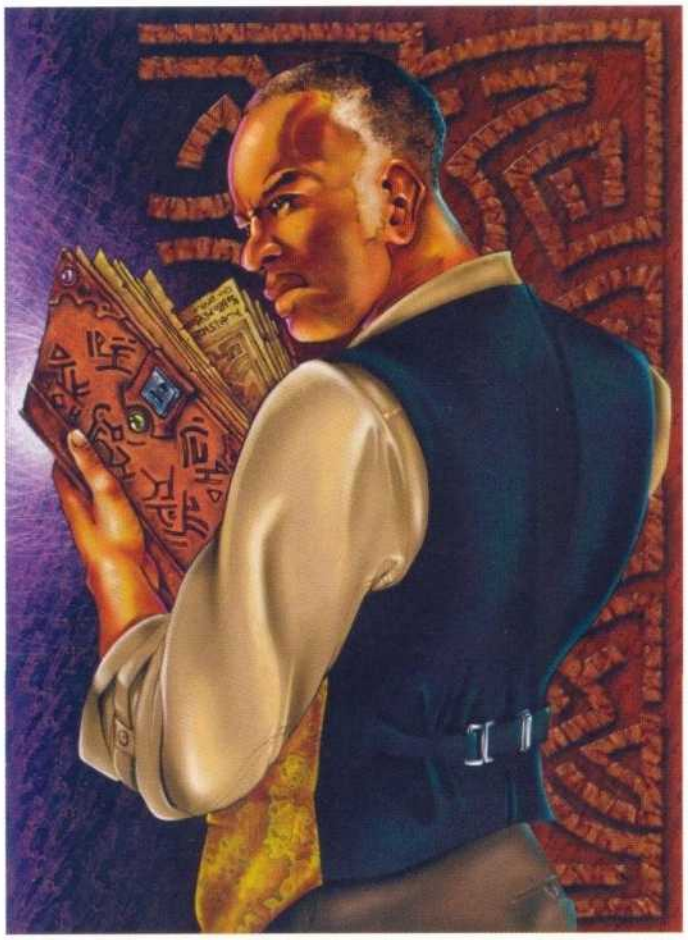
Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	9/4/2
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	6/3/1
Stamina*	—	CON	8/4/2
Knowledge*	—	INT	14/7/3
Computer operation	1	INT	15/7/3
First aid	1	INT	15/7/3
Language (Greek)	2	INT	16/8/4
Language (Latin)	2	INT	16/8/4
Parapsychology	3	INT	17/8/4
Social Science*	—	INT	14/7/3
Anthropology	2	INT	16/8/4
History	2	INT	16/8/4
Linguistics	2	INT	16/8/4
Awareness*	—	WIL	12/6/3
Perception	1	WIL	13/6/3
Investigate*	—	WIL	12/6/3
Research	2	WIL	14/7/3
Search	2	WIL	14/7/3
Lore*	—	WIL	12/6/3
Occult lore	1	WIL	13/6/3
Psychic lore	1	WIL	13/6/3
Interaction*	—	PER	11/5/2
Interview	1	PER	12/6/3

*Broad skill checks carry a +1 step penalty.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Unarmed	4/2/1	Personal	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI
Gun*	3/1/–	by weapon	by weapon	HI



*Dr. Akens does not have any skill with firearms and doesn't carry a gun. If he picks up a gun and tries to use it, he must make an untrained Ranged Weapons skill check to attack with the weapon.

Equipment

Tape recorder; camera; specimen collection kit; laptop computer with cellular modem, database of paranormal activity patterns; blessed silver crucifix; luggage; VW Microbus with 150,000 miles on it.

Background and Personality

Dr. Akens has been studying paranormal activity for more than twenty years. He started out by investigating alleged haunted houses and psychic phenomena as a graduate student, and he's become one of the foremost experts on ghosts, hauntings, and occult traditions in the Midwest. Most academics don't take him seriously, of course, but Dr. Akens is one of the more reputable specialists in his field. He teaches anthropology and linguistics at Marquette University in Milwaukee in order to maintain some credibility with the college administration and to fund his occult investigations.

Dr. Akens is a tall, dignified man forty years of age, with a thoughtful manner and a deep, pleasant voice. He always takes people at their word and assumes that they're telling the truth about their experiences until hard evidence proves otherwise.

Dr. Akens is currently traveling to Portland to look into a reported haunting. He's accompanied by Doug Nichols, a photojournalist.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

BONUS PENALTY

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Name: Doug Nichols

Profession: Free Agent
Career: Photojournalist



Ability Scores

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	10	5	
Dexterity	11	5	+1 step
Constitution	10	5	
Intelligence	9	4	
Will	11	5	+1 step
Personality	9	4	

Action Check Score: 13+/12/6/3

1–3	Amazing	7–12	Ordinary
4–6	Good	13+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 10	○○○○○○○○○○
Wound 10	○○○○○○○○○○
Mortal 5	○○○○○

Skills

Skill	Rank	Ability	O/G/A Skill Score
Athletics*	—	STR	10/5/2
Climb	1	STR	11/5/2
Ski	1	STR	11/5/2
Unarmed Attack*	—	STR	10/5/2
Brawl	1	STR	11/5/2
Stealth*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Shadow	1	DEX	12/6/3
Vehicle Operation*	—	DEX	11/5/2
Movement*	—	CON	10/5/2
Trailblazing	1	CON	11/5/2
Stamina*	—	CON	10/5/2
Endurance	1	CON	11/5/2
Knowledge*	—	INT	9/4/2
Awareness*	—	WIL	11/5/2
Intuition	1	WIL	12/6/3
Creativity*	—	WIL	11/5/2
Photography	2	WIL	13/6/3
Investigate	—	WIL	11/5/2
Search	1	WIL	12/6/3
Interaction*	—	PER	9/4/2

* Broad skills have a base situation die of +d4.

Combat Information

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Unarmed	11/5/2	Personal	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI
Gun*	5/2/1	by weapon	by weapon	HI

*Nichols does not have any skill with firearms and doesn't carry a gun. If he picks up a gun and tries to use it, he must make an untrained Ranged Weapons skill check to attack with the weapon.

Equipment

Professional-grade camcorder; tripod; still camera; tape recorder; laptop computer with video editing software; cellular phone; luggage.

Background and Personality

Ever since he was a kid, Doug Nichols has loved cameras and journalism. He worked on his school paper, served a tour in the Navy as a journalism specialist, and started freelancing as a photographer as soon as he got out of the service. He's been all over the world, specializing in archaeology shoots and nature documentaries. Documentary work pays the bills, but Nichols has another hobby—ghost-hunting. When he can find the time, he tries his hand at paranormal investigation, hoping to catch an image of something that's never been photographed before.

Nichols is a rangy, big-boned man in his late twenties. He has a laid-back manner, and he enjoys outdoor sports of all kinds. He's currently traveling with Dr. Phillip Akens, a paranormal investigator who intends to check out a reported haunting in Portland. But after that, Nichols hopes to get in some mountaineering, extreme skiing, and hiking around the southern Cascades before heading home.

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS												PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

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So You Want to Be the Gamemaster?

This section of the fast-play rules provides an overview of the Gamemaster's role in an ALTERNITY game. It contains a short DARK•MATTER adventure that you can use to introduce your players to the game and familiarize yourself with the art of presenting and moderating a roleplaying game.

If you haven't read the earlier fast-play rules presented in this book, you should read that section now and then come back here. You can't be a good Gamemaster until you know something about how the game works.

The Role of the Gamemaster

As the Gamemaster, you have a number of jobs to handle during and between game sessions. Unlike other types of games that have strict rules and deal with limited situations, a roleplaying game such as the DARK•MATTER setting is as wide open as the players' imaginations. For this reason, the presence of a game moderator to act as referee, story designer, and narrator is essential.

The players interact with each other and the game environment through the actions of their characters, the heroes. The Gamemaster describes each scene, directs the action, and plays the roles of the supporting cast members—villains, allies, and extras who inhabit the campaign world.

However, the Gamemaster isn't competing against the players. When the Gamemaster and the players get together to tell a fun and exciting group story, everybody wins. That's the power and appeal of a roleplaying game.

Key Concepts

Let's take a look at some of the key concepts behind moderating the ALTERNITY game. Some of these terms have also been defined in the first section of this chapter, but they're repeated here for the sake of completeness within the Gamemaster section.

Gamemaster: The participant in the game who acts as the moderator, narrating adventures and controlling characters who are involved in the story but aren't directly controlled by players.

Hero: An imaginary character controlled by a player.

Supporting Cast: The other characters who appear in every story: friends, enemies, and incidental characters with whom the heroes interact. The Gamemaster controls members of the supporting cast.

Setting: The imaginary context and environment within which the heroes operate. The DARK•MATTER game is set in a world very much like our own, except that the broad spectrum of paranormal and occult phenomena is frighteningly real—to those who know what to look for.

Adventure: A scenario in which the heroes interact to create a group story. As Gamemaster, you present an opening situation or scene (called the "trigger"). The rest of the adventure unfolds through the actions of the heroes (as dictated by their players) and the moderation of the Gamemaster (through story events and the supporting cast).

Campaign: A continuing series of adventures that takes place in a single setting and focuses on the same group of heroes. A campaign can be finite, ending after as many adventures as necessary to tell the complete story; or it can be an ongoing tale, progressing like a television or comic book series.

Group Story: While a regular story, such as found in a movie or a book, features a set beginning, middle, and ending, a group story is more dynamic. The Gamemaster has an outline that provides a series of encounters and events, and a few possible ways the adventure could end. The dynamic comes from the group—the players and Gamemaster—who determine the course of the story and its outcome through the interaction of their imaginary characters. In a group story, no one—not even the Gamemaster—knows exactly how how it all will end.

Game Session: One distinct period of game play; a time when you gather your friends to play the ALTERNITY game. Some adventures can be completed in a single session; others might require several sessions to reach a conclusion.

Using the Game Mechanic

The ALTERNITY game is built around a core mechanic that has nearly universal application. All heroic actions in the game are resolved by rolling just two dice: a control die and a situation die. A control die is always a d20; a situation die can be a d4, d6, d8, d12, or d20. Depending on how hard or easy a particular task is, the result of the situation die is added to or subtracted from the result of the control die, as detailed in the player's fast-play rules.

You can use the dice in varying ways, though the mechanic is always the same: Roll two dice, trying to achieve a number that's equal to or less than a character's appropriate score. If the task is associated with a skill, then the skill score is used. If it's a feat check, then the associated Ability Score is used. In all uses of dice during a game session—except when rolling for damage—low results are better than high ones.

Use the mechanic to determine the success of an attack, using an appropriate combat skill; to overcome a challenge, using a physical or mental skill; or to determine the outcome of an encounter, using a Personality skill in conjunction with good roleplaying.

The Most Important Rule

Not every action requires a dice roll. Repeat this sentence and apply it often. When the heroes attempt normal, everyday tasks, they should accomplish them without consulting the dice. In heroic situations, when the outcome is in doubt and the result could mean life or death, then have the players roll dice.

Situation Die Steps

The best tool you have as the Gamemaster is your ability to set the odds of any given task. You can do this by adding bonuses or penalties for given situations and counting in the appropriate direction on the Situation Die Steps Scale (presented in the player's fast-play rules). Or, if you're more inclined toward quick resolutions, simply eyeball it by selecting the modifier that matches how difficult or easy you want the task to be.

Examples of Situation Modifiers

Weapon Range	Short	Medium	Long
Pistol	None	+1 step	+2 steps
Rifle	None	None	+1 step
Target has Cover			
Light Cover	Medium Cover	Heavy Cover	
+1 step penalty	+2 step penalty	+3 step penalty	
Situation			
Amazing difficulty	+3 steps	Amazing ease	–3 steps
Good difficulty	+2 steps	Good ease	–2 steps
Ordinary difficulty	+1 steps	Ordinary ease	–1 steps
Marginal difficulty	None	Marginal ease	None

Putting it Into Practice

What do you actually do with this information? That depends. Here are examples of both methods in action. Use either method or a combination of the two, as you see fit.

The Step-By-Step Method: Michele's hero, Detective Jones, wants to take a shot at the villainous cult leader. Jones has the pistol skill, so he has a base situation die of +d0. The cult leader is 10 meters away from Jones, which is medium range (+1 step penalty) for his weapon, and has light cover (+1 step penalty). In addition, because Jones is standing atop a moving train, you declare that the situation has a Good level of difficulty (+2 steps). By counting out the steps on the Situation Die Steps Scale, the Gamemaster determines that Jones has a final situation die of +d12. Michele rolls d20+d12, hoping to achieve a total that's equal to or less than Jones's pistol score. If she succeeds, then Jones hits his target, scoring either an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success, as detailed in the player's fast-play rules.

Eyeballing It: Dave's hero, Jack Martin, needs to slip past the customs official. Since Martin doesn't have the *sneak* specialty skill, his base situation die is +d4. You decide that the official is particularly vigilant today. This makes the situation Hard, causing Martin to take a +2 step penalty. Dave rolls d20+d8, hoping for a result equal to or less than Martin's Stealth skill score.

Eyeballing It

Situation Description	Modifier	Situation Die
Extremely easy	–3 steps	–d8
Very easy	–2 steps	–d6
Easy	–1 steps	–d4
Average	None	+d0
Tough	+1 step	+d4
Hard	+2 steps	+d6
Challenging	+3 steps	+d8

Running the Game

You can run a roleplaying game very easily by sticking to this one simple formula:

- Describe a scene to the players that demands some action on the part of their heroes.
- Ask the players what their heroes are going to do.
- Resolve the heroes' actions.
- Determine how the resolution of the heroes' action affected the original situation.
- Describe the updated situation to the players, and start the process all over again.

Don't worry; you don't have to make it all up on the fly. Usually, a Gamemaster has a script or a set of notes to work from that outlines the various scenes and situations that make up the adventure the heroes are currently engaged in. In this fast-play rules chapter, the adventure is scripted so that all you have to do is follow the directions.

How does this work in practice? It's pretty easy. Let's say that the heroes are investigating the site of an alien abduction. First, the Gamemaster describes a lonely spot on the open prairie, marked only by a burnt circle on the ground and a set of tire tracks leading away. The Gamemaster then asks the players what their heroes are going to do. Each player decides what action his or her hero takes; one hero may collect a soil sample, another might stand guard to watch out for anyone else approaching, and a third player may declare that his hero will follow the tire tracks.

Next, the Gamemaster resolves the actions the players have declared. Taking the soil sample and standing guard are easy—the players don't have to make any rolls to succeed in those tasks. But following the tire tracks requires an Investigate–*track* skill check, so the Gamemaster asks the player to roll a skill check for his hero.

Finally, success or failure in the challenges of the scene may dictate a new situation—the tire tracks lead toward a distant mesa if the heroes can follow them. Now they have a new set of decisions to make; they can stay and search the area around the circle, or they can follow the tracks into a new scene.

The Adventure

An ALTERNITY adventure is nothing more than a series of distinct scenes in which the heroes are presented with a situation, decide what they want to do, resolve their actions, and deal with the consequences. Each scene challenges the heroes with enemies to defeat, mysteries to solve, or supporting characters to interact with.

To continue with the previous example, let's say that the adventure is simple: The heroes have been assigned to investigate an alien abduction. Scenes that might make up this adventure include the following:

- A search of the site where the abduction took place.
- An interview with the abductee when the victim is found again.
- A hostile encounter with secretive men in black who attempt to steal evidence the heroes have collected from the scene.
- An attack by angry locals who think that the heroes are somehow behind the abduction.
- A scene in which the abductee must be protected from the men in black or the aliens who originally kidnapped him.

Not all of these scenes might be necessary in the adventure; maybe the heroes never go out to the site of the encounter, or maybe they avoid the locals by driving away from a confrontation

before it gets ugly. And, players being players, the Gamemaster may need to respond to their actions with new scenes that reflect the course of the heroes' investigation.

Many Gamemasters make up adventures for their players by thinking up a cool plot, jotting down some notes about the villains or challenges the heroes must defeat, and then creating a good scene to start the heroes in the story. You don't have to do that right away; for your first time as the Gamemaster, use the scripted adventure in this chapter.

The Scene Structure

Every time the players are faced by an obstacle, challenge, or significant encounter with a Gamemaster-controlled character, they're engaged in a scene. A scene is one piece of an adventure—a decision box in which the heroes might succeed, fail, or sidestep a problem altogether. There are three types of scenes: combat scenes, challenge scenes, and encounter scenes.

Combat Scenes

Most roleplaying games resemble action movies. The heroes frequently confront the villains with force and stop the bad guys the old-fashioned way. Even if the heroes aren't willing to use force against the villains, their enemies may not feel constrained to abide by the same restrictions. Ghosts or hostile entities might lash out at investigators; unknown assassins may try to kill heroes getting too close to the truth; ruthless agents might try to make the heroes disappear before the heroes expose their plots. Combat is commonplace in many DARK•MATTER adventures.

Setting Up the Fight

The first thing you need to do in a combat scene is set up the fight. Decide who's attacking the heroes, and why they're doing it. Usually, your *adventure notes* can help you determine the opposition the heroes face.

For example, if you've already decided that a government lab is protected by a security team of four guards, it's pretty clear that the heroes must defeat or bypass all four guards to get inside. When you play the adventure later in this chapter, you will know exactly what the heroes may end up fighting against.

Decide where the opponents are in relation to the heroes. If the heroes just stormed a room full of armed gunmen, it's pretty clear that all the combatants are in the same room. If the heroes drive into an ambush on a bridge, you might determine that the gunmen are kneeling behind cars parked to block both lanes. Then describe to the players where their heroes and the bad guys are in relation to each other.

Finally, some situations may have the potential for surprise. If the heroes are relaxing in a hotel room after a long day of investigation when two assassins kick in the door, they might not be ready for a fight. Have each hero who might be caught off guard make an Awareness skill check; if the hero fails, she is surprised and can't take any actions in the first round of the fight.

Action Rounds

Scenes in which time is critical—gunfights, chases, disarming bombs—need a framework for deciding who goes first. The action round organizes the actions of the heroes and the supporting cast so that the Gamemaster can tell whose turn it is to act.

Every action round is divided into four phases: Amazing, Good, Ordinary, and Marginal. All characters involved in the scene make action checks before each round to determine which phase they may act in. Characters with Amazing action checks act first, then characters with Good action checks, then Ordinary, and finally Marginal.

Although actions in a phase occur simultaneously, you don't want everyone rolling dice at the same time. Instead, all characters who are entitled to an action in the same phase should act in the order of their action check scores—highest score first. The results of their actions (such as damage) are applied at the end of the phase, thus simulating simultaneous activity.

Example: Jones, Martin, and the cult leader all achieve Good action check results. Their action check scores are 13, 10, and 15, respectively. For ease of play, the cult leader acts first in the Good phase, followed by Jones, then Martin.

Attacks

There are three basic ways to attack a creature or a character in the ALTERNITY game system: bare-handed, with a melee weapon, or with a ranged weapon. When a hero chooses to attack an enemy character or hostile creature, he must attempt a skill check using the appropriate skill.

- Hand-to-hand attacks use the Unarmed Attack–*brawl* or *power martial arts* or the Acrobatics–*defensive martial arts* skills. If the character doesn't have any of these skills, he must make an untrained Strength feat check (use the "Untrained" Strength score and add a d4) to attack in hand-to-hand combat.
- Ranged weapon attacks use the Ranged Weapons–*pistol* or *rifle* skills. If the character doesn't have these skills, he must make an untrained Dexterity feat check to attack.

The Gamemaster may add step modifiers to the attack for the target's Strength or Dexterity, or to reflect a tricky situation—a long-range shot or good cover for the target. The result of the attack roll is a Failure (a miss), or an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success (all hits).

If a character hits his target, he inflicts damage appropriate to the success of his attack. For example, if Officer McDermott achieves an Ordinary success with her 9mm pistol, she inflicts d4+1 points of wound damage.

Damage

Damage comes in three types: stun, wound, and mortal. If a character is hit by an attack or some other damage-causing condition, the degree of success achieved by that attack determines the type and amount of *primary damage* suffered by a character.

- If a character loses all of his stun points, he's knocked out.
- If a character loses all of his wound points, he's knocked out and gravely injured.
- If a character loses all of his mortal points, he's dead.

Each of the hero templates in this chapter lists some examples of weapons and armor, and includes their important statistics.

Serious, lasting injuries—mortal damage and wound damage—cause secondary damage to the character who is injured. For every 2 points of wound damage inflicted on a character, that character also suffers 1 point of stun damage. For every 2 points of mortal damage a character receives, that character also suffers 1 point of wound damage and 1 point of stun damage.

Example: Wheeler fires his .38 pistol at a horrible ice-demon and gets an Amazing success on his attack roll. The damage for

an Amazing success with the .38 pistol is d4m. Wheeler's player, Michele, rolls d4 and gets a result of 3. The ice-demon suffers 3 points of mortal damage (the primary damage of the attack) plus secondary damage of 1 wound and 1 stun.

Armor

Aliens, paranormal creatures, and some human characters may possess armor that protects them from the dangers of battle. Armor can reduce the primary damage a hero suffers—but armor has no effect on secondary damage.

Example: Dave's character, Officer McDermott, is wearing her Kevlar vest when a crazed cultist shoots her for 5 points of wound damage. That also causes 2 points of secondary stun damage, which Dave records on the hero template immediately because armor doesn't stop secondary damage. Now Dave rolls to see how well McDermott's armor protected her from the wound damage. The vest blocks d6–2 points of high impact (HI) damage. Dave rolls a d6 and gets a result of 4, for a total of 2 (4–2), so the number of wounds is reduced by 2. Dave marks off 3 wound boxes on Officer McDermott's character template (5–2=3).

Challenge Scenes

Not every threat or obstacle involves a villain with a gun. Heroes routinely scale cliffs, search for hard-to-find clues, try to repair damaged machinery, or use their wits and training to get to the bottom of things. Any time the story hinges on whether or not a hero can successfully use a skill in a noncombat situation, you're dealing with a challenge scene.

Typical challenge scenes include the following:

- Using Athletics–*climb* or *jump* to scale a difficult obstacle.
- Using Manipulation–*lockpick* to get around a locked door.
- Using Stealth–*shadow* or *sneak* to trail someone without being spotted or slip past a guard without a fight.
- Using Medical Science–*treatment* to help an injured character.
- Using Technical Science–*repair* to fix a piece of damaged machinery.
- Using Lore–*occult lore* or *psychic lore* to analyze paranormal phenomena and discern a cause.
- Using Investigate–*search* or *track* to glean a clue from a crime scene or find someone who doesn't want to be found.

In fact, any time the players want to try to use their heroes' skills to advance the story in some way, it's a challenge scene. The adventure in this chapter includes several potential challenge scenes with guidelines on how you should handle them as they come up.

The basic procedure for a challenge scene is simple. Ask the players what skill they want their heroes to use. Determine if there are factors that make the skill check easier or more difficult, add the appropriate step modifiers to the skill check, and then ask the players to make skill checks for their heroes. Evaluate the results and apply them to the situation.

Many challenges are very short. If a hero is trying to jump onto a moving train, she gets one shot at it and succeeds or fails. Other challenges may be broken up into a number of distinct steps; for example, climbing a mountain may require a number of Athletics–*climb* skill checks to conquer each stage of the ascent.

Example: Tom's character, Donna Truitt, is trying to slip a tracking device into an enemy agent's pocket in a quiet coffee shop. The skill most appropriate to the situation is Manipulate–*pickpocket*. The Gamemaster decides that, since the place is almost empty, it's hard for Donna to get close without being very obvious about it. He assigns a +2 step penalty, and then adds another +1 step penalty since the enemy agent has a high Will score and a +1 step resistance modifier (Will represents how perceptive a character is, among other things). Tom rolls a *pickpocket* skill check on a d20 + d8 and gets a Good success. Not only did Donna plant the tracker, but she hid it in such a way that the enemy agent isn't likely to find it for a while.

Encounter Scenes

An encounter scene describes a conversation or interaction between two characters—a hero and a member of the supporting cast. Two heroes don't make up an encounter scene, since the players who control those heroes are free to talk to each other any time they like. Similarly, two supporting cast members don't have encounter scenes, since the players don't necessarily get the chance to see what happens when the mob boss talks to his underling.

Not every meeting between a hero and a character under the Gamemaster's control should be construed as an encounter scene. Presumably, heroes are real people in a real world. They chat with the cashier at the grocery store, they talk to the other people taking the train they're riding, and they pass by dozens or

Recovery

After a character suffers damage, he or she can get back to full health in a number of different ways:

- Stun damage disappears at the end of a scene.
- Wound damage, but not mortal damage, heals naturally at a rate of 2 wound points per week of rest and recuperation.
- The Knowledge–*first aid* specialty skill can heal stun damage on conscious patients, negating 2, 3, or 4 points of stun damage depending on the degree of success achieved on the skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing).

First aid can also revive a character who was knocked out due to stun damage, restoring 1, 2, or 3 stun points depending on the degree of success. This skill can also be used to heal wound damage; any success restores 1 wound point.

- The Medical Science–*treatment* specialty skill can be used to heal stun damage on conscious patients, as per *first aid* above.

Medical Science–*treatment* can also be used to revive a character who was knocked out due to stun damage, restoring 2, 3, or 4 stun points depending on the degree of success.

This skill can be used to heal wound damage; any success restores 2 wound points.

- The Medical Science–*surgery* specialty skill can heal wound damage and mortal damage; a success restores 1 point of mortal and 2 points of wound damage. This skill can be used on a specific patient once every hour. Note that using the *surgery* skill requires the kind of facilities normally found at a hospital—anesthesia, monitoring devices, and so on.

hundreds of strangers every day as they go about their business. But only a handful of these chance encounters have anything at all to do with the story at hand. In fact, an encounter is worth a scene only if the hero can learn or do something important in the course of that encounter.

Typical encounter scenes include the following:

- Deceiving a gate guard by pretending to have a pass to get into a restricted area.
- Convincing a police officer not to take the hero into custody under suspicious circumstances.
- Conversing with a rival agent in a social situation and trying to get some information out of him.
- Interviewing a witness to a UFO encounter.
- Persuading an authority figure to quarantine an area exposed to an alien virus.
- Convincing a bystander to help the heroes in a dangerous or illegal act.

There are two ways to resolve an encounter scene. The first is the easiest: common sense. If the players say something that sounds convincing to you, the Gamemaster, you can simply rule that their heroes convinced the character they were talking to. Characters in the game should act and react the way real people in the same situation would, so use your best judgment.

The second way to resolve an encounter scene is to ask the players to make a skill check using the appropriate Personality-based skill—Deception, Interaction, or Leadership. If a hero is pretending to be someone else to get past a guard, Deception–*bluff* is probably the best skill to use. If the hero is threatening the guard with imminent violence, Interaction–*intimidate* is more appropriate. Ask the player to tell you what his or her hero is saying, and then apply a step bonus or penalty to reflect how effective the player's tactic seems to be in the current situation. Then call for a skill check and evaluate the results.

Example: John's hero, Dr. Akens, is trying to persuade a beat cop to let him leave the scene of a murder without arresting him. This sounds pretty tough, but the Gamemaster asks John what Dr. Akens says to get out of this situation. "I'm telling the cop that I saw the murderer run off in another direction just a moment ago so that I can leave when the police officer goes to investigate," John says.

The Gamemaster decides that the skill this reflects is probably Deception–*bluff*, and that Dr. Akens's approach is weak but not too bad—a +1 step penalty to a Deception skill check is reasonable. Unfortunately, Akens doesn't have the Deception skill, so John must make an untrained Personality skill check for Dr. Akens. He rolls a d20 + d6 (a +1 step penalty for the broad skill check, and the +1 step penalty for the weak argument) and compares it to Akens's Deception skill score. John blows the roll—the cop holds Akens and refuses to let him leave the scene before he can question the good doctor.

Supporting Cast

Each of the players controls only one hero at any given time. The Gamemaster controls all the other characters in the adventure. The most important supporting cast member is the major antagonist. A good villain helps to set the mood of a story and can even become a more-or-less permanent part of the campaign—a recurring figure whose plots and agents constantly threaten the heroes or whatever it is they hold dear.

Supporting cast members include the major villain; his or her associates and hired hands; the authority figures who command or employ the heroes; the informants, witnesses, and shop owners the heroes interact with; and the valued friends, hirelings, and allies ready to help the heroes at a moment's notice. The Gamemaster needs to be ready to run these characters as they are called upon, or to improvise as the need arises.

It's important for the Gamemaster to give each supporting cast member—especially major opponents and allies—much the same consideration players give their heroes.

Some supporting cast members should be fully developed, with a complete set of skills and vital game statistics. Other characters, such as minor opponents, experts, and bystanders, need only the skill scores and statistics that might come into play during a scene. For example, give a common thug a combat skill or two, durability ratings, and a weapon; give an expert just the skill scores needed to use his expertise on the heroes' behalf.

The adventure in this chapter features several supporting characters. As the Gamemaster, you decide what these characters will do in each scene, and how they will accomplish it.

Roleplaying 101

The best part about controlling the supporting cast is that you can create all kinds of personalities during the course of play. Ham it up, play it straight, or go for the dramatic—depending on the mood of the adventure and the personality of the character.

If you can do it and make it sound good, use a unique voice for each character. Try an accent (a French Combat Spec, a Russian Diplomat), different styles of speech (a formal-sounding Free Agent, a Tech Op who uses lots of slang expressions), or signature phrases (such as an informant who always spouts, "Whatever you say, Boss, whatever you say . . .").

Heroes and Encounter Skills

Villains routinely threaten, cajole, bluster, or rail at the heroes. However, they're not entitled to make Interaction–*intimidate* or Deception–*bribe* skill checks to make the heroes back off or accept a payoff. When a supporting character wants the heroes to do something, it's your job as Gamemaster to convey the character's threat or offer—and then allow the players to decide if their heroes listen.

Of course, there may be consequences to ignoring a threat or insulting a character who's trying to deal with the heroes. It's reasonable for you to point out to the players what these consequences might be, but you shouldn't ever take control of the heroes' actions.

Presenting an Adventure

A roleplaying game's action takes place in an adventure. Within its structure, the participants create the group story. The Gamemaster's role in the adventure centers around narrating the story, portraying supporting cast members, and moving the story along at a satisfying pace. Whether you use published adventures (such as "Exit 23," presented in this chapter) or create your own epics, the Gamemaster's role remains the same.

Narration

The heroes need to be involved in a story during which they act, react, and create a riveting tale. A story consists of a beginning, a middle, and an end, and each one should be filled with conflicts and goals—in other words, obstacles for the heroes to overcome and objectives for them to achieve. It's up to the Gamemaster to have the basics of a story ready when the game session begins.

Remember, though, that the story will be completed by the group—through the actions of the heroes and their interaction with your supporting cast. The heroes play an important part in determining how a story takes shape, and you should make sure their decisions play a part in the process.

You must develop a basic plot (or use a plot from a published product), provide motivations and objectives for the heroes, and have an exciting idea for the ending. A plot requires enough background material so that the story feels like it fits the campaign setting. Other elements that make a good basic plot include a major antagonist (the villain), the antagonist's nefarious scheme, and motivations to make the heroes want to get involved. These elements come together in the adventure's opening scene—called the trigger.

The "Exit 23" adventure provides an example of how these elements work together.

Pacing

Another aspect of presenting an adventure is the pacing of the story. The story shouldn't artificially push the heroes to meet some schedule. Instead, watch how the scenes play out. When a scene starts to drag and the fun factor begins to flag, that's when you step in to give the scene a boost. How? By using the resources at your disposal—maybe have a supporting character show up with some tip that gives the heroes a nudge in the right direction. If your players don't know what to do next and the story is in danger of stalling, it's up to you to give it new life.

Don't create an adventure outline that's so complete the heroes can't make any decisions without violating your plot. Start the adventure with action and have lots of other action ideas ready to insert into the flow as the game session progresses. Use combat, challenges, encounters, conflict, tension, humor, and mystery to keep an adventure moving toward its dramatic conclusion.

The basic rule for pacing is that as long as the players are having fun, stay in the current scene. When the action bogs down, then the Gamemaster must help the pacing by getting things moving again.

Moderating the Rules

The player's fast-play rules section of this chapter gives you the basic facts about how the ALTERNITY game works. That's all you need to introduce your players to the game system and run the adventure in this section. In play, it's up to the Gamemaster to moderate the game so that everyone has fun, plays fair, and is challenged. Of all these, the emphasis is always on fun. If a rule gets in the way of everyone's enjoyment, change it. But change it consistently and after consideration. Don't change a rule just for the sake of change.

Final decisions are always left to the Gamemaster. Can the heroes perform a particular action? Can they even try it? That's up to you. Make your decision based on the need to keep the story moving, your interpretation of the rules, and whether or not the action fits the story and increases everyone's enjoyment of the game. Be fair and impartial in your treatment of heroes and supporting characters. Challenge the players and their heroes. The players want to see their heroes tested and to experience the thrill of competing against the odds and coming out on top. Heroes do this sort of thing all the time! Just make sure the players have decisions to make and options to choose from as the adventure unfolds.

If someone disagrees with a decision, call a time out and discuss it with the group. You still get to make the final call, but you can reduce the possibility of hard feelings if you moderate the game fairly. The goal is to tell a good group story and to have fun, not to abuse the heroes.

Sometimes the dice just fall the wrong way. That's okay. But you might want to give the players a break now and then. After all, it's no fun for a player to lose a hero in a stupid and random way. Be lenient when determining the difficulty of a particular action, or change the result before revealing the outcome to the players. This sort of manipulation is the Gamemaster's prerogative, but use it sparingly—and always in the interest of keeping the story moving and the fun factor high.

EXIT 23

An Introductory DARK•MATTER Adventure

"Exit 23" is a short adventure designed to introduce you to the ALTERNITY game and the DARK•MATTER setting. If you're a brand-new Gamemaster, the first thing you need to do is read through the adventure before you run your first game. You should know how each scene fits into the the adventure so that you can present each scene in the best and most exciting manner possible.

Familiarize yourself with the fast-play rules earlier in this chapter. The other players expect you to know how the game works, so make sure that you at least know where to find the answers to any questions that come up. Finally, you should take a minute to look over the hero templates so that you know what kind of heroes your players are controlling in the game.

When you're ready to start playing, assign each player one of the templates. You can choose randomly, or you can tell the players about each hero and ask them which one they want to play. Flip a coin if two players want to run the same hero. (We recommend that you make photocopies of the hero templates to hand out to everyone.) If you have extra templates left over, you might consider running these extra heroes as supporting cast members.

Ask the players to read over their templates and answer any questions they may have about them. The best way to learn the game is by playing, though, so just explain the basics and then get on with the adventure. Most players catch on as you go along.

If you're not the Gamemaster for this game, stop reading here. It's no fun when someone tells you how the movie ends before you see it, and it's no fun to know how the adventure proceeds before you play it.

Adventure Background

Don't read this to the players! This is a brief background of what's happening in this adventure. We'll let you know how to start the game for the players on the next page.

The Hoffmann Institute is an organization devoted to investigating and understanding all kinds of paranormal phenomena. The Institute operates from more than a dozen major offices around the world, dispatching professional investigators to check out reports of ghosts, hauntings, UFOs, mysterious creatures, real magic, and the activities of secret organizations and conspiracies. (You can find more information on the Hoffmann Institute in Chapter 2, though you won't need it for this adventure.)

Several days ago, agents working for the Institute investigated an old estate formerly owned by a reputed cult leader and diabolist named Michel Galvin. Galvin disappeared about ten years ago, and distant relatives finally sold his manor in order to wash their hands of the whole business. Hoffmann agent Jonas Riley, who'd been keeping tabs on the old Galvin place, heard of the upcoming estate sale and visited the site to make sure that it was free of Michel Galvin's sinister influence before it was sold to some unsuspecting person.

Riley and his team examined the place in detail, discovering a secret laboratory or conjuration room hidden in the manor's attic. The room was mostly empty, but concealed in a secret drawer Riley found an evil artifact—a snow globe with magical powers. Neither Riley nor anyone else on his team knew what to make of Galvin's globe, so Riley took it to an Institute expert in Portland, Oregon, for a thorough examination and safekeeping.

Unknown to Riley, other people besides the Hoffmann Institute have been keeping an eye on Galvin's mansion. Galvin's circle of acolytes, *Les Trieze Corbins* (The Thirteen Crows) still exists, and they still watch Galvin's place. They'd searched the grounds several times for the globe but never found the secret drawer. When Riley discovered the globe and removed it from the mansion, *Les Trieze Corbins* wanted it back. They sent Jacob Dumont, one of their number, after Riley to retrieve the globe.

Dumont trailed Riley from Galvin's estate in Montana into the rugged mountain country of the Idaho panhandle. But Dumont isn't alone. With spells learned from Galvin years ago, the cultists conjured a winter-demon and created a vicious blizzard to close the highway and trap Riley at a lonely rest stop in the middle of the night. This allowed Dumont to catch up with Riley.

Overview

What does all of this have to do with the players? The answer is simple: Their heroes are caught at the rest stop along with Riley and Dumont, and it's up to them to stop the sadistic cultist from killing everyone and escaping with Galvin's sinister artifact.

The beginning of the adventure finds the heroes stranded in a rest stop on I-90, near Exit 23 in Idaho. They're on the road for various reasons of their own; for example, Officer McDermott is patrolling this stretch of highway, while Donna Truitt is just driving back to her home in Seattle from whatever business she was engaged in before the start of the adventure. Most of the heroes don't know each other; they're just travelers stranded by a sudden snowstorm.

The adventure opens when the heroes discover that someone or something has attacked several other travelers in another part of the building, killing one person and seriously injuring another (Jonas Riley, although the players don't know who he is or what he's doing there when their heroes find him). The adventure should proceed through seven distinct scenes, as shown below:

Scene 1: A Grisly Discovery. The heroes learn that they're not alone in the rest stop and that something waits in the storm.

Scene 2: Danny Wood. The heroes interview the only witness to the winter-demon's attack and learn something about what they're up against.

Scene 3: Who Goes There? The winter-demon lashes out at anyone who tries to track it into the storm and drives the heroes back inside.

Scene 4: Smoke 'em Out: The cultist, Dumont, drives every-

White River Rest Stop

While truckers and locals know it better as the Exit 23 rest stop, the name on the lobby identifies the place as the White River Station. It's located between the eastbound and westbound lanes, and there is a turnoff here for a lonely mountain road that runs about ten miles to the closest town, White River. At the moment, none of the roads is even close to passable due to the accumulation of snow and the lack of visibility.

The heroes may explore the rest stop anytime they like. In fact, since the adventure assumes that they've been here for a couple of hours before the action starts, you can pretty much tell the players anything they want to know about what's where—their heroes have seen the whole place by now.

Vestibule and Phones: The main entrance. There are two phones here, neither of which is working.

Lobby: A large, open room featuring an information counter (never staffed), two wall displays with flyers for local tourist attractions, and a big wall map of Idaho.

Women's Room: A typical rest room.

Men's Room: A typical rest room.

Arcade: This alcove contains six coin-operated video games.

Convenience Store: A small, cluttered shop loaded with knickknacks, caffeine pills, road maps, and souvenirs. The store is closed and the lobby entrance is blocked by a roll-down grate. Anne Banks, the cashier, is waiting out the storm in the donut shop. She'll open the store if anyone wants to buy something.

Storerooms: These are typical stockrooms filled with the supplies needed by the rest stop businesses. All feature large sheet-metal doors leading outside that are currently locked.

The Donut Shop: A small shop with a counter, stools by the counter, and a couple of small booths. The shop serves coffee, donuts, breakfast sandwiches, and other light fare. Most of the people in the rest stop have gathered here.

Restaurant: A McDonald's that is closed for the night. A pull-down grate covers the counter window, but the seating area is open.

Kitchen: The kitchen for the McDonald's. It's crowded with stoves, fryers, and several large refrigerators.

Fuel Office: The cashier's stand for the gas station. Ahmed Singh, the cashier, has shut down the pumps and the office in order to join everyone else in the donut shop.

one in the rest stop outside so that the demon can make short work of them. He starts a fire that the heroes must extinguish, or they'll have to abandon the tenuous safety of the rest stop.

Scene 5: Firebug. The heroes discover that Dumont lit the fire, and they capture him.

Scene 6: *Les Trieze Corbins*. The heroes question Dumont to learn more about what they're up against and why he's after Riley.

Scene 7: Fire and Ice. The heroes determine that the only way to survive the storm is to destroy the demon. Arming themselves with improvised weapons, they lure the demon into a final confrontation.

Of course, the adventure may not follow this exact path. Your players will think of dozens of things to try that don't have anything to do with the script. Your job as Gamemaster is to treat each of these improvisations fairly and sensibly, using what you know about the plot as a guideline for whether or not the player's idea will work.

Now you know how the story should go; you're ready to play!

Players' Introduction

When you're ready to start playing, read or paraphrase the text in the box below to the players. This lets them know where their heroes are and what they're doing when the adventure begins.

You've never seen a snowstorm like this. October in the Idaho mountains can be bad, but for hours now it's been a virtual white-out. The snow must be at least fifteen inches deep on the highway, and the weather's showing no signs of breaking.

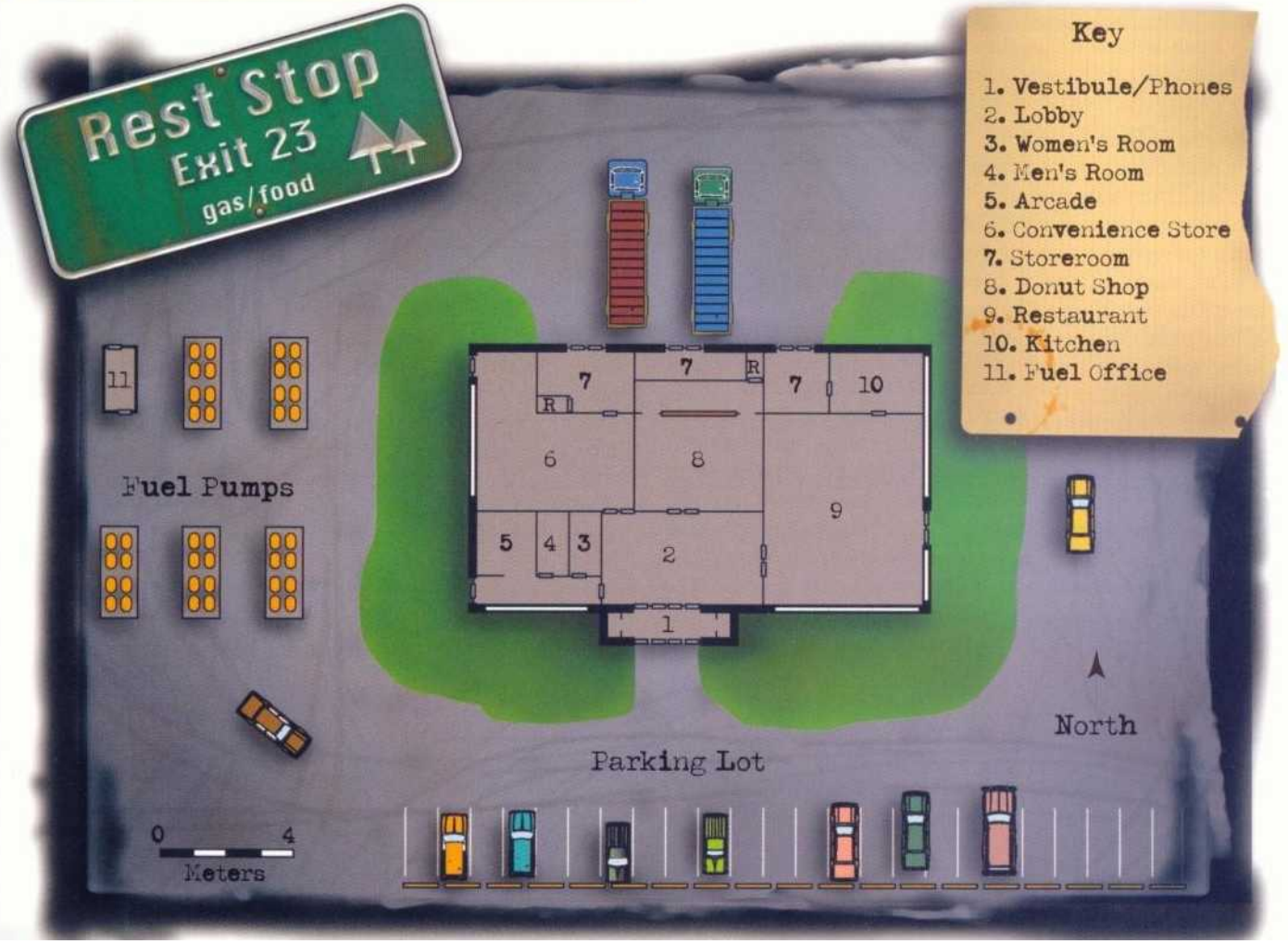
It's close to midnight now, but you've been stranded since sundown in a small interstate rest stop, waiting for the plows to come through so that you can get back on the road. A half-dozen motorists share your predicament, plus four or five rest stop employees who have stayed on to serve coffee and food for the duration of the storm.

Each of you has places to go and things to do, but for now you're all stuck here. No one's driving anywhere tonight, and no one's coming to get you out. Some of you have passed the time with a paperback novel or a magazine, while others have been chatting with the other motorists.

Ask the players to introduce their heroes for the game. Have the players state their heroes' names, describe their general appearance, and maybe even say something about where their heroes were going when the snowstorm set in.

Answer any questions the players have about the situation or the people around them. Here are a couple of the most likely questions you'll get:

What does this place look like? It's an interstate rest stop. You can use the map to explain the general layout of the





place. The heroes have been stuck here long enough to look around a little.

Who else is here? In addition to the heroes, a number of supporting characters are at the Exit 23 rest stop. You'll play these characters as the Gamemaster.

- A balding business executive of about 50, wearing a good suit and a conservative overcoat (Jonas Riley).
- A short, stocky lady truck driver wearing a flannel shirt and a sheepskin vest (Norma Thomson).
- A long-haired college student with John Lennon glasses, an Army jacket, and a sketchbook filled with Gigeresque drawings (John Black).
- A matronly waitress of about sixty years who runs the donut shop (Mabel Adams).
- A big, beefy truck driver in a cheap parka and a black ball cap (Jacob Dumont).
- A teenage kid with long hair and an apron who does the short-order cooking in the restaurant (Danny Wood, the witness in Scene 1).
- A pretty teenage girl who runs the register in the convenience store (Anne Banks).
- A young man with South Asian or Indian features who runs the gas station (Ahmed Singh).

Why can't I just keep driving? Your players may hail from someplace like Georgia or Florida, and they might find it hard to believe that a snowstorm could close a major highway. If any hero tries it, he or she gets about a mile so down the highway and drives into a ditch. It takes a long, cold walk to get back to the rest stop, and then you can continue with the adventure.

Okay, so what do we do now? Tell your players to wait a minute while you finish the introduction, and then they can tell you what their heroes are doing.

You're sitting in the donut shop, nursing a cup of coffee, when the lights flicker. "Oh, great," mutters Mabel, the counter waitress—and then the lights go out altogether. Somewhere on the other side of the rest stop you hear a door slam open, followed by a vicious blast of freezing cold air that somehow finds its way over to where you sit. The wind howls like something alive, scratching and clawing at you with an icy grasp.

Without even thinking about it, you abruptly realize that something is horribly, terribly wrong. Then you hear an awful racket from the direction of the rest rooms—violent blows, choking cries, breaking glass, and finally one more high-pitched scream that makes your blood run cold.

The wind howls again, more doors slam . . . and then the room becomes still again, except for the distant whistling of the storm outside.

"What in heaven was that?" Mabel says in the darkness.

What do you do?

If any player thinks to ask, tell him or her that the following characters are not in the donut shop at the moment: the ex-

ecutive, the cook, and the guy in the Army jacket. (The gas station and convenience store cashiers shut down their stations and joined everyone in the donut shop.) People have been coming and going all night, so it's not unusual that several aren't here right now.

If your players don't know what else to do, encourage them to investigate the screams from the rest rooms. Proceed to Scene 1.

Scene 1: A Grisly Discovery

When the heroes investigate the screams and sounds of struggle they heard earlier, read or paraphrase the text below:

> The last gust of wind seems to have knocked out power to the rest stop. There's just enough illumination from various emergency lights to carefully move through the darkened building. Wind screams outside, howling past an open door or broken window clattering shrilly somewhere out of sight.
>
> At the rest room, a body is sprawled in the doorway. It's the young man in the Army jacket, and he's quite dead. Several needle-sharp icicles as long as swords impale the corpse, now surrounded by a puddle of slick scarlet ice. He seems to have been stabbed through the back as he left the rest room.
>
> Inside the men's room, you find another body—the executive. Like the guy at the door, he's transfixed by several icicles, but while you watch, he groans and stirs. "Help me," he gasps. "So . . . cold . . ."

The dead man is John Black. He's beyond any help the heroes can give. The executive is Jonas Riley. He's been badly injured, impaled through the thigh, upper arm, and side, but by pure chance the icicles missed killing him.

This is a challenge scene, with the following challenges for the heroes to resolve: help Riley; make some deductions about what happened from the first look at the scene; search the scene for hidden clues; and search the surrounding areas. Ask the players what their heroes do, but suggest some of these options if necessary.

Helping Riley

Riley's game statistics don't really matter in this adventure. He's sustained several points of mortal damage in the attack, which means that he'll be unconscious and helpless for the balance of the adventure. It also means that he dies if he doesn't get help.

To stabilize Riley and keep him from dying, a hero must succeed in a skill check using one of the following skills: Knowledge–*first aid* or Medical Science–*treatment*.

Ask the players which of their heroes tries to help Riley. Add a +1 step penalty to reflect the difficulty of working on Riley's injuries in the dark, but ignore the penalty if the heroes provide some light for the doctor to work with.

Remember, to make a skill check, you'll ask the player to roll a d20 and a d0, d4, or d6 (for a +0, +1, or +2 step penalty), adding the results together. If the result is less than or equal to the hero's skill score for Knowledge–*first aid* or Medical Science–*treatment*, she succeeds in stabilizing Riley and preventing his death for now. If the skill check fails, Riley's condition worsens. The hero may make one more skill check at a +2 step penalty to stabilize the agent, and if this fails, Riley dies. (It's not critical to the adventure for Riley to survive.)

Depending on which heroes the players chose to play, there may not be any heroes present who know first aid or medicine. Remember, you can allow a hero to make an untrained skill check using his untrained Intelligence score to help Riley. The hero will probably fail, since this is a very difficult roll, but at least he can try.

Checking Out the Scene

If any player tells you that her hero is just looking around or trying to figure out what happened here, ask for an Awareness–*perception* or Investigate–*search* skill check for the hero. The result of this skill check indicates which of the clues noted below the hero notices. Any hero who looks around the scene sees that the stalls are empty, a trash can stands against one wall, and a condom dispenser hangs on the other wall. The mirror behind the sink has been holed and broken, and ice standing in the sink seems to have frozen right out of the faucet.

With a Marginal or better success, the hero notices that a fine layer of frost covers the entire room. This was not present the last time one of the heroes visited the facility; the rest room is much, much colder than it should be. (Most heroes notice this.)

An Ordinary or better success also allows the hero to note that no icicles large enough to kill someone have formed anywhere on the building, and certainly not in the rest room.

If the hero achieves a Good or better success, she realizes that Riley's attacker most likely hit him from the front, probably as he stood near the sink, judging by the blood splatters on the wall.

Finally, with an Amazing success, a hero also notices that Riley's coat hangs on a hook on the wall, but no other personal belongings from either victim are in sight.

Hidden Clues

Heroes who search the scene in detail for anything of interest may attempt an Investigate–*search* skill check.

An Ordinary success allows a hero to find Riley's valise stashed in the trash can underneath a layer of paper debris. It contains some papers (summed up in the sidebar below) and the snow globe. If the player indicates that his hero is specifically checking the trash can, he automatically finds this. (Riley stashed it here when the demon burst in, suspecting that he—or, more specifically, the globe—was the target.)

A Good or Amazing success allows the hero to find a footprint in the puddle of blood surrounding John Black's body. It seems to be the print of a large wolf or maybe a small bear.

Searching the Area

When the winter-demon attacked Riley and Black, Danny Wood was playing video games in the arcade next door. He got a good look at the creature, which scared him out of his wits. He's currently hiding behind an Asteroids game at the back of the arcade.

To find Danny, the heroes need to look around the corridor, lobby, and arcade—in other words, they need to look around out-

side the rest room as well as inside it. If a player tells you that his hero is examining the hallway, skip ahead to Scene 2.

If the players don't think to look around the area, you can cheat a little bit by telling the players that the heroes hear a clunk or scraping sound in the arcade.

The Snow Globe and Riley's Notes

Jonas Riley's briefcase is stashed in the trash can in the men's room. If the heroes find the briefcase and examine its contents, they'll find the snow globe and Riley's notes about the device and how he found it.

The snow globe is a simple glass sphere about 10 centimeters (4 inches) in diameter. At the moment, it contains a small representation of the rest stop where the heroes are sheltering against the storm, and the tiny flakes flurry downward without ever settling—you don't have to shake the globe to make the snow fall.

The globe is remarkably resistant to breakage and won't crack if dropped, thrown against a wall, or struck a good hard blow. (There is a way to destroy the globe, though the heroes shouldn't discover it at this point. See Scene 7.)

Riley's notes about the snow globe take about half an hour to read. If any hero takes the time to study them, take that player aside and sum up the information that appears in the "Adventure Background" heading. Omit any mention of Jacob Dumont, since Riley doesn't know that Dumont followed him.

Scene 2: Danny Wood

Danny Wood was playing games in the arcade when the winter-demon attacked John Black and Jonas Riley in the room right next door. When the heroes check out the hallway outside the rest room, read the text below to the players:

> The corridor just outside the rest room is dark and cold. At the end of the hallway, a door leading outside swings in the vicious, gusting wind, banging loudly against the wall. Fingers of swirling snow already dust the floor near the open door.
>
> To your right, the building's arcade is a dark cavern, with the normal chatter of video action silenced by the loss of power. Suddenly, there's a small rustling from somewhere inside, like something moving around in there.
>
> What do you do?

Play this up as a situation that may be dangerous—as far as the heroes know, the murderer could be hiding in here. Of course, it's only Danny Wood, hiding in the back of the room. But the heroes must go into the dark arcade (or at least call out) without knowing exactly what's in here. A good horror game involves an occasional tension-building scene that doesn't actually endanger anybody.

When the heroes identify themselves, challenge the occupant of the room, or just go in and look around, continue with the text below:

> Slowly and carefully, someone dressed in a fast-food uniform and apron stands up from behind a video game. It's the kid from the McDonald's, and he's obviously scared out his wits. "Please tell me it's gone," he says in a weak voice. "I don't know what it was, but I was sure it was gonna kill me."
>
> He looks around, panic growing in his eyes, and then starts for the door. "Man, I gotta get out of here!"

This is an encounter scene. Danny Wood is the only conscious witness to the killing, but he flees outside to his car and tries to drive away if the heroes don't calm him down and find out what happened.

Keeping Him Here

The first step is to prevent Danny from running off. Ask the players if the heroes let him leave. The heroes can restrain him physically (a hand on the shoulder is enough to stop him), or they can try to calm him down.

Calm Him Down: A successful Interaction or Interaction–*charm* skill check calms Danny.

Threaten Him: A successful Interaction or Interaction–*intimidate* skill check scares Danny enough to keep him here. Add a –2 step bonus if an obvious authority figure (Officer McDermott or anybody flashing a gun) makes the attempt.

Get Him Talking: A successful Interaction or Interaction–*interview* skill check gets Danny talking about what he saw and distracts him.

"It's Out There": If any hero points out that the killer is outside now, Danny abandons the notion of going for his car. No skill check is necessary.

Finding Out What He Saw

Even if the heroes keep Danny on the scene, the cook is very shaken up right now. The sight of Black's body by the entrance to the men's room panics him even more. With the first few questions the heroes ask, Danny just mumbles things like "I dunno" and "Oh, man, it just killed that guy!"

To get some better information from their witness, the heroes need to ask the right questions. Have the hero speaking to Danny make a successful Interaction–*interview* skill check (Dr. Akens is good at it) to dig out the following facts. Make one check per question, but you can apply a –2 step bonus if the heroes calmed him down or got him talking first.

What happened? "I was over here playing Asteroids when the lights went out. I started to walk out of the arcade, and suddenly the door flew open in the hallway. A big blast of snow and ice came in, and there was something in the middle of the snow—a big white wolf or animal or something."

What did it do? "It went right past me and into the men's room. I looked around the corner, and I saw the dead guy come staggering out, with those icicles sticking in him. I heard someone else yell, and then it came back out again. It looked at the dead guy, and then it left."

Where did it go? "The wolf-thing stopped right there, there where you're standing, and looked right at me. I think it was telling me it coulda killed me if it wanted to. Then it blew apart

into snow and ice, and it flew back out the door again. It's outside somewhere."

What did it look like, exactly? "I don't know, mister. It wasn't like anything I've ever seen before. It was part ice, part wind, part animal. It had claws of ice, and eyes that glowed red. It howled, too, just like the wind, but there were a thousand voices in it, saying stuff in some language I don't know. I hope to God I never see it again."

You can allow the players to grill Danny for as long as they like, but the cook doesn't know anything more.

Do I Know Anything About This?

After looking over the murder scene and talking to Danny, your players may ask if their heroes have any knowledge of supernatural entities or murders with this kind of MO (*modus operandi*). Most of the heroes described in the templates simply have had no exposure to this kind of happening before. There are two exceptions, though: Officer McDermott and Dr. Akens.

Officer McDermott: If the player running McDermott asks if she's heard of any similar killings lately, ask the player to make a Law–*enforcement* skill check. If the check succeeds, McDermott realizes that there have been no other killings like this in the area.

Dr. Akens: The player running Dr. Akens may ask if he knows anything about this. Ask him to make a Lore–*occult lore* skill check (add a –2 step bonus if Dr. Akens has read through Riley's notes on Galvin's snow globe). If successful, Akens can draw the following conclusions from the evidence at hand:

- If Galvin was a diabolist (an evil sorcerer), the creature that attacked Riley and Black may have been some kind of demon. Such things come in many varieties, and ice-demons or winter-demons have been described in some obscure occult texts.
- Demons or spirits are often bound to specific missions or tasks, such as the destruction of a particular person or the recovery of a specific object.
- Demons may be invulnerable to normal weapons, but sometimes possess other weaknesses—a susceptibility to silver weapons, fear of bright light, and so on.

Scene 3: Who Goes There?

At this point, the heroes are probably studying the murder scene, examining Riley's briefcase, talking to Danny Wood, and working to make Riley comfortable. The winter-demon realizes that it still hasn't accomplished its mission, and it lures people outside.

Begin this scene when Scene 2 is starting to finish up. You could also start this scene anytime a hero ventures outside into the storm.

> The wind howls outside, and the snow continues to fall. The building is dark and cold, with icy gusts reaching into every corner of the structure. Mabel, the lady running the donut shop, has lit a couple of gas lanterns in that corner of the rest stop, but it's still dim and shadowy in here.
>
> Abruptly, bright light fills the lobby. One by one, the headlights of the cars outside are coming on. Over the moaning of the storm, you can hear a cacophony of horns and car alarms going off all at once. You can also hear glass breaking outside.
>
> What do you do?

The heroes don't have to do anything, of course. They can let the demon outside trash their cars, and no one will get hurt. But several heroes have weapons or special equipment sitting out in their cars, and they may want to retrieve this gear at some point. If the heroes choose to stay inside and do nothing, go on to Scene 4 after the winter-demon commits a few acts of miscellaneous vandalism to the heroes' cars.

Anyone who goes outside to confront the creature or to get some gear is in for a combat scene. The demon does its best to injure or kill someone. It attacks lone heroes who are far away from their companions before it goes after a group of heroes.

> The wind screams and rages all around you as you stumble out into the snow. It's surprisingly deep, almost to your knees, and you can't see anything with the snow whipping past your eyes. Suddenly, the car horns and alarms fall silent.

Randomly select one of the heroes who is outside for the winter-demon to attack and have that hero's player roll an Awareness skill check (Doug Nichols's player can make an Awareness–*intuition* skill check instead). If the check fails, the winter-demon gets a free attack on the hero. Read the following text:

> From out of the storm's fury, something slams into you like a locomotive, slashing and gouging you with icy claws.

Roll the winter-demon's attack and damage (if it hits) normally.

If the skill check succeeds, the hero senses the winter-demon's presence just before it attacks. Read the following text:

> Despite the poor visibility and biting cold, you sense an even greater cold approaching you. And then you see two points of fiery red, like sinister eyes burning into your soul. . . .

After the winter-demon gets its free attack, or after the hero spots the demon just before it attacks, ask all the players whose heroes are outside to make action checks. This means that each player should roll a 20-sided die and compare it to his character's action check score to generate a Marginal, Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result. Roll an action check for the winter-demon, but apply a –1 step bonus to the demon's action check since it's in its own element. Any heroes who are still inside the building must wait until the next action round before they can roll action checks and take any actions in the fight.

Now, count down through each phase of the round. Start with the Amazing phase and ask if any players achieved an Amazing action check. Then proceed to the Good, the Ordinary, and the Marginal phases.

When a player's turn comes up, ask her what her hero does. If the player wants to attack, ask her to make a skill check using



Winter-Demon

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	14	7	+2 steps
Dexterity	11	5	+1 step
Constitution	12	6	
Intelligence	8	4	
Will	12	6	+1 step
Personality	9	4	

Action Check Score: 15+/14/7/3

1–3	Amazing	8–14	Ordinary
4–7	Good	15+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 12	○○○○○○○○○○○○
Wound 12	○○○○○○○○○○○○
Mortal 6	○○○○○○

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Claws	16/8/4	Personal	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4+1m	LI
Icicles**	12/6/3	4/8/12	d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w	HI

* +1 step penalty for medium range, +2 steps for long

** The demon can throw three icicles at one time, making three attack rolls at a +1, +2, and +3 step penalty, respectively.

Armor

Hide*	d4+2 (LI)	d4+1 (HI)	d4–1 (En)

* The demon's armor is of Good quality. Damage rolled from physical attacks degrade by one type before secondary damage is assigned or armor is checked. Consequently, if a hero inflicts mortal damage on the winter-demon, it becomes wound damage. Similarly, wound damage becomes stun damage. If a hero inflicts stun damage (for instance, from a punch), the winter-demon ignores the damage.

Special

The winter-demon can use its action to dissolve into a cloud of ice and snow that can't be affected by any damage except fire, although this prevents the creature from attacking. It can resume its physical form by spending another action to do so.

The demon gains a –1 step bonus to its action checks and a +1 step increase to its Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers while it is outside in the snowstorm.

The demon can use an action to create a minor supernatural effect (flickering lights, frightening sounds, gusts of wind) within 10 meters. This requires a successful Will feat check.

Background/Personality

The winter-demon is a powerful, malevolent entity from another dimension. Jacob Dumont's fellow cultists conjured it to kill Jonas Riley and retrieve the snow globe, and it obeys Dumont's commands. The creature can shift between two body forms at will. The first is a large, wolflike biped with claws of ice and a gaping jaw filled with needle-sharp fangs; the demon can make physical attacks in this form.

The second form is a cloud of snow, ice, and wind. In cloud-form, the demon can't attack, but it can't be harmed by any force except fire. In cloud-form, the demon can fly at a rate of about 100 kilometers per hour (or 400 meters per round).

The winter-demon is very resistant to normal physical attacks, but magical attacks, fire, and silver weapons can harm it. Attacks of these types do not downgrade in effect.

the appropriate skill. Add a +2 step penalty to the heroes' attack rolls while they're outside, since driving snow limits visibility.

The winter-demon attacks a hero when its turn comes up.

After you've called for heroes to act in the Marginal (last) phase of the first round, the first round of combat ends. Ask each player to make an action check for the next round and repeat the process. The demon attacks a different hero each round.

Ending the Fight

Repeat the same process of action checks and Amazing, Good, Ordinary, and Marginal actions each round until the fight is over. The fight ends when all heroes retreat back into the building, after the demon injures three heroes, when the demon suffers more than six points of wound damage, or after five action rounds. Read the text below when the fight ends:

> Suddenly, the white wolf-thing seems to fly apart in a spray of icy shards. A whirlwind of snow and howling wind dances and spins where the creature was standing. Dozens of shrieking voices seem to gibber and moan in the wind, and the creature laughs maniacally. Then it's gone, flying off into the blizzard. But you can still feel it out there, watching you.

It's very likely that several heroes may be wounded without hurting the demon at all. That's okay—this is a horror game, and you want the players to be scared for their heroes.

Assuming that the heroes retreat or drive off the demon and then go back inside, give the players a few minutes to talk things over, and then go on to Scene 4.

Scene 4: Smoke 'em Out

While the heroes are occupied with the demon outside, Jacob Dumont decides to drive everyone out of the building and into the storm. He figures that the best way to do this is to start a fire. The demon can pick off individuals one at a time under the cover of darkness, and Dumont can search the rest stop for Riley's valise without interference, at least until he's forced to leave, too. (Dumont is more about action than good plans.)

During the heroes' investigation of the murder scene and fight with the demon, Dumont douses the newspaper stand in the store with gas from the gas pump and lights it. When the heroes are recovering from their encounter with the winter-demon, read or paraphrase the following text:

> You're keeping an eye open for more strange happenings when you become aware of a strange orange glow illuminating the dark lobby. At the same time, you smell smoke! Behind you, the magazine stand in one corner of the convenience store is blazing away, and the flames are spreading fast!
>
> What do you do?

This is a challenge scene—the heroes must extinguish the flames within six rounds, or the store becomes a blazing inferno that simply can't be extinguished with the materials at hand. Six rounds after the store goes up, heat and smoke make the lobby and the donut shop untenable. Six rounds after that, the entire building must be abandoned.

Each hero can act once per round, but they have no real opposition to act against—you can skip action checks. Just keep track of how many times each hero has acted.

To extinguish the flames before they spread, the heroes must amass 10 successes with various firefighting techniques, some of which are listed below:

Beat Out the Flames: Heroes can use coats, blankets, or stomping to fight the flames. Each round a hero tries to beat out the flames, have the player make a Strength feat check for his hero. An Ordinary success counts as 1 success toward putting out the fire, a Good counts as 2, and an Amazing counts as 3 successes. If the hero rolls a natural 20 on the control die, he catches fire and sustains 1d4 points of wound damage! He needs to roll on the ground the next round to put out the flames.

Each round that a hero stays up close to the flames, he suffers 1d4 points of stun damage (no armor prevents this). If a hero passes out in here, someone else must use an action to pull him out, or the fire kills him.

Get a Fire Extinguisher: It takes one action to locate a fire extinguisher, and another action to get the extinguisher back to the scene of the fire and get it ready for use. In the third round, the hero may start fighting the fire. Each action with a fire extinguisher requires a Dexterity feat check with a –3 step bonus (d20–d8). On a Failure, the hero scores 1 success toward extinguishing the fire; on an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result, she scores 2, 3, or 4 successes.

Fire extinguishers are located in the restaurant kitchen, the storeroom of the donut shop, the convenience store (inaccessible due to the fire), and the hallway outside the rest rooms.

Use Water or Snow: To use water or snow effectively, the hero must spend one action to locate a bucket or container. A second action fills the bucket and another action gets him to the scene. After that, it takes one action to load up and one action to get the water or snow on the fire. Have the hero make a Strength feat check with a –1 step bonus. He scores 1, 2, or 3 successes toward extinguishing the fire with an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result.

Move Flammables Away: Each time a hero spends an action to clear possible fuel for the fire away from the area, she buys one more round before the flames spread. For example, if a hero spends two actions moving flammable objects away from the magazine stand, the fire won't spread until eight rounds have passed instead of six. No skill check is necessary. At best, this tactic can buy six additional rounds before the fire spreads.

Scene 5: Firebug

The heroes should be able to put out the fire. If you have only one or two players in your game, you can make it easier by ruling that it takes 5 successes to put out the fire. Wait until the heroes have finished putting out the fire, then read the text:

> Well, you're not cold any longer. Sweat runs down your face and stings your eyes, and you're pretty sure you've got some



minor burns on your hands and face. But it looks like you've got the fire under control. It's already dying out. Over the smell of smoke, you can make out a different odor—the sharp tang of gasoline in the air. That fire wasn't an accident.

Suddenly, you hear a couple of loud bangs from the other room. A woman screams: "Look out! He's got a gun!"

What do you do?

Since the heroes extinguished his fire, Dumont is trying something more direct. Any hero in the donut shop sees Dumont draw a gun and move out toward the lobby, firing a couple of shots in the air to drive everybody else to the ground. If Officer McDermott is in the donut shop at the start of the scene, the fight begins right away as Dumont yanks out a gun and starts shooting at her. (Ignore the boxed text below if this is the case.) Otherwise, he steps into the lobby to confront the heroes.

You can hear people screaming and diving for cover in the other room. Suddenly, the big trucker in the black baseball cap appears in the doorway of the donut shop, pointing a pistol in your direction. "I won't let you meddle with my plans any longer," he hisses. He raises the pistol. "Time to die!"

What do you do?

Have the players make action checks for their heroes—this is definitely a combat scene. Make an action check for Dumont, too. When his turn comes up, the cultist shoots at any armed character he can see. If no one is carrying weapons, he shoots at Officer McDermott. If Dumont doesn't see any armed characters out here, he shoots at whichever character is standing nearby.

Dumont doesn't expect anyone behind him to do anything, so if a hero is in the donut shop, he can attack Dumont from behind with a –2 step bonus to his attack roll.

Most of the heroes are probably armed by this point, so they should kill or incapacitate Dumont quickly. Remember to apply the heroes' Dexterity resistance modifiers to Dumont's attack rolls when he shoots at them. If the fight goes poorly for Dumont (if less than half his wound boxes are left, or he's suffered mortal damage), he surrenders; go to Scene 6.

Taking Down Dumont

Your players might have their heroes tackle or grab Dumont to wrestle him to the ground and get the gun away from him.

If a hero tries to do something like this, have the player make an Unarmed Attack–*brawl*, Unarmed Attack–*power martial arts*, or Acrobatics–*defensive martial arts* skill check. Instead of inflicting damage, the hero puts a hold of Ordinary, Good, or Amazing quality on Dumont. If the heroes use a second action to wrestle with Dumont while he's held, the hold turns into a pin—they get him on the ground and get him under control.

Dumont can continue to shoot or act while held, but he suffers a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty depending on whether he's in an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing hold. He can't do anything while pinned, as long as the heroes keep him under control.

Dumont may use an action to try to break out of a hold, but

Jacob Dumont, Cult Member

Combat Specialist

Ability	Score	Untrained	Resistance
Strength	12	6	+1 step
Dexterity	11	5	+1 step
Constitution	10	5	
Intelligence	9	4	
Will	12	6	+1 step
Personality	6	3	

Action Check Score: 14+/13/6/3

1–3	Amazing	7–13	Ordinary
4–6	Good	14+	Marginal

Durability

Stun 12	○○○○○○○○○○
Wound 12	○○○○○○○○○○
Mortal 6	○○○○○

Weapon	Score	Range (S/M/L)	Damage (O/G/A)	Type
Unarmed	14/7/3	Personal	d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s	LI
Pistol*	13/6/3	6/12/50	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI

*+1 step penalty for medium range, +2 steps for long

Armor

Kevlar vest	d6–3 (LI)	d6–2 (HI)	d4–2 (En)

Skills

Athletics [12]; Unarmed Attack [12]–*brawl* [14]; Ranged Weapons [11]–*pistol [13]*; Vehicle Operation [11]; Stamina [10]–*endurance [11]*; Knowledge [9]–*language (French) [12]*, *language (English) [11]*; Awareness [12]–*intuition [13]*; Lore [12]–*occult lore [13]*; Resolve [12]; Interaction [6].

Background/Personality

Dumont is a member of *Les Trieze Corbins*, the acolytes of the modern-day sorcerer Michel Galvin. He and his companions have waited for years since Galvin's disappearance to get their hands on his arcane lore. In the current situation, Dumont thinks nothing of killing everyone in the rest stop to accomplish his goals and glorify the dark powers he worships.

Dumont is a large, powerfully built man who dresses like a trucker or longshoreman. He speaks with a guttural French-Canadian accent, when he speaks at all—he's normally surly and unresponsive to any kind of attempts at conversation.

not a pin. To break out, he must make a Strength feat check (add the Strength resistance modifier of the holding hero) and match or beat the success of the hold. For example, if Dumont were held with a Good hold, he would need a Good or Amazing success on his Strength feat check to break free. Of course, even if he does, he can be tackled again.

If the heroes defeat Dumont without killing him, go to Scene 6. If he gets away or the heroes kill him, go to Scene 7.

Scene 6: *Les Trieze Corbins*

You need to run this scene only if the heroes capture Dumont without incapacitating him. They can't talk to him if he runs off, is dead, or is unconscious. If the cultist can't be questioned, skip ahead to Scene 7.

The trucker is a big man, with a thin beard and a feverish intensity in his eyes. He's dressed in a weathered old parka and wears a black ball cap on his head. Strands of unkempt hair cover his shoulders. He looks up at you with contempt. "You think I am beaten so easily, eh?" he snarls. He's got a strange accent, maybe French-Canadian, in his voice. "I think no. My friend out in the storm will dispose of you one by one. When morning comes, I'll be here, and you'll all be frozen corpses!"

This is an encounter scene. The heroes have a chance to interrogate Dumont and find out what he's up to, what's waiting outside, and how they can defeat it. It's also another way for you to let the players in on the story's background so that they'll understand why their heroes became involved.

Questions and Answers

Ask the players if their heroes are replying to Dumont's threat or asking him questions. Determine what topic they're asking about and use the guidelines to determine what they can get out of the cultist. Remember, Dumont is contemptuous and angry. He'll spit out anything he says, adding various insults as you see fit.

Who Are You? "I am Jacob Dumont."

If the players ask what he does or where he comes from, Dumont tells them that he is a powerful sorcerer. He threatens them with horrible dooms. "You have meddled with *Les Trieze Corbins*. We shall remember that—always."

What's Going on Here? "Nothing that you should have interfered with, fool."

If the players press harder, call for an Interaction–*interview*, Interaction–*intimidate*, or Investigate skill check. (If the speaking hero doesn't have any of these skills, an Interaction check is fine.) Each successful skill check reveals one piece of information:

- Dumont's here to retrieve some artifact.
- The artifact was in the possession of a man named Jonas Riley—the fellow who was injured in the demon's attack.
- The demon is helping Dumont.

What Are You Looking For? "If I tell you, you will keep it from me. I am not stupid."

If the players press, he adds, "It is something sacred—a work of my master's hand. I will not have you defile it with your touch."

What Is the Thing Outside? "A demon of winter—a great and terrible demon. I command it. Soon it will destroy all of you!"

How Do We Beat the Demon? "Hah! Your weapons are almost useless. Better to consider how you want to meet your end."

If the players continue, have them make skill checks as described above. Each successful skill check reveals a piece of the following information:

- The demon won't give up until it accomplishes its mission.
- Magical spells may dismiss the creature. (Unfortunately, neither Dumont nor the heroes know any magical spells.)
- Mundane weapons won't hurt it much, but fire or silver might harm it.

What If We Just Kill (or Hurt) You Now? "I have no fear of death or torture. There are more of us. One sacrifice for the cause is nothing."

Getting Ready?

While the heroes were interrogating or holding Dumont, they may have had some time to make some preparations for another confrontation with the demon. Ask the players if they want their heroes to do anything while they're questioning Dumont.

Get Weapons: McDermott and Wheeler have some heavy weapons in their cars. Retrieving them takes the heroes only a minute, but make sure you scare the players by allowing them to think the demon may attack at any moment!

Get Fire: Preparing torches or Molotov cocktails (gasoline-filled bottles with rags stuffed into the neck for easy lighting and throwing) is a good idea. It takes only a few minutes for a hero to pump gas from the filling station, but he or she has to go outside first. Again, scare the players to build suspense.

Get Silver: Several characters may have silver jewelry, and the convenience store includes a few pieces of locally made sterling silver earrings. It takes only a few minutes to empty the buckshot from a shotgun shell and stuff it full of silver. Assume that the heroes can put together six shots' worth of silver.

Interview's Over

Allow the players to question Dumont until they've followed up two or three lines of inquiry. Then read the text below and go to Scene 7.

> Dumont suddenly throws back his head and laughs. "I tire of this game," he says. "Come to me, my pet!" He gives out a horrifying shriek, spitting out words in a language you don't know.

Scene 7: Fire and Ice

If the heroes kill or incapacitate Dumont, or when Dumont decides the interrogation is over, the ice-demon breaks into the building to finish off the surviving heroes. This time the demon tries to kill everyone it can catch.

> Outside, the wind howls. You hear glass breaking and the sound of a door flying open. A gust of icy wind sweeps through the building, as the storm suddenly reaches out for you!
>
> Screaming in panic, the other people in the rest stop—the employees and your fellow travelers—scatter and run, seeking shelter. In the confusion, a sharp blast of wind knocks over the gas lanterns, which gutter out, leaving you in darkness!



The demon attacks any hero it can catch. Remember that the creature is indoors now, so it loses its action check bonus and superior resistance modifiers.

If you want to make this fight more dramatic, the demon slashes once at a hero and then chases one of the supporting cast members. Mabel runs into the storeroom; Anne and Danny flee into the restaurant; Ahmed runs for the nearest door; and Norma just goes to ground under a table in the donut shop.

Fight Ice with Fire . . .

The players may realize by now that guns don't work extremely well against the ice-demon. There are several ways to attack the demon with fire, though. Dr. Neary has several road flares in her car, and the gas station is nearby. There are three ways to use these weapons against the creature.

Warding: Any open flame or a burning flare deters the demon from attacking a hero who specifically tries to keep the flame between the creature and herself. The demon must make a successful Will feat at a +2 step penalty to ignore a flare or torch and attack the hero carrying the flame.

Douse and Light: There's plenty of gasoline around. A hero could fill a bucket with gasoline and carry a lighter, torch, or flare to light the gasoline fast. Dousing the demon requires the hero to get close to the demon (3 meters or less) and make a successful Dexterity feat check with a –1 step bonus. Lighting the gasoline takes another action. If the demon is set aflame, it suffers d6, 2d6, or 3d6 points of wound damage on an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success with the dousing attempt.

Molotov Cocktail: Attacking with a Molotov cocktail requires an Athletics–*throw* skill check (or just Athletics, if the hero has no *throw* skill). The cocktail ignites immediately, without needing an action to torch it off. It inflicts d4, d6, or 2d6 points of wound damage on an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success with the attack roll.

Aerosol Sprays: Using fire to light the liquid from a can of hair spray, for example, can inflict d4+1 points of stun damage, d4 points of wound damage, or d4+2 points of wound damage for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success.

. . . or Gunfire

Wheeler's assault rifle and Officer McDermott's shotgun aren't much more effective than pistols, since the damage still downgrades before it affects the demon.

Silver Bullets: If the heroes loaded any shotgun shells with silver, they'll do much better. The demon is affected normally by silver weapons (no downgrading effect to damage), and it receives no armor protection against silver projectiles. Since the shotgun inflicts double damage at short range, one or two hits with silver-filled shells should take care of the demon.

Occult Knowledge

Dr. Akens knows enough about the occult to suspect that Dumont doesn't have the skill to control the winter-demon without help. During the battle, have the player running Dr. Akens roll a Lore–*occult lore* skill check. If successful, he realizes that the snow globe may be some sort of talisman that keeps the demon in check. (If Dr. Akens has read through Riley's notes, give the player a –2 step bonus to the skill check.) This successful skill check also allows Akens to theorize that the snow globe may have the same vulnerability that the demon does—fire.

Destroying the snow globe requires that it be engulfed in fire or great heat for 1 round, then struck with a hard object. During the time the globe is heated, the winter-demon is completely vulnerable to *any* attack. If the globe is struck after the round of heat, it instantly shatters, at which point the demon is no longer tied to this dimension (since it can no longer achieve its designated goal). Should this occur, the demon must make a Will feat check at the beginning of each round. If it succeeds, it remains in the fight. If it fails, go to "Victory?" below.

Victory?

If the heroes defeat the demon or destroy the snow globe, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The howling of the wind and the screaming of the winter-demon rise to an intolerable pitch. Stinging ice scours your flesh, and waves of bitter cold rake your body. Then the creature seems to explode into a spray of ice, dissipating in the wind. Its chattering howls die with it, slowly fading away. The wind relents, and the malign sentience of the storm outside seems to vanish as well.
>
> It's done.

Or Defeat?

If the demon is simply too much for the heroes, you can spare their lives—just make sure that the demon can reach the snow globe. If a hero is carrying the artifact, the demon batters that hero into unconsciousness and then steals the globe; if the globe is simply lying about somewhere, the demon ignores the heroes, seizes the globe, and leaves. If he can, Dumont makes his escape.

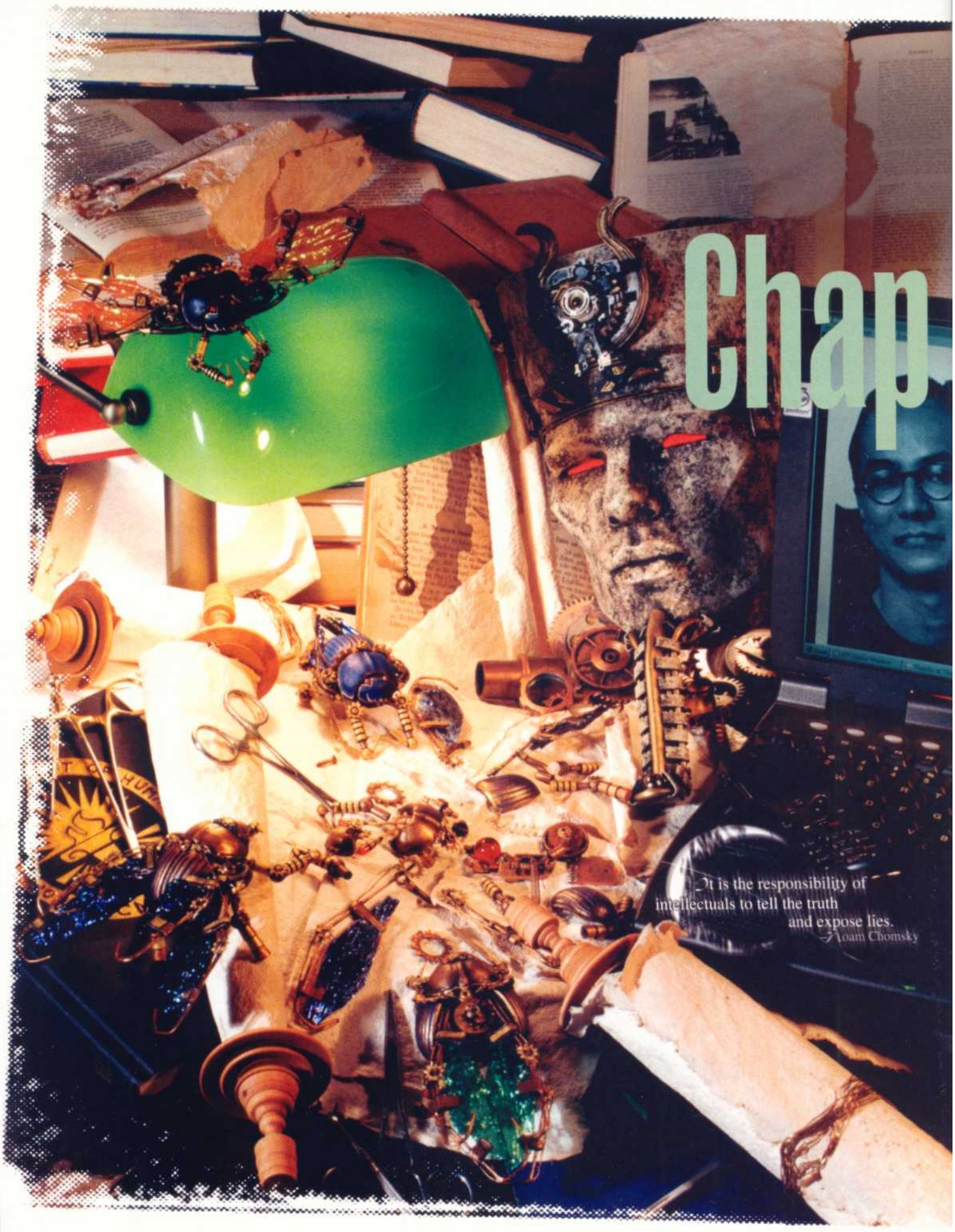
If some of the heroes are in bad shape, the supporting characters who work in the rest stop can attempt to save their lives with some quick first aid. Use your discretion, but don't be too harsh.

Conclusion

If Jonas Riley survives, he comes to sometime around sunrise. Although he's weak and exhausted, he carefully questions the heroes about the events of the preceding night. Then he offers the heroes his business card, marked with the Hoffmann Institute logo. "You handled yourselves pretty well," Riley tells them. "We're looking for people like you." This is a great way to set the stage for *Raw Recruits*, the adventure in Chapter 11 of this book.

If Riley didn't survive, another Hoffmann Institute agent named Mary Carter shows up at the rest stop at daybreak, following the snowplows. She pieces together the heroes' story and offers the same deal.

If Dumont made his escape, don't worry. The bad guys might have won the day, but some or all of the heroes probably survived. They know the story of *Les Trieze Corbins* now, and they've got a reason to go after Dumont. You can use this as a springboard for another adventure—perhaps one of your own creation.


Chap
It is the responsibility of
intellectuals to tell the truth
and expose lies.
–Noam Chomsky

ter 2 welcome to the hoffmann institute

THE STANDARD DARK•MATTER CAMPAIGN ASSUMES THAT THE heroes are members or associates of the Hoffmann Institute, a private organization dedicated to investigating paranormal activities. If the Gamemaster prefers not to use the Institute as the heroes' employer, *Chapter 10: Campaign Options* suggests some alternative methods of involving the heroes in the intricacies of DARK•MATTER. If that is the case, the Gamemaster can use as much or as little of this chapter as is appropriate to introduce his players' heroes to the campaign setting.

The exact relationship of a particular hero to the Institute ultimately depends on the player, but at least one hero should be a direct employee. Heroes with certain careers (see *Chapter 3: Heroes of DARK•MATTER*) may be directly linked to the Institute hierarchy. Heroes with other careers may be allies, part-time employees, or new recruits of the Institute.

In many cases, the new recruit has already encountered the secret world investigated by the Institute. Perhaps the hero has manifested paranormal abilities, or witnessed a monstrous creature in a remote area, or been abducted by alien beings.

The Institute has recruited the hero to help in its work, and perhaps—if the hero possesses psychic or magical abilities—offered training in his or her strange new powers. In exchange for the Institute's resources and direction, the hero undertakes a vow of secrecy and a pledge to work against the tides of darkness sweeping across the land.

The Institute provides resources and guidance to its operatives. The degree of such help depends on the campaign and the experience of the heroes (and players). Veteran individuals can expect less assistance from the powers that be than newbies. In any case, it's never a good idea for heroes to rely on outsiders doing the job for them.

An Overview

The Hoffmann Institute was founded in 1917 with the goal of furthering scientific exploration. However, as the incidence of paranormal events—dubbed the "Dark Tide" by the Institute—continues to rise, the Institute finds itself on the front line in the battle for humanity's very future. As one of the few groups capable of recognizing and dealing with paranormal or alien threats, the Institute takes an active role in protecting the interests of the human race.

The Institute does not seek fame for its actions and takes great precautions to keep its more unusual activities from coming into the public eye. To the general populace, the Institute appears to be nothing more than a private think tank engaged in research on alternative energy sources, psychic phenomena, and other fringe topics. A public website proclaims the Institute's mission as "Improving the Human Condition." Teams in the field often pose as reporters or scientists involved in routine investigations of strange incidents.

Even those within the Institute are often kept from knowing too much about its activities. To ensure this security, most department chiefs or field directors lead specific city branches for no more than five years. After this term, the Institute inevitably transfers the chief or director to another city. In addition, only Director Itohiro Nakami himself knows the precise size of the organization; each division supervisor knows how many agents and researchers report to him or her, but not how many answer to the Institute as a whole. Conservative estimates put the size of the staff at around 2,300 in the U.S. and 800 overseas (this estimate does not include part-time staff or contract employees).

Though the Institute doesn't appear to make a profit, its sources of funding elicit much speculation. In fact, the UN and certain departments within the U.S. government foot part of the bill for the Institute's operations, though the Institute's practice of occasionally working at cross-purposes with those groups makes the whole arrangement seem more than a little questionable.

Recruitment

As noted above, the Hoffmann Institute recruits heroes for a variety of reasons. But whether it targets a specific individual based on her skills, her background, her paranormal abilities, or simply due to an encounter with the unusual, the process is generally the same.

First, the Institute researches the target's background. While criminal activity won't scare the recruiters off, they definitely want to know if the hero can handle encounters with unexplainable phenomena. Sometimes a strong will and a strong arm are enough for recruitment, but usually the Institute looks for more.

Assuming the recruit passes the background check (and most rejects won't ever know it happened), the Institute approaches the hero, actively recruiting her assistance for some minor task. The job might be as simple as supplying a piece of information, or it might be as complicated as sheltering an injured agent. The Institute will most likely not even identify itself, instead posing as a private entity or, rarely, a government agency. The test involves the hero's trustworthiness and willingness to help.

Once these two hurdles have been negotiated, the Institute calls in the recruit for her first mission. Typically, she'll be teamed with three to five other recruits on a simple training mission—a straightforward investigation, a research trip, or some other job with a low potential for danger. Assuming the recruit completes the mission to the satisfaction of her supervisor, a promotion to agent, research assistant, or secretarial member (depending on the division to which the hero is assigned) is usually forthcoming. On rare instances, a second training mission may be required; however, if the hero fails to achieve full membership status after a second try, the Institute almost never extends a third offer.

November 4, 2001

From: Dr. Nakami, Institute Director
To: New Recruits
Re: Hoffmann Institute Employment

Dear New Recruit:

Thank you for joining the Institute; our work depends on recruiting adaptable, capable people in a wide range of fields, and your contributions will certainly help further the cause. By now you've had a chance to complete the Institute's Nondisclosure Form and to meet some of our employees. It's time for your first briefing.

Please report to the Institute's Chicago branch office at 10 A.M. Friday, November 9 for a meeting with Facility Chief R.A. Patterson. There, you will receive information on your first official mission for the Institute.

This booklet is intended to familiarize you with the Institute's organization and goals. Please read it over, commit the relevant facts to memory, and then destroy this document.

Sincerely,

絲寛 仲弥 博士

Dr. Itohiro Nakami

Investigations

The investigations of the Hoffmann Institute fall into three main areas: new technology, new species, and new signs of the changes that have been wrought on humans and on the Earth. Such projects are generally led by a field director or facility chief, who in turn parcels out portions of the work to other operatives. When this work is shared with those outside the Institute, it is always divided up and compartmentalized so that no single outsider can put all the pieces together.

New Technology. Many Institute researchers (particularly those in the Engineering & Fabrication department of the Analytical Division; see below) are devoted to examining alien technology. Sometimes that technology is "liberated" by agents from government labs, sometimes it is gathered during normal investigations, and sometimes it is acquired peacefully through trade. A few of the most dangerous of these items are simply examined, classified, and filed away. Others are subjected to reverse engineering or taken apart to study their internal construction and deduce the methods used in their manufacture. A few such items simply defy all attempts at understanding.

New Species. The most obvious sign of the so-called "Dark Tide" is the appearance of new breeds of mutants and even entire new species, some of them of unknown origin. The Institute investigates all such appearances, takes samples when it can, and makes careful notes on the powers, weaknesses, and behavior of each species.

New Signs. Finally, the Institute tracks new phenomena, primarily evidence of psychic powers, alleged incidents of magic, and reports of miracles (often dubbed "operative faith" among Institute staff). While much of this is just statistical tracking of the general background level of weirdness, the Institute singles out the most unusual reports for further investigation.

Hierarchy

While the Hoffmann Institute is hardly an example of fossilized bureaucracy, it does have an internal organization that most of its members rely on to route sensitive documents, pass decisions up the chain of command, set policy, and issue orders.

A division supervisor leads each of the five divisions, and these individuals report only to Director Nakami. Department chiefs and field directors (or facility chiefs, in the case of the Administrative Division) make up the bulk of "upper management" of the Institute. A single department chief oversees each department within the five divisions; for example, the Analytical Division has four department chiefs, one for each of its four subdivisions (see "Divisions & Resources," below). Field directors and facility chiefs supervise the day-to-day operations of their departments at each Institute branch office, though every department is not necessarily represented at every facility. Typically, the Institute draws these individuals from the ranks of agents, fellows, and researchers; however, because turnover at high levels is relatively slow, such promotions are few and far between. These individuals have greatly increased responsibility, but also enjoy access to resources, materials, reports, and information that field agents simply don't ever see. Along with the perks come additional dangers: Department chiefs and even division supervisors sometimes disappear or are found dead, victims of foul play by one of the Institute's many enemies.

The agents, researchers, and fellows that comprise the bulk of the Institute serve as the heart and soul of the organization. These brave men and women are sworn to secrecy and work in the most dangerous areas of espionage, paranormal research, and alien contact. Though many of them may never see the face of the enemy, all of them have a role to play in tackling conspiracies and alien infestations that have withstood the challenges of centuries. It takes guts to sign on at the Institute and even more courage to stick it out as a career. In order to move up through these ranks, agents must produce case reports, research papers, new information on alien species, or other proofs of investigation. Of course, some stay at the entry level forever, like a beat cop who never wants to be promoted to a desk job. Most employees of these ranks report to a supervisor at least one rank above them, though cross-departmental teams of agents may have more unusual setups (see the "Cross-Departmental Teams" sidebar below).

Recruits are exactly that: new recruits to the Institute. Most recruits are supervised by a facility chief in the Personnel department (see below), who reviews their work and distributes the necessary information for fulfilling missions (which are typically straightforward information-gathering operations). No one remains a recruit for more than a year; at that point, the Institute either promotes the recruit to agent, research assistant, or secretarial member status (depending on the division) or releases the recruit from employment.

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the auxiliaries, specialists who provide expertise to the Institute on an occasional basis in

Institute Titles

Director: Dr. Itohiro Nakami

Administrative	Analytical	Archives	Intelligence	Special
Division Supervisor	Division Supervisor	Division Supervisor	Division Supervisor	Division Supervisor
Department Chief	Department Chief	Department Chief	Department Chief	Department Chief
Facility Chief	Field Director	Field Director	Field Director	Field Director
Senior Fellow	Research Director	Research Director	Agent in Charge	Agent in Charge
Institute Fellow	Research Fellow	Research Fellow	Special Agent	Special Agent
Junior Fellow	Researcher	Researcher	Field Agent	Field Agent
Secretarial Member	Research Assistant	Research Assistant	Agent	Agent
		Recruit		
		Auxiliary		

exchange for information or a simple paycheck. Many of these associates are engineering, manufacturing, computer, or military specialists. A few know the truth about the Institute's mission but happen to work elsewhere (often in the U.S. government), and these auxiliaries actively support its goals.

Secrecy and Clearances

Because of the dangers involved at all levels, the Institute takes its security and secrecy very seriously. In fact, anyone of recruit rank or higher must swear an oath of secrecy concerning the Institute's operations as a condition of their employment. (Those of auxiliary rank generally don't know any important secrets beyond their own task; however, nondisclosure agreements are common.) Employees who disobey Institute policy find their security clearances revoked, their pay docked, or their duties suddenly involving routine assignments in out-of-the-way stations for a few months. In the worst case, agents who betray the Institute by failing to live up to its exacting standards may be assigned something called "permanent debriefing." The stories told around the bunkers, labs, and office towers of agents who betrayed the Institute's trust are surely exaggerations (the story of the agent driven to madness by a concerted regime of psionic torture is a particular favorite), but no one doubts that the consequences for betrayal of Hoffmann secrets are dire indeed.

The Institute classifies all information into one of five categories and expects its members to treat the information accordingly. In most cases, a large label or stamp shows the clearance of the document in question.



Public. Public information from the Institute is published in various scholarly journals and disseminated by the Institute's press liaison (Junior Fellow Daniel Gerrick of the Legal department). The sum total of such information is very small and portrays the Institute as a private research foundation pursuing both government and corporate grants and projects.

Confidential. Confidential information is restricted to Institute members and their trusted associates. It is not to be shared with strangers but can be freely discussed among members. Recruits have access to confidential information only when given it by their supervisors.

Classified. Classified information may only be discussed behind closed doors at the Institute or in a secured location. All field directors have at least this level of clearance, and many agents do as well.

Secret. Secret information is discussed only within Institute facilities. All department chiefs have at least this level of clearance, though many field directors and agents in charge also have access to these materials.

Top Secret. Top Secret documents require retinal scans and passcodes to access from the Case Report Server (the Institute computer archive; see below). Such documents are printed on distinctive yellow paper. All division supervisors and a few department chiefs have this level of clearance.

Eyes-Only. This designation is sometimes added to Classified, Secret, or Top Secret documents when the originals are not to circulate, even from one Institute office to another. Most Eyes-Only documents are stored on the Case Report Server in a read-only format that makes printing and copying impossible; access requires a passcode, a retinal scan, and an authorization from a second Institute member of a rank equal to or higher than that of the person requesting the information.

The Institute keeps a few Eyes-Only documents under slightly less rigid security; these can be printed on a special red paper designed to discourage photocopying. The printed documents are meant to be shown as part of a briefing, read, and then returned to their point of origin. No Eyes-Only document may be kept for further study, copied, or even used for purposes of making notes.

Compensation and Benefits

The Institute pays its members quite well for their expertise and silence. Recruits generally receive a one-time payment of $1,000 for their training missions. Full employees (agents, research assistants, and secretarial members) receive a base salary of $4,000 per month (plus reasonable expenses related to Institute missions). Occasional bonus payments are also given for particularly successful missions or discoveries (or for the retrieval of valuable technology or artifacts). Such payments can vary from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the significance of the mission or discovery.

As an employee moves up the ranks, her salary increases as well; special agents make $70,000–90,000 per year, while department chiefs typically pull down salaries in the low to mid-six figures. Benefit packages (including training, retirement, medical, and legal assistance) are also very attractive, though not too many field agents dip into the pension fund: Heroes tend to die young.

Institute Training

Most agents can expect to receive necessary training from the Institute. For instance, the Institute prefers that all agents working in the field have the following three broad skills: Unarmed Attack, Modern Ranged Weapons, and Investigate. Recruits who join the Institute should consider learning these broad skills as soon as possible. Other skills useful to the DARK•MATTER hero are described in the "Skills Every Hero Should Have" sidebar in *Chapter 3: Heroes of DARK•MATTER*.

Hoffmann provides qualified trainers for employees who desire to improve their skills. Agent training is free of charge and should be limited to skills appropriate for the employee's line of work (though training requests are rarely denied).

The Gamemaster should assume that the Institute has trainers capable of teaching any broad skill and up to rank 3 in any specialty skill available in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. The Gamemaster may roll the results of any Teach skill check (average Teach–*specific field* skill rank of 12) or assume that on average, any Institute teacher subtracts 1 skill point from the cost of any skill taught. Consult the rules for the Teach skill given in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook* for more information.

Trainers capable of improving specialty skills beyond rank 3 are relatively rare (and should probably be designed specially by the Gamemaster). If a hero seeks such a trainer, the Gamemaster may require the hero to find this individual through roleplaying or using contacts.

Divisions & Resources

The Institute has five primary divisions, each responsible for a different aspect of the Institute's overall goals: the Administrative Division, the Analytical Division, the Archives, the Intelligence Division, and the Special Division. Most divisions have a presence in all of the Institute's branch offices, though that presence may be as limited as a single individual in some of the smaller facilities. Each division is centered in a different city or compound. Divisions are further divided into departments, as noted below. A branch director, responsible for all operations within a specific facility, oversees each individual Institute office; this title only denotes the chief executive of an individual facility, whether he or she is a field director, department chief, or even a division supervisor.

Director Nakami leads the Administrative Council, a group of executives responsible for keeping the Institute on track and out of the public eye. The most prominent members include the five division supervisors and the department chiefs within the Administrative Division. Certain branch directors responsible for particularly sensitive offices and affairs within the Institute also attend from time to time.

Administrative Division

The "suits" make policy, assign agents to specific cases, and authorize the use of force in difficult cases. More often, however, they simply try to keep the rest of the Institute on track and under budget; most executives are equal parts bean counter and inspirational speaker.

Division Supervisor Gail Morland simultaneously holds positions of strength and weakness. As head of the policy-making Administrative Division, Morland is one of the most senior members of the Institute. However, all three of her department chiefs sit in on most top-level briefings, so she doesn't have full control over the flow of information from top to bottom. The three department chiefs of this division rate among some of the most prominent Institute members: the policy director (who implements Dr. Nakami's executive directives and oversees legal matters), the director of the budget (responsible for Facilities & Accounts, Personnel, and Training), and the director of security.

Members of the Administrative Division often specialize in skills such as Administration, Business, Law, Security, and Teach. Careers particularly suited to the Administrative Division include corporate security specialist, facilitator, military officer, police officer, and soldier.

While this division isn't necessarily the best one for young agents (or heroes, as most Administrative Division members tend to be desk-bound), the Security department is always on the lookout for top-notch operatives.

Facilities & Accounts. Director of the Budget William Overstreet, who reports directly to Dr. Nakami, oversees the dozens of offices, labs, warehouses, and remote testing facilities owned or leased by the Institute. The same department oversees payroll, disbursements, expense reports, and all the other financial minutiae of modern business. The department is particularly resistant to all forms of bribery, administrative shortcuts, threats, and excuses. Treat all Interaction or Administration rolls with F&A as if the target had an additional +2 resistance modifier.

Though Overstreet manages the finances, he leaves the technical details to Harold J. Fierstein, the overall head of Institute resources. A New Yorker who serves the Administrative Division as a sort of combined quartermaster and facilities manager, Harold knows where every nut and bolt the Institute owns is kept, and his twice-a-decade Inventory Days result in serious fallout if

Working the System

All heroes affiliated with the Hoffmann Institute are assumed to have a free allegiance to the organization (see "Contacts & Allegiances" in *Chapter 7: Attributes* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). Thus, heroes may freely request information or resources from other Institute members as needed. (In addition, some heroes may designate one or more of their beginning contacts as members of the Institute.) Of course, getting someone in another part of the Institute to do the heroes a favor isn't always automatic; after all, staff members have their own jobs to do, regardless of whatever crisis the heroes might bring to them. In addition, some desk-bound Institute members resent the autonomy and authority of the field agents and take a certain perverse delight in denying them resources that they could just as well share. Sure, it's pathetic and petty, but sometimes that's just how people are.

Chapter 9: Running a DARK•MATTER Campaign has information for the Gamemaster on determining the success of a hero's attempt to obtain information or resources.

anything turns up missing. While his title, Property Manager, is technically equivalent to a department chief, everyone quickly learns that pissing off Harold is a sure way to get all the furniture removed from your office, your weaponry taken in for "service and adjustments," your travel money rescinded, and your expense accounts audited. Hell hath no fury like a bureaucrat scorned.

Legal. The Institute does not maintain a large internal legal department; instead, it retains the small but aggressive firm of Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen to supply its legal counsel. Based in Baltimore, the firm also has branches in New York, Houston, and Los Angeles. The primary contact attorney Albert P. Curtin has pretty much seen it all, from bail to lawsuits to property damage settlements involving the destruction of a low-Earth-orbit satellite. Mr. Curtin has practiced law with Marshall, Wickham for more than thirty years, but in his youth he was a paratrooper with the U.S. Army. A story made the rounds at the Institute a few years ago that he helped a team of agents fight their way out of a Wyoming jail. For more information on legal resources available to the heroes, see "Avoiding the Law" in this chapter.

Personnel. Responsible for recruiting new staff from all areas of society, Personnel performs background checks, psychological and physical testing, and surveillance to determine who is mentally and physically capable of performing the often unusual work required by the Institute. Less well publicized is its role in assessing its current employees for loyalty, performance, and mental health. Problem staff members are referred to Security.

Security. The Security department of the Institute is second to none, and its members like to compare themselves to the Special Division (a group that Security department members tend to describe either in awed whispers or with jealous disdain). Many of the security staffers once served as police officers or soldiers, and all have personal experience in combat situations. They are rarely outsmarted and spend no small sums on security equipment and counterintelligence.

Most important, the Institute tries to keep its business to itself. This means that when things go wrong, the Institute security officers don't call the police. All break-ins, security breaches, firefights, murders, and other disturbances occurring on Institute property are investigated entirely by Institute staff.

Unlike the other departments in the Administrative Division, Security uses a title hierarchy identical with that used by the Intelligence and Special Divisions. Any Security department member with "agent" in her title can expect to perform occasional fieldwork as the muscle for an Institute research team.

Training. This department has a twofold job. First, the department keeps Institute members current on research and technology trends. Its second (and less publicized, though more popular) responsibility is keeping operatives fresh. Toward this end, it often sends burned-out researchers or Special Division operatives on "training vacations" to warm, tropical locations where they can learn scuba diving and maybe even relax for a little while.

Analytical Division

A mix of pure research and applied or engineering-oriented analysts makes up the "brains" of the Analytical Division. The division has different strengths in different cities, but the primary labs are based in Flagstaff, Arizona. The staff there reports to Division Supervisor (and Branch Director) Thomas "Tall Tom" Curran, a former Chief Medical Examiner for the city of Dallas. He still affects a Texas drawl and occasionally wears cowboy boots to work, but his years of city government experience and "seen-it-all" attitude keep him on top of his staff—a gaggle of brainy but easily distracted technicians. Other offices are led by department chiefs or field directors, as appropriate.

The Analytical Division has four departments: Ballistics, Biological & Chemical, Computing Resources, and Engineering & Fabrication. Each department has its own research director at the individual labs; each lab's research directors report to the supervisor of the office as noted above.

Members of the Analytical Division generally specialize in scientific and technical skills, including Computer Science, Life Science, Physical Science, System Operation, and Technical Science. Careers well suited to this division include doctor, forensics expert, gadgeteer, hacker, scientist, and xenoengineer.

Plenty of exciting opportunities exist for heroes assigned to the Analytical Division, particularly those in the Biological & Chemical and the Engineering & Fabrication departments. While most operatives in this division may work in labs, there's nothing like the occasional field trip to liven things up.

Ballistics. The Ballistics group does not have the vast firearms databases common to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms or the FBI, but it does know the patterns of most common firearms and can match a weapon to a particular bullet if both the weapon and the bullet are available for study. The Ballistics department also has some familiarity with advanced firearms and their effects.

Biological & Chemical. A small group of researchers performs the Institute's sample collecting, DNA analysis, and genetic research. They can match a genetic sample given a 24-hour turnaround and can identify individuals by blood type, semen, and even DNA samples taken from hair or saliva. Finally, they can determine whether a person was poisoned or drugged from a small blood, hair, or urine sample.

Capable of providing a detailed chemical breakdown of any sample they are given, the chemical analysts at the Institute can provide much more information if given enough time, such as the likely source of fibers, the origin of particular forms of plastic or metal, and even a guess at the likely site of soil samples. Just as important, chemical analysts can use gunpowder residue to determine whether weapons were discharged in a given room, and can trace fingerprints even on rough surfaces.

Computing Resources. The CR staff installs and services the Institute's computers and networks.

Engineering & Fabrication. The E&F staff is an odd mix of engineers and former white-collar criminals: The department conducts reverse engineering of alien technology, but it also provides forged documents and specialized equipment for use by the Intelligence Division and the Special Division. Their work includes hidden weapons, tracking devices, surveillance gear, fake passports, and other unusual tools. The skills of Technical Science–*xenoengineering* and Creativity–*forgery* are critical here.

Archives

While those in other divisions may derisively refer to the members of this division as "the clerks," the Institute archivists control all the data, research reports, patents, and classified information produced by the entire organization. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Institute Archives keeps many of its records

secured in a proprietary format using an operating system developed within the Institute to provide maximum security. Only members of the Archival staff and a few programmers of the Computing Resources department are fully conversant with the technical ins and out of the system; all others must make a formal request to retrieve case reports, films, affidavits, court testimony, and physical evidence from the "clerks."

The Archives itself is split into two departments: Documentation and Antiquities. The first deals with documents, and the second deals with creatures and objects recovered by Institute agents. Both are overseen by Division Supervisor Gheorghe Zamfirescu, a thin, bespectacled Romanian respected for his encyclopedic memory and broad base of knowledge, but who is semiseriously referred to as "the Lord of the Archives" for the rage that erupts when he or his staff are crossed. He still speaks English with an accent and can also converse in Spanish, French, German, Russian, Urdu, Turkish, and Latin.

Zamfirescu oversees a wide-ranging collection of human and alien artifacts, widely scattered over the world. In fact, the Archives' collection of ancient books and carefully gathered biological samples is deliberately spread across many sites for security reasons. Four of the most important are the Case Report Server (electronic copies of case files), the New York Rare Book Depository (maps and books), the Chicago Specimen Collection (primarily biological), and the Barcelona Antiquities Office (books and antiquities). Smaller collections of machines, archaeological finds, and other nontextual materials are scattered from Paris to New Orleans and Jakarta to Cairo.

Any effort to remove a document from the Archives requires the requesting person to fill out a receipt, complete with thumbprint and signature. Failure to do so sets off an alarm similar to those used to deter shoplifting in department stores. The Archives staff reports all such incidents, and excuses such as "it was an accident" or "I was in a hurry" don't carry much weight. Likewise, Archival runners hunt down items and papers not returned in a timely manner, sometimes simply removing them from the procrastinator's office if they are extremely overdue.

Institute members assigned to the Archives generally specialize in skills such as Computer Science, Knowledge–*language,* Investigate–*research*, and Social Science specialties. Good careers for this division include antiquarian, facilitator, field agent, field guide, journalist, occultist, private investigator, professional thief, and visionary.

Despite the negative connotations of membership in the Archives, heroes who enjoy traveling to distant locales should consider joining this division. After all, someone has to collect all the artifacts, documents, and biological samples kept here!

Department of Antiquities. This department is spread fairly thin in the United States; most of its members pursue materials in Europe, Africa, and South America. Though some slur its members as "librarians," they often motivate new



lines of inquiry, as they have the most complete set of data on current and historical events. They also have better firsthand knowledge of alien artifacts and unfamiliar technology than perhaps anyone else on Earth.

The Chicago Specimen Collection contains hundreds of blood, gene, and tissue samples from aliens, bioengineered humans and animals, and even mutant animals. While the collection is kept in deep-freeze lockers, it is not otherwise protected. However, for an intruder to steal any particular sample, she would have to understand the collection's filing system, a Byzantine method that makes the Dewey decimal system seem like a paragon of logical categories. The millions of samples are each numbered and then put into the freezers; without an understanding of their filing system, just pulling samples from freezers won't do a thief much good.

The Barcelona Antiquities Office is a relatively quiet portion of the Department of Antiquities that spends much of its time pursuing not creatures, but objects. The small staff visits auctions and private estate sales throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia to examine and purchase artifacts and equipment made available to a small clientele. The Antiquities department also stores many of the artifacts recovered by Institute agents in a high-security warehouse in the Pyrenees.

Department of Documentation. Institute researchers turn over recovered items to the Department of Antiquities for storage, but all letters, reports, case files, and photographs from agents eventually wind up in the Department of Documentation. Here, Archive members scan and compress files, then encrypt them for storage on the Institute's OSIRS computer network, colloquially referred to by the staff as the "Eye of God." Rumors circulate from time to time that the reason for the high degree of successful security within the Institute Archives is the presence of an artificial intelligence that oversees every communication and exchange between the Case Report Server and the outside world. Even within the department, though, staffers are *reasonably* sure that this is just a rumor. Most of the time.

All reports, photographs, and affidavits resulting from an Institute investigation are transferred to digital media and stored in the Case Report Server. There is no access to the CRS from the outside world; the network can only be reached from an Institute terminal. Even then, each level of secured files requires a separate password. General public files require only a general Institute password. Each layer of successively more sensitive documents requires an additional password until the researcher reaches the level of compartmentalized information, where only a few people have access to certain documents relating to the most sensitive files. These compartmentalized data sectors include files on the Administrative Division and many of the Special Division projects. The Case Report Server also logs each and every file access. Only the research directors and higher-ranking members of the Analytical Division's Computing Resources department have the codes to override this electronic tracking system.

The New York Rare Book Depository was originally founded as the Special Collection of the New York Public Library. This entire collection of esoteric manuscripts, maps, and books was "lost in a fire" in 1922. Shortly thereafter, the volumes reappeared as a private collection housed in the towering buildings just off Broadway and not too far from Wall Street. The entire collection takes up a single floor of a skyscraper; the security is moderately tight, as security officers are always on guard and an electronically locked door prevents access from the elevator foyer to the Depository proper.

The collection houses Latin, English, Spanish, and ancient Greek works, as well as government documents acquired through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and through more dubious methods. The staff that maintains the collection requires a signature and Institute ID for every item examined; in addition, it allows no items to leave the premises without permission from the New York Depository Director, Dr. Mariel Clovis.

Intelligence Division

The "spooks" of the Intelligence Division operate out of Washington, D.C., where they have ample opportunity to work with or against members of the FBI, NSA, DOD, CIA, and other intelligence-gathering groups. They include codebreakers and burglars as well as the more traditional cloak-and-camera spies. Division Supervisor Samuel Layacona, a white-haired African-American gentleman who got his start in the NSA and other government intelligence organizations during the Carter administration, heads up Intelligence. He maintains close contacts with allies in positions of authority and power within the U.S. government.

Because of the wide variety of activities undertaken by the Intelligence Division, many skills prove valuable to its members, including (but not limited to) Awareness, Computer Science, Deception, Interaction, Investigate, and Stealth. Careers appropriate to the Intelligence division include corporate security specialist, facilitator, field agent, hacker, military officer, psi agent, and psychic.

Heroes particularly interested in intrigue will find a welcome home in this division. Between Image Acquistion, Observation, and Information Retrieval, Intelligence offers its members a wealth of opportunities to investigate their fellow agents. For that very reason, this division tends to be the most selective (outside of the Special Division) of potential agents.

Directorate. The Directorate of the Intelligence Division operates almost entirely from a secure compound allegedly located somewhere in the Scottish Highlands. Its twelve members keep dossiers on Institute employees and enemies alike and file weekly intelligence reports and policy recommendations based on the information provided them by the rest of the division. More than anyone else, even the division supervisors, the members of the Directorate are believed to have Dr. Nakami's ear, and they help determine which projects the Institute undertakes.

Image Acquisition. Though technically part of the Washington group, IA staffers also operate from remote sites across the country and across the world. They are primarily hackers and satellite communication engineers; they buy, beg, borrow, or steal images from national satellites as they are transmitted to receiving stations on the ground.

The "eye-spies" are joined by a small staff of Signal Intelligence Officers. The Institute usually recruits these fellows from the U.S. Army Signal Corps or the NSA. They concentrate on intercepting, decrypting, and translating TV, radio, digital, and telephone signals from around the world.

Observation. The Observation department specializes in cultivating human contacts from other groups (what they refer to as "resources in position") and in placing their own deep-cover agents in other groups. As a result, they are widely scattered, with field directors running operatives in almost every city where the Institute has a presence; a few intelligence analysts in Washington and El Paso function in an oversight role, monitoring

world events both public and covert. All Observation department staffers report directly to Division Supervisor Layacona.

Information Retrieval. This department of the Intelligence Division is small, mobile, and rarely mentioned by Institute members (its existence is Classified). The I-Retrieval members are believed to be ex-CIA and ex-DEA interrogators with experience in extracting information from drug lords, terrorists, and other hardened criminals.

Special Division

The Institute makes no effort to publicize the existence of the Special Division. The Institute's officers and supervisors don't acknowledge it, and its members never appear on an organizational chart or even on phone lists. Many Special Division members are passed off as members of the Administration Division's security teams or as special researchers or spooks. Questions about their work are usually answered with a curt "I can't talk about that." Regardless, stories of their activities periodically make the rounds among agents, and if even half of the rumors are true, the Institute is involved in a lot of very interesting activities, from black ops to wetwork to contact with alien beings.

Many skills and careers are appropriate for the Special Division. However, very few starting heroes will find a place here, as the division tends to select experienced individuals over raw recruits.

Cross-Departmental Teams

With all the options available to Hoffmann agents, it's entirely likely that the heroes will belong to different departments, or even different divisions. While this separation would seem to present difficulties in maintaining a proper hierarchy, the Institute has a few traditional methods of handling the situation.

The Liaison: When the Institute assembles a team of recruits for its first mission, it designates a facility chief in the Personnel department as the team's official liaison. This person has the responsibility of issuing the team's orders, reviewing their reports, and writing up their evaluations. While most liaisons end their involvement with new agents at that point, a few "adopt" the agents, taking the role of concerned parental figures. The liaison seeks out future missions appropriate to "his" agents and tries to defend them from the inevitable mazes of bureaucracy of the Institute. Of course, each hero may also be required to report to his or her own supervisor, which can create interesting divided loyalties.

The Team Lead: For other groups, no such adoptive figure exists. Instead, the Institute designates one of the heroes (usually of a higher rank than his comrades) as a team lead, responsible for assembling a cross-departmental team for each mission. Of course, in the typical DARK•MATTER campaign, this team usually remains the same from game to game, but it also provides a great mechanic for players to try out new hero concepts if the mission warrants it. The team lead reports to a supervisor in his or her own department.

Special Division: Ultimately, many agents dream of joining this elite branch of the Institute. If the heroes prove themselves worthy (which should take several successful missions), they might be designated as a Special Division team. This allows the agents to maintain a cover role in their original divisions while still enabling them to work together as a team. The Gamemaster has more information on the Institute's Special Division.

Institute Security

The primary Institute buildings are distinguished mostly by their low profile; they don't look like armed camps but rather like perfectly ordinary buildings in perfectly ordinary office parks. Just underneath the surface, however, they are well secured against casual break-ins and even against sustained assault.

Perimeter Security

All Hoffmann Institute buildings are specially constructed with security in mind. The windows are always made of bulletproof glass, gates and tire spikes line the entrance and exit to the parking lot, and motion sensors measure the movement of personnel on the Institute grounds. However, policy states that although an Institute building should be secure, it shouldn't look secure. This serves two purposes. On the one hand, it keeps the Institute's public profile low and discourages casual curiosity. On the other hand, it gives enemies of the Institute a sense of overconfidence and may force their hand; that is, the apparently casual security may convince them to make a move that reveals their intentions.

Each Institute building requires electronic key cards to open most checkpoint doors past the public lobby, and small security cameras survey all hallways and entrances. The information recorded by the key cards and video surveillance is all stored in OSIRS (see sidebar) as part of the security logs. Only field directors or others with the highest level of Institute clearance have access to the security logs.

Computer Security

Digital security at the Institute is extremely tight. The entire organization runs off a special operating system used nowhere else, simply to make it more difficult for outsiders to hack the Institute (see the "OSIRS" sidebar). This provides much better security at the root level than any commercial software; it enables real-time processing of video signals, quick verification of retinal scans, real-time encryption of all Institute messages, and much tighter tracking of who opens what files when.

For all these reasons, all hacking attempts against Institute systems suffer a +6 step penalty. This penalty is applied in addition to any penalties imposed by poor equipment or software, by counterhacking, and by additional security measures that may be in place at any given terminal.

Internal Security

Within the Institute proper, some areas are subject to much tighter security than the perimeter security that ensures the safety of hallways and offices. In addition to the surveillance

OSIRS

The Hoffmann Institute uses a unique computer operating system designed by Institute employees many years ago, called the Operating System for Internal Real-time Security. Abbreviated OSIRS (and pronounced "Osiris"), this system is used throughout the organization.

At the Gamemaster's option, heroes using OSIRS may utilize any PL 5 program listed in the *Player's Handbook* or *Dataware* (TSR02811), as well as an occasional PL 6 program. Most programs are of at least Good quality.

cameras and passkeys of the typical offices, retinal scanners and highly skilled (and well-armed) guards protect the security zones of the Institute. Persistent rumors hold that psionically active individuals watch over particularly secure areas with occasional scans of surface thoughts.

Rules of Conduct

The Institute's gift to the heroes of knowledge and power means that the heroes are also entrusted with safeguarding the reputation and secrecy of the Institute. To help prevent misunderstandings and to make each agent's duties absolutely clear, in 1955 the Hoffmann Institute adopted a code that still governs the behavior of its employees to this day. An oft-interpreted excerpt of that code follows:

304 (B). Discretion in Unusual Circumstances

i. *All members and recruits of the Institute are expected to keep their activities out of the public eye. The Institute is not a public agency, and it wishes to avoid legal and criminal entanglements. Any and all measures are approved to maintain that condition.*

ii. *All members and recruits of the Institute should take precautions to prevent evidence or eyewitnesses from spreading knowledge of the Institute's research. At the same time, all reasonable good-faith efforts should be made to provide the Institute with clear, complete records and documentation of unusual events.*

In general, this has been interpreted as permission for members to violate the law of the land when keeping the Institute's existence quiet, preferably through the application of psionic powers or even simple bribery. Extreme sanctions are approved only when the Institute is in danger of being exposed to its enemies.

The "good-faith efforts" have been interpreted differently over the years; some members have engaged in trespassing, theft, and psionic espionage to obtain results. Others have resorted to murder, mind probes, and extortion of public officials. The middle ground shifts as each generation of agents tackles the new problems of the era, but the most recent trend is tacit approval of any measures necessary. Though the upper echelons never quite come right out and say so, it seems that Institute leadership feels the situation is escalating rapidly, and heroic efforts may be necessary to keep the rising tides of darkness from overwhelming humanity.



Avoiding the Law

Keeping unusual activity and dangerous technology quiet takes some doing; fortunately, the Institute has many resources that allow its members to escape the consequences of their illicit (and sometimes illegal) activities.

Legal Cover

Any large organization operating in the United States needs an army of lawyers to fend off lawsuits, defend accused employees from various criminal charges and civil complaints, file the necessary paperwork for licenses and charitable tax status, and lobby for special privileges from the government. The Institute is no different, and it relies on the firm of Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen to provide these services and to advise Institute operatives when they move artifacts across national boundaries, become embroiled in customs disputes over import and export, and encounter other difficulties. The firm often settles disputes out of court, and its lawyers are flexible enough to realize that bribery, extortion, and corruption of public officials are all valuable tools against the opposition's sometimes ruthless attempts at cover-ups and suppression.

While the law firm benefits from its close ties to government officials, it also seeks to retain a very low profile. So far, the attorneys at Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen have managed to put some favorable legislation into effect, granting the Institute the right to use extralegal measures in cases of extreme national need. In several instances, the firm has also provided government resources to facilitate witness protection or an identity switch. However, gaining access to the Institute's high-powered lawyers is far from easy; the partners at Marshall, Wickham are reluctant to help out with schemes that don't come from the top of the Hoffmann Institute through normal channels. (The Institute generally depends on its operatives to work with just two out of three of the traditional "lawyers, guns, and money" trinity of special operations.) Normally, they'll work hard to help an operative in trouble, but heroes who want advice for other plans must make a successful encounter skill check, treating the law firm as an allegiance with a Neutral starting attitude (the Gamemaster has more information on this).

If the heroes are captured by law enforcement, the Institute can usually pull strings to extricate them and have the incident removed from their records, but the process can take days depending on the crime, the local legal system, and what sort of money the heroes are prepared to spend on bribes. Should the heroes wish to avoid such tanglings, the Gamemaster is always free to ask the players to make a Law–*court procedures* roll on their heroes' behalf in a law-abiding society or an Interaction–*charm* or Deception–*bribe* roll in a less rigorous legal system. If the check fails, springing the heroes free requires d6+1 days of legal wrangling by the attorneys.

Heroes should bear in mind that many individuals without a criminal record have some personal information on file with various agencies. For instance, if a hero has ever been arrested, belonged to the military, or worked in law enforcement or for a government agency, his fingerprints are on file somewhere. Though the Institute maintains resources to deal with extreme circumstances, it still pays for agents to keep a clean record.

The Underground Railroad

In addition to its "aboveground" legal options, the Institute has a chain of several dozen retired members who provide safe housing and resources to Institute staff on the run or otherwise in trouble. There are limits to what this "underground railroad" can provide, though, and many members are not exactly thrilled to have bloodied agents or wanted criminals showing up in their homes. Most of the time, the members of the network provide what help they can, then send the fugitives on their way. Sometimes they take extreme risks to help out their successors or even join them temporarily in their work. But nothing compels a retired Institute member to take anyone into his house, especially someone who brings the threat of potentially lethal pursuit along. More than anything else, the heroes' reception depends on the nature of the group that presents itself at the safe house door and the strength of an encounter skill check. The Gamemaster has more information on how to utilize safe houses.

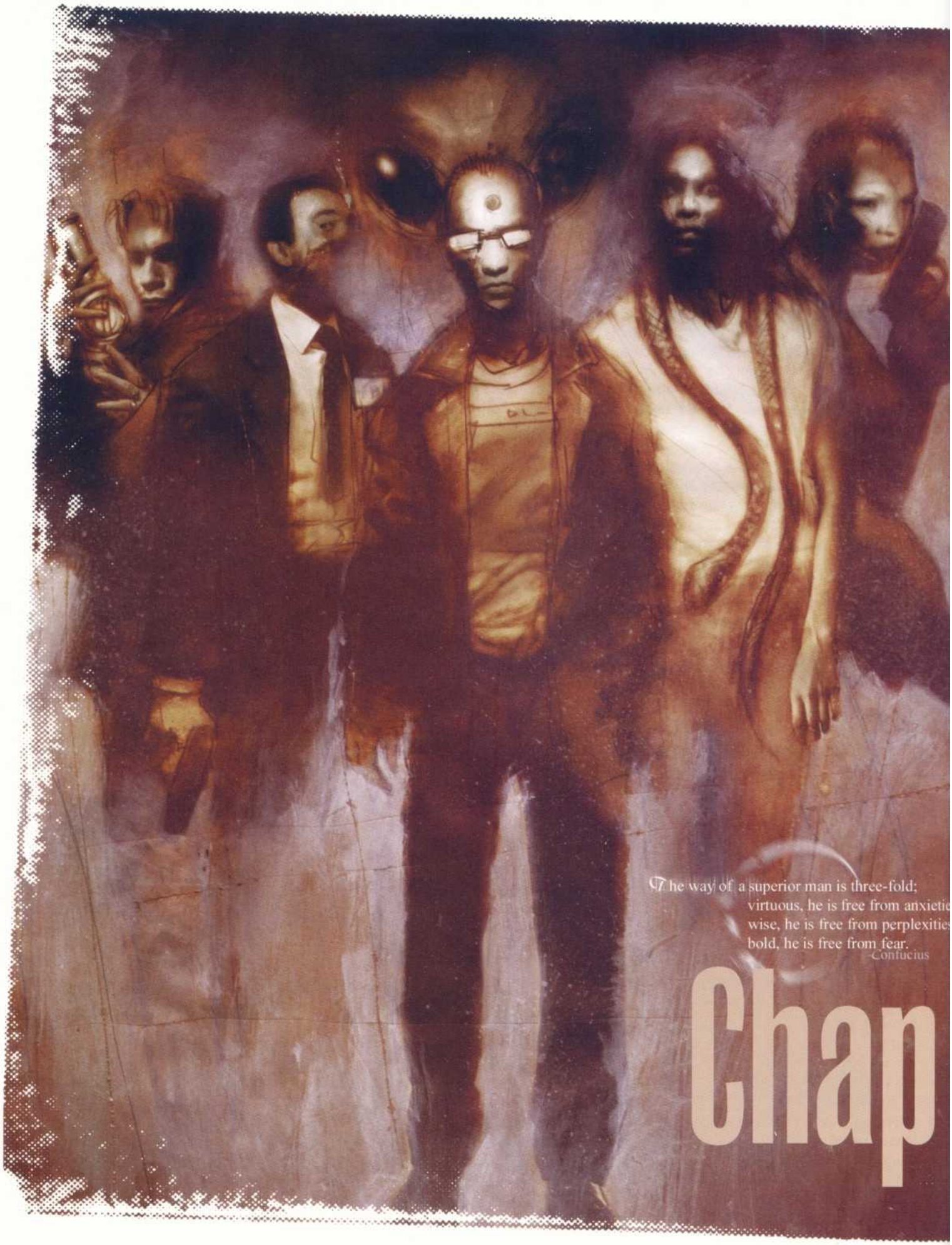
Institute Allies

A number of groups are closely allied with the Institute, ranging from grass-roots UFO watchers to sophisticated corporate sponsors to sympathetic government agents. Some of these ties are closer than others, but all bring something valuable in exchange for the Institute's wealth of information, contacts, and experience.

The informal groups are in many ways the closest and the most valuable. They include a network of genuine phone psychics (the Clarity Network) who report current doings in the paranormal world in exchange for extended psychic seminars, UFO watchers who keep tabs on the skies in return for veiled hints about government projects and clues about power sources, and even many small but sincere pagan groups who ask for nothing in return for their aid but Institute intervention when diabolists or other dark arcane forces perturb their local places of worship.

The Institute keeps its corporate friends in the dark about many of the Institute's real goals, allies, and methods. However, in exchange for the patent rights to certain limited technological and manufacturing advances, these corporate groups provide the Institute with needed funds. Most are too smart to look a gift horse in the mouth; those who inquire too closely into the Institute's other affairs quickly find themselves cut off from further offers.

The United Nations and other governmental organizations often request help from the Institute when low-profile, high-risk operations need to be undertaken but can't stand the scrutiny of open debate, legislative wrangling over budgets, and an oversight committee. Indeed, many Institute operations are UN-funded; the notoriously wasteful UN budget is in fact rather efficient. The supposedly wasted funds are usually transferred through a variety of financial shenanigans into the coffers of the Institute, the CDC quarantine teams, NASA, certain paramilitary organizations, and other groups the UN deems useful to its mission.



The way of a superior man is three-fold;
virtuous, he is free from anxieti
wise, he is free from perplexitie
bold, he is free from fear.
-Confucius

Chap

chapter 3 heroes of dark•matter

THE HEROES OF THE DARK•MATTER CAMPAIGN SETTING ARE DRAWN from all walks of life. Though they seem no different from those who live alongside them, these heroes have skills, powers, or experiences that set them apart.

Players should create heroes for DARK•MATTER in the same way they would for any other ALTERNITY game, using the rules in the *Player's Handbook*. In addition, this chapter details many new elements added by the DARK•MATTER campaign setting, including skills, perks and flaws, careers, and psionic powers.

Not surprisingly, humans make up the vast majority of heroes in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. Human beings inhabit most of the globe, so by sheer weight of numbers, it's up to humans to defend themselves. At the Gamemaster's option, nonhuman heroes may be allowed to players; information on playing such characters is provided in *Chapter 10: Campaign Options*.

New Skills

Superior learning and technology separate us from our superstitious, primitive ancestors, those who had the bad luck to be born before internal combustion, mass production, advanced petrochemistry, and other marvels. New skills are being acquired in the shadows of the paranormal, and new sciences are constantly being explored. Heroes in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting stand at the forefront of new avenues of research, new techniques, and new explanations of the unusual, the unexplained, and the exotic. This section describes the subjects of interest to a modern mad scientist and paranormal investigator alike.

The section also includes two new broad skills. The first, Social Science, includes aspects of the humanities, the classics, and other fields of research into human culture, history, and language. The second new broad skill, Lore, provides information about the strange and the supernatural; it covers forms of knowledge not taught in traditional schools, colleges, and universities. This body of ancient lore is often unreliable, as it includes the raving of kooks and frauds as well as the invaluable legacy of prior civilizations.

The table below lists new skills valuable to any hero in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. Each skill is then described in detail below.

TABLE D1: NEW SKILLS

INT Skills	Cost	Pr.	Pg.
Knowledge	3	—	51
*Language (specific)**	1	—	51
Life Science	7	T	52
*Genetics**	3	T	52
Medical Science	7	T	53
*Psychology**	3	T	54
Social Science	6	DT	54
Anthropology	3	DT	54
History	3	DT	54
Linguistics	3	DT	55
Technical Science	7	T	55
Xenoengineering	5	T	55

WIL Skills	Cost	Pr.	Pg.
Creativity	4	—	56
Forgery	4	FT	56
Investigate	7	FT	56
Cryptography	4	FT	56
Research	3	T	57
Lore	6	F	57
Conspiracy Theories	3	F	57
Fringe Science	3	FT	58
Occult Lore	3	F	58
Psychic Lore	3	F	59
UFO Lore	3	F	59
Street Smart	5	F	59
Net Savvy	3	FT	59

* Additional information on this existing skill is provided below. Underlined type indicates a skill that can't be used untrained.

Knowledge

"Knowledge is power." It may be a cliché, but it's also true. Heroes in the DARK•MATTER setting should remember that knowledge can come from many sources, and some of them may not speak the heroes' language. The expansion of the Knowledge–*language* skill allows heroes to better communicate in the global arena of conspiracy and hidden secrets.

Language, Specific Skill

This skill can't be used untrained.

(The following text expands on the description of the Knowledge–*language [specific] skill* as presented in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

Because of the innate difficulty of learning and properly using an extinct or nonhuman language, penalties to the use of such languages apply. Any skill checks related to the use of an extinct human language made by a human hero suffer a +1 step penalty. Heroes attempting to use a language other than that of their own species (such as a human attempting to communicate with an alien creature) suffer a +3 step penalty.

⊗ **Communicate with Similar Language:** At rank 4, a hero may attempt basic verbal communication with individuals who speak a language similar to her own (i.e., any language in the same group as a language in which the hero has rank 4 or better). The hero may attempt a skill check using his language at a +3 step penalty (or take a +3 step penalty to any other skill being used to communicate, such as encounter skills, as

noted in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*) to successfully communicate general concepts. See the "Language Groups" sidebar below for more information on language groups.

Life Science

This broad skill remains largely unchanged (except for the expanded description of *genetics*, below). Note that few heroes should begin play with Life Science–*xenology* unless their background suggests specific previous experience in that field.

Genetics

(The following text expands upon the description of the Life Science–*genetics* skill as presented in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

This skill allows a hero to examine a creature's DNA and determine whether it has been tampered with, what new genes or markers have been added, and how extensive the changes are. A character with this skill can also examine microorganisms and determine if they are of terrestrial or extraterrestrial origin.

Language Groups

For the most part, human languages do not exist in a vacuum; that is, they are related to similar languages and often draw syntax, pronunciation, and grammar from the same source. The DARK•MATTER campaign setting introduces the concept of language groups to address this.

Listed below in **bold** are a number of language groups, along with one or more specific languages that fall into each group. This text should not be considered a definitive linguistic study; only the most widely used languages are listed, along with a few other significant or pertinent tongues. (If no languages are listed in a group, then the language is considered isolated and related to no other languages closely enough to enable cross-communication.) Parenthetical listings indicate dialects divergent enough to be considered a wholly different language, or (when listed with "aka") alternate names for the language.

A hero who has at least rank 4 in a language may attempt to communicate with those who speak another language in that hero's language group (see the rank benefit for Knowledge–*language*). In addition, the Social Science–*linguistics* skill allows a hero to improve his translation ability across an entire language group.

Aleut: Aleut, Inuit, Yupik.
Algic: Algonkin, Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Cree, Ojibwa, Powhatan, Shawnee, several more.
Armenian
Athabascan: Apache, Chipewyan, Navaho.
Attic: Greek, Greek (ancient)[1].
Baltic: Latvian, Lithuanian.
Basque
Caddoan: Caddo, Pawnee, Wichita.
Celtic: Breton, Cornish, Gaelic (Irish), Gaelic (Scots), Welsh.
Chinese: Cantonese, Gan, Hakka, Jinyu, Mandarin, Min Bei, Min Nan, Wu, Xiang.
Daic: Dong, Thai, Zhuang.
Dravidian: Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Teluga.
Finno-Lappic: Estonian, Finnish, Livonian, Saami (aka Lapp).
Germanic: Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English[2,3], Flemish, German, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Yiddish.
Hamitic: Berber, Hausa, Oromo, Somali.
Indo-Aryan, Central: Gujarati, Haryanvi, Hindi, Marwari, Panjabi (eastern), Romani[2], Urdu.
Indo-Aryan, Eastern: Assamese, Awadhi, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Chhattisgarhi, Magahi, Maithili, Oriya.
Indo-Aryan, Northern: Nepali, Panjabi (western), Saraiki, Sindhi.
Indo-Aryan, Southern: Deccan, Marathi.
Iranian: Farsi, Kurmanji, Pashto.
Iroquoian: Cayuga, Cherokee, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, Wyandot.
Japanese
Khoisan: San[2], Nama.
Korean
Malayo-Polynesian: Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Ilocano, Indonesian, Javanese, Malay, Sunda, Tagalog.
Mayan: Cakchiquel, Mam, Maya, Pokomam, Quiché, Tzeltal, Tzotzil.
Mongolian: Dongxiang, Mongolian.
Mon-Khmer: Central Khmer, Vietnamese.
Muskogean: Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muskogee, Seminole.
Niger-Congo: Akan, Igbo, Rwanda, Yoruba, Zulu, many others.
Nilotic: Dinka, Maasai.
Oto-Manguean: Amuzgo, Chinanteco, Mixteco, Otmoi, Mazateco, Zapoteco.
Quechuan: Quechua[2].
Romance: French[3], Esperanto[4], Italian, Latin[1], Lombard, Neapolitan-Calabrese, Portuguese[3], Romanian, Spanish.
Semitic: Arabic[2], Aramaic, Hebrew, Hebrew (ancient)[1].
Sinhalese-Maldivian: Sinhala.
Siouan: Crow, Dakota, Omaha, Osage.
Slavic: Belorussian, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Ukrainian.
Tibeto-Burman: Burmese, Naga (Konyak)[2], Naga (Naga)[2], Sherpa, Tibetan.
Turkic: Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Tatar, Turkish, Uyghur, Uzbek.
Ugric: Hungarian (aka Magyar).
Uto-Aztecan: Comanche, Hopi, Nahuatl[2] (aka Aztec), Paiute, Shoshone, Ute.
Zuni

[1] Indicated language is extinct. Skill checks using this language suffer a +1 step penalty.
[2] Indicated language has many distinct dialects that may interfere with communication. At the Gamemaster's discretion, communication attempts with those speaking alternate dialects may suffer from a +1 to +3 step penalty.
[3] Indicated language has one or more strong Creole variants which must be learned separately. Speakers of the indicated language may communicate with Creole speakers at a +2 step penalty, and vice versa.
[4] Esperanto is a "universal" constructed language that draws elements from many European languages. It is most closely related to the Romance language group, and thus "belongs" to that group as indicated.



► ***Eugenic Engineering.*** At rank 8, a hero with this skill can attempt to create engineered humans (or other animals) in two forms: *clones* and *new lineages*. A clone is a genetic duplicate of a human being or other organism, born with exactly the same DNA as the single "parent." Creating a clone requires a cell sample and a Good complex skill check (one check per day; +1 step penalty to checks). A successful skill check creates an embryo that grows into an exact copy of the organism from which the cell sample was taken. It is up to the Gamemaster to determine exactly what this means; at minimum, the clone should have ability scores approximately equal to those of its "parent," as well as matching physical features.

Founding a new lineage is the process of engineering specific mutations in an embryo (which can either be a normal embryo or the result of a cloning attempt). Before attempting the skill check, the hero with this skill must declare which mutations (Ordinary or Good only) she wishes to include. The complex skill check requires a number of successes equal to twice the number of mutation points (maximum of 5) desired in the new lineage. One roll may be made each day, with a +2 step penalty to the check. Note that any new lineage also has a minimum of 2 drawback points, plus any obtained through the process noted below. For each Failure rolled during the process, an additional drawback point is added to the quantity possessed by the embryo. The Gamemaster should determine all drawbacks randomly.

In either case, if the complex skill check fails, the embryo suffers a fatal mutation and dies.

► ***Create Retrofitted Mutation:*** At rank 12, a hero with this skill can attempt to mutate a creature that is already fully formed rather than altering its genes before or during the embryonic stage. Doing so requires sculpting a retrovirus that contains the new genes and that can be used to infect the subject. Designing the retrovirus is a complex skill check requiring a number of successes equal to three times the number of mutation points desired (maximum 3 mutation points, only Ordinary or Good mutations allowed). Any retrofitted mutation also has 1 drawback point per Failure rolled during the complex skill check. Three Failures simply indicates that the infection and the consequent mutations fail to take hold. One roll may be made each week, at a +3 step penalty.

The incubation period of the retrovirus is d4 days. Once the infection takes hold, the retrovirus changes the genetic material inside every infected cell of the subject's body. The infected individual should immediately make a Constitution feat check with a +3 step penalty as if he had been exposed to an Amazing-strength disease (see Chapter 3: Gamemasters in *Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*).

Assuming the hero survives the infection, the retrofitted mutation grows and expresses itself slowly, as the cells react to their new programming. This process lasts d4 weeks.

Medical Science

Like Life Science, the study of Medical Science operates as per the standard ALTERNITY rules, with the addition of the profiling rank benefit for *psychology*. Few heroes should begin play with Medical Science–*xenomedicine* unless their backgrounds specifically suggest such experience.

Psychology

(The following text expands upon the description of the Medical Science–*psychology* skill as presented in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

► ***Profiling:*** At rank 4, a hero with the *psychology* skill can use it to create a profile of an individual (usually a criminal suspect). The profile is a series of educated guesses about a person's appearance, habits, mannerisms, history, state of mind, and even belongings. Given sufficient clues—usually at least two elements of the profile, or physical evidence such as that found at a crime scene—a hero with this rank benefit can piece together the remainder of the profile. Conversely, given enough behavioral elements, the hero could even make a reasonable estimate of the sort of physical evidence the subject might leave behind.

When this rank benefit is obtained, the *psychology* skill can be used in place of the Knowledge–*deduce* skill, but only in terms of identifying the behavioral profile of a human subject. Also, the player need not be at a loss as to his next course of action, as described under the *deduce* skill. Such a skill check is always complex rather than simple. The complexity of the check is usually Ordinary (modified up or down depending on the specific situation). The frequency of rolls is one per 10 minutes (for Marginal complexity), one per hour (for Ordinary complexity), one per day (for Good complexity), and one per week (for Amazing complexity).

The conditions of the skill check usually depend on the amount of information available, but can be affected by other factors as well at the Gamemaster's option. As an example, the typical crime scene (some physical evidence, knowledge of the victim's activities and behavior, and other indicators) offers Marginal conditions. Limited evidence worsens conditions, while additional information (such as an eyewitness or a videotape of the suspect) improves conditions.

As the hero's rank in *psychology* improves, she gains a bonus to the application of this skill. At rank 8, a –1 step bonus is applied to complex skill checks used for profiling; this improves to –2 at rank 12.

Skills Every Hero Should Have

Players accustomed to far-future ALTERNITY campaigns (such as the STAR*DRIVE® Campaign Setting) may not be familiar with the realities of Progress Level 5. While the careers discussed in this chapter provide great hero archetypes, what skills does every DARK•MATTER hero need?

Well, the world is an ugly, dangerous place, so think about picking up Stamina–*endurance* and Resolve–*mental resolve*. As stated in *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*, any investigator should strongly consider picking up a combat-related broad skill (such as Unarmed Attack or Modern Ranged Weapons) for use when words aren't enough. Easily forgotten (but perhaps most important of all skills in an investigation-based game) is Awareness–*perception* (and, to a lesser extent, *intuition*), which proves invaluable in noting clues.

There are many other useful skills that at least one hero in each group should have. The Investigate specialty skills—particularly *research* and *search*—will come in handy in almost every adventure. Deception and Interaction skills can't be overlooked—it's usually safer to talk than to shoot. Someone should have a rank or two in Vehicle Operation–*land vehicles* for that inevitable car chase. Knowledge–*first aid* (or Medical Science–*treatment)* lets heroes keep going even after nasty fights.

Finally, don't overlook skills that increase a hero's knowledge, such as Business, Law, Lore, foreign languages, and the various science skills.

Social Science

This skill grouping includes topics usually studied as the humanities, the classics, and "soft sciences" of the ivory tower. A hero with this skill has a basic understanding of history and human culture and the current assumptions in those fields.

Social Science specialty skills may also be used to analyze nonhuman cultures, though at a substantial penalty (see the table below). Of course, the Gamemaster is also free to disallow any particular check; for instance, a hero could not use Social Science–*history* to recall a fact from the history of an alien species unknown to him.

Anthropology

This skill covers the study of humankind and humankind's closest relatives, specifically their physical and organizational cultures. A hero with this skill is familiar with the beliefs, practices, organizations, and functional and political relationships within a given society, the physical structure of the body and patterns of biological diversity within a bodily structure, and the study of humankind's collection of artifacts, physical tools or structures, and remains. A hero with this skill can make reasonable estimates of an object's age, dig out and verify relevant data, make comparisons between various technical and artistic forms shared by related cultures, and interpret ancient settlement and social patterns.

⊗ ***Area of Expertise:*** At rank 3, the hero may select an area of expertise for his *anthropology* skill. Examples include pre-Columbian cultures of the Amazon basin, late Chinese dynasties, or Celtic sites in Roman times. This specialization grants a –1 step bonus to any skill checks on topics within or closely related to the area of expertise. This bonus improves to –2 at rank 6 (or the hero may select a second area of expertise). This bonus improves by an additional step at rank 9 and again at rank 12. The Gamemaster should approve the choice of expertise.

► ***Analyze Relics:*** At rank 4, the hero may draw conclusions through the examination of newly found relics of the past, including human remains. The hero may conduct proper fieldwork and make valuable deductions from any materials, maps, potsherds, and other data found there. At rank 8, the hero gains a –1 step bonus to *anthropology* skill checks made for such a purpose; this bonus improves to –2 at rank 12.

History

The *history* skill allows a hero to recall factual information and important individuals from human history and to analyze past social trends and events for their relevance. This knowledge extends to politics, science, technology, religion, and other areas of human endeavor. The hero may use the skill to recall any histor-

Social Science Situation Modifiers

Hero is performing fieldwork	+1
Hero is using tools/equipment of:	
Amazing quality	–2
Good quality	–1
Ordinary quality	0
Marginal or worse quality	+2 or more
Condition of item or text analyzed is:	
Amazing	–1
Good	0
Ordinary	+1
Marginal	+3
Culture or language analyzed is:	
Existing human terrestrial	0
Extinct human terrestrial	+1
Nonhuman	+3
Topic is within or closely related to area of expertise	see skill

ical fact (the Gamemaster may apply a +1 to +3 step penalty for particularly specific or obscure information) and to interpret various historical theories about events of the period.

⊗ ***Area of Expertise:*** At rank 3, the hero may select a time period, institution, or region to focus upon. For example, a hero might choose the British Empire, the Renaissance, the Catholic Church, or Egypt and North Africa. This specialization grants a –1 step bonus to any skill checks on topics within or closely related to the area of expertise. At rank 6, this bonus improves to –2 (or the hero may select a second area of expertise). This bonus improves by an additional step at rank 9 and again at rank 12. The Gamemaster should approve the choice of topic.

Linguistics

This skill can't be used untrained.

This skill represents the study of how languages form, how they are structured, how they evolve, and how they relate to each other. A hero with this skill has a chance to note relationships between an unknown language and known languages and to draw conclusions about the age of any particular document by the grammar, spelling, and contextual clues it provides within its text. Especially skilled heroes may be able to understand text in a previously unknown language by drawing on a known language (see below). Given enough time—generally months or years—a linguist can also sometimes crack a dead language unrelated to known languages.

⊗ ***Translate Documents:*** At rank 4, the hero may select a language group (see the "Language Groups" sidebar above) to focus upon. (The hero must have at least rank 3 in one language belonging to the language group selected.) This rank benefit allows the hero to make a *linguistics* skill check at a +1 step penalty to translate documents written in any language of the group. The amount of material to be translated, along with the condition and language of the document, applies modifiers to the check as listed in the "Social Science Situation Modifiers" table. At rank 8, the hero may select a second language group (or eliminate the penalty for the group he already specializes in).

The result of the check indicates the general level of understanding: On a Marginal result, the hero can only identify the language and general time period of the written information. On an Ordinary result, the hero understands also the basic purpose of the document (it's a personal letter, or a textbook, or a royal proclamation). With a Good result, the hero can actually understand about half of the information in question, though slang and idioms may be translated incorrectly. On an Amazing result, the hero can understand about 90% of the document, though a few errors might still slip in.

Translating text should require approximately d4 hours per page. In general, longer works are more likely to result in a correct translation, though they require more time to translate. Thus, if the hero has only a single sentence to translate, the attempt might take only a few minutes but incurs a +1 step penalty. On the other hand, translating an entire book could take days or weeks but grants a –1 step bonus.

⊗ ***Language Mastery:*** At rank 12, the hero receives an additional –1 step bonus to the comprehension or translation of any spoken or written language within the group or groups with which he has specialized.

Technical Science

A hero attempting to use Technical Science–*invention, juryrig,* or *repair* on items of alien technology suffers a +3 step penalty to any skill checks. Apply an additional +1 step penalty for every Progress Level of the item beyond the hero's own. Thus, an alien item of Progress Level 6 incurs a +4 step penalty to skill checks. In addition, the Gamemaster is free to reduce or ignore any bonus achieved by the use of toolkits (the tools may be useless for the job).

Xenoengineering

This skill can't be used untrained.

This specialty skill allows a hero improved odds when examining, repairing, or operating items of alien technology. The hero may make a *xenoengineering* skill check to properly understand the item's function. Cases of outrageously alien machines operating on completely unknown principles may incur an additional +1 to +3 step penalty, but most items of about the same Progress Level inflict only the modifier noted above. If the skill check succeeds, the penalty for using the item is decreased by 1, 2, or 3 steps (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result). Thus, if the player rolled a Good result on his hero's *xenoengineering* check when examining the hypothetical Progress Level 6 item noted above, he suffers only a +2 step penalty to use the item.

If the *xenoengineering* check fails, he receives no reduction in the penalty for using it. If the check results in a Critical Failure, the xenoengineer has misinterpreted the item's intended purpose and irreparably damaged it (perhaps with devastating consequences, at the Gamemaster's discretion).

⊗ *Improved Familiarity:* As the xenoengineer's skill improves, he has an easier time working with strange technology. At rank 6, any penalty for working with alien or advanced technology is automatically reduced by 1 step, and by another step at rank 12. This can only eliminate penalties; it can never grant a bonus.



Creativity

DARK•MATTER introduces a new Creativity specialty skill: *forgery*. Note that *forgery* has its own specific skill point cost, unlike skills such as *painting* or *photography*, which each have a cost of 1 skill point.

Forgery

This skill can't be used untrained.

This skill allows the hero to create false documents or other materials. The *forgery* skill always requires a complex skill check, with the number of successes required relating directly to the complexity of the task. For instance, forging a driver's license might only be of Ordinary complexity, while counterfeiting U.S. currency would be a task of Amazing complexity. In addition, the normal Creativity situation modifiers apply (as listed in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*). The frequency of the skill checks is up to the Gamemaster: One per hour is appropriate for Marginal or Ordinary complexity checks, while more complex tasks might require two, three, or more hours between checks. The Gamemaster is always free to rule that certain items may not be forged or counterfeited without the proper equipment.

A number of broad or specialty skills might provide bonuses to the *forgery* skill, including (but not limited to) Manipulation, Business–*corporate*, Computer Science–*programming*, Law, and Awareness–*perception*. At the Gamemaster's discretion, a successful skill check using such a skill provides a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result) to the *forgery* attempt.

A successful Awareness–*perception* skill check (at a +2 step penalty) allows a person to identify a document or other object as a forgery.

⊗ ***Increased Skill:*** As the hero's *forgery* rank increases, his ability to create counterfeit items and successfully pass them off improves. At rank 4, the hero gains a –1 step bonus to *forgery* skill checks, and targets attempting to identify forgeries suffer an additional +1 step penalty. These modifiers change to –2 and +2 at rank 8, and –3 and +3 at rank 12.

Investigate

This broad skill may well be the most valuable skill in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. After all, what good is an investigator who can't investigate?

Cryptography

This skill can't be used untrained.

This skill allows the hero to encode and decode ciphers and codes. Using the *cryptography* skill involves a complex skill check; the complexity and conditions of the check are based on the complexity of the code. Marginal codes include letter-substitution ciphers and mathematical puzzles and apply a –2 step bonus to skill checks to decode. (Marginal codes may also be decoded using the Knowledge–*deduce* skill.) Ordinary codes apply no modifier to decoding and include those used to encrypt passkeys on personal computer systems—little more than alphanumeric strings, which, while unsophisticated, take a while

to cycle through. Good codes include block or stream ciphers and apply a +1 step penalty to decoding attempts. Amazing codes utilize the mathematics of chaos theory and apply a +3 step penalty to attempts to solve them.

Computer Science–*programming* is treated as a related skill (see the "Investigate Situation Modifiers" table in *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*), and thus provides a bonus of –1, –2, or –3 steps to the *cryptography* skill check.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** As the hero's *cryptography* rank increases, his ability to encode and decode improves. At rank 4, he gains a –1 step bonus to cryptography skill rolls. This improves to –2 steps at rank 8 and –3 steps at rank 12.

Research

This skill allows a hero to utilize information sources such as libraries or records archives. A *research* skill check is always a complex check; the complexity is based on the information desired. Use TABLE P24: KNOWLEDGE CATEGORIES in *Chapter 4: Skills* of the *Player's Handbook* to determine complexity. Conditions for the check depend on the quality of the information source being utilized (see sidebar below). Generally speaking, one skill check may be made per hour of research (though the Gamemaster is free to rule that a particular line of research should require more or less time). As noted in the *Player's Handbook*, a hero with a skill related to the subject on an infestigation receives a bonus to the *research* skill check based on the rank of the related skill (rank 1–4 grants a –1 step bonus, rank 5–8 gives –2, and rank 9–12 grants –3).

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 4, the hero gains a –1 step bonus to *research* skill checks. This improves to –2 at rank 8 and –3 at rank 12.

Lore

The arcane secrets of the ages and the mindless ravings of fools are both the province of this broad skill, which covers all the forms of hidden, secret, and privileged knowledge. In earlier times, much of this knowledge was the property of shamans, wise men, witches, and state religions. Even in modern times, telling the gold from the dross is difficult because so much of the information available is bogus.

Lore grants a hero a broad overview of parapsychology, believers' accounts and skeptics' rebuttals, occult beliefs and practices, psychic research, ghost stories, important documents and finds, and the major personalities involved in the pursuit of Greater Truths beyond conventional science. Most of all, the hero understands the arguments against conventional scientific explanations.

Conspiracy Theories

The hero with this skill has a working knowledge of the most widely known and most frequently postulated conspiracy theories. Whether it's the JFK assassination, the Bavarian Illuminati, the Freemasons, or the CIA, she knows who they are and what they are suspected of. A simple success is usually enough to provide some basic information, unless the topic is particularly obscure.

Researching in this field requires a great deal of time, and *conspiracy theories* skill checks cannot be made to acquire information more than once per game session or once per game week, at the Gamemaster's discretion. The Gamemaster should also consider using conspiracy dice when determining success with this skill (see *Chapter 9: Running a DARK•MATTER Campaign*).

⊗ ***Seeing the Puzzle:*** At rank 4, a conspiracy theorist can put together some of the pieces some of the time. Once per adventure, the player may make a *conspiracy theories* skill check at a +3 step penalty (this check requires no special research or time commitment). With a success, the hero learns a piece of useful (and not particularly apparent) information from the Gamemaster.

Libraries and Information Sources

From time to time, heroes will consult a local library or other repository of information. Of course, not all sources of information are of equal quality; the better the source, the easier it is to gather the information the hero needs. Typical skills assisted by a library or an information source include Business, Investigate–*research*, Knowledge–*language*, Law, Life Science, Medical Science, Physical Science, and Social Science. Lore specialty skill checks may also be assisted by a library, though at a +1 step penalty (since such information tends to be poorly represented in most places).

Consult the listings below to estimate the quality of an information source. Some specific (and rare) examples of the information sources listed below may be of higher or lower quality than the default standards (for instance, London's esteemed British Museum would provide a Good-quality information source). In some cases, the quality of the information source varies by topic (the British Museum's Egyptian collection, perhaps the finest in the world, might rate as an Amazing-quality source for that topic).

Conditions	Modifier	Examples
Critical	+4	Elementary school library
Extreme	+3	Rural public library, high school library
Moderate	+2	Medium-sized public library
Slight	+1	Small museum
Marginal	0	Internet*, city library
Ordinary	–1	University library, large museum, city newspaper morgue (local news), private collection (limited topics)
Good	–2	Government agency database, police records, courthouse records (legal records only)
Amazing	–3	Library of Congress

* While the Internet is typically of limited help in research attempts (what it has in breadth it often lacks in depth or accuracy), a successful Computer Science–*hacking*, Street Smart–*net savvy* , or Knowledge–*computer operation* skill check (the last at a +1 step penalty) can help the hero locate higher-quality archives. The result of the skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) indicates the quality of the information source the hero finds. In addition, the Internet grants a –1 step bonus when used to assist Lore specialty skill checks (as it serves as a repository for strange or outlandish information).

⊗ ***Clarity of Vision:*** At rank 8, a hero with this skill has a pretty good idea of who's who, and who's a fraud. On a successful skill check, he gains one valuable insight into a single conspiracy being investigated or uncovers a previously overlooked connection.

Fringe Science

This skill can't be used untrained.

This skill acquaints the hero with all sorts of fantastic technological concepts such as antigravity, perpetual motion machines, teleportation, mind-control devices, and many other ideas that mainstream science ignores. Heroes with this skill also understand the various forms of free energy studies: cold fusion, zero-point energy, gravimetrics, overunity energy, Newmann motors, Poynting currents, vacuum energy, and the other usual suspects.

A hero with this skill can identify equipment used in conducting fringe science experiments, can offer reasonable hypotheses about their uses, and has an overall knowledge of what sorts of experiments are being conducted in the field, enough so that he can speak convincingly to other researchers.

⊗ ***Improved Understanding:*** At rank 6, the hero gains a –1 step bonus to any Technical Science specialty skill checks relating to unusual, alien, or fringe technology. This bonus improves to –2 at rank 12.

Occult Lore

This skill provides a hero with background knowledge of myths, monsters, urban legends, astrology, numerology, folklore, and the basic facts of the world of the supernatural. It also provides knowledge of the history of supernatural events, what forms ghosts and hauntings take, and how spells of various traditions are usually cast and manifested. In many cases, no skill check is required for the basics of the paranormal. A successful skill check allows a hero to identify a particularly unusual creature, person, legend, or book, at the Gamemaster's discretion, or at least to relate it to similar legends. A Good or Amazing result on a skill check simply provides more information.

► ***Prediction:*** At rank 4, the hero may use *occult lore* to make predictions about the future of himself or others. This can take the form of astrological horoscopes, numerological analysis, tarot readings, or any other ritual of the player's choice. A simple skill check is required, modified by the time period to be predicted. If the hero attempts to predict events within the next few hours, a +1 step penalty applies. Events within a few days apply a +2 step penalty. Events a week or more into the future result in a +3 step penalty or worse, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

An Ordinary success results in vague but generally accurate information (much like a typical newspaper horoscope). A Good result is either accurate or specific (at the Gamemaster's option), while an Amazing success is both accurate and specific. Of course, even the best predictions tend to be cryptic and sometimes misleading or difficult to interpret. In any case, the attempt requires d4+1 hours to complete.

At higher ranks, the hero becomes more skilled in predicting the future. At rank 8, the hero receives a –1 step bonus to *occult lore* skill checks used for the purpose of prediction. This bonus improves to –2 at rank 12.

Psychic Lore

The hero knows the basics of paranormal psychic research, lore, and evidence available to the public, from spontaneous human combustion and mind control to remote viewing and spoon bending. The skill focuses entirely on human abilities and human experiments in psionic endeavors and does not include FX.

⊗ ***Resist Psi:*** At rank 4, the hero gains an additional +1 resistance modifier against the use of any psionic power.

⊗ ***Sense Psi:*** At rank 8, the hero gains the equivalent of the Psionic Awareness perk (or a –1 step bonus to the perk check if the hero already possesses the perk).

⊗ ***Identify Psi User:*** At rank 12, the hero may make a Psionic Awareness perk check at a +2 step penalty to identify an individual with psionic powers, even when those powers are not in use.

UFO Lore

This skill includes knowledge of oral histories, well-known UFOlogists, important discoveries and historical dates, famous alien sightings, and the vast body of eyewitness accounts and other literature about aliens among us. The hero is aware of the existence of alien beings, their ships, and their activities over the centuries. She may be able to identify alien artifacts as of extraterrestrial origin and recognize their species from eyewitness reports. In addition, she has a somewhat skewed view of alien technology (such as gravitics and mass energy) and various alien powers (such as mindwalking and FX).

⊗ ***Improved Understanding:*** As the hero gains higher ranks in *UFO lore*, she receives a situation die bonus to *UFO lore* skill checks. The bonus is –1 step at rank 4, –2 steps at rank 8, and –3 steps at rank 12.

Street Smart

This skill can be extremely useful for those living on the fringe in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. In addition to the street-level skills detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, this book includes a specialty skill particularly suited to the computer-literate: *net savvy*.

Net Savvy

A knowledge of *net savvy* ensures that a hacker is always ahead of the curve with the latest slang, sites, tools, and netiquette—everything he needs to be accepted by the "digital underground." With this skill, a user knows where to find grayware, which sites have a thriving black market, which sites clamp down on illegal intrusions, and where to find an untraceable net connection. If it's illicit, immoral, or dangerous and it's on the Internet, *net savvy* is the skill that applies. [Note: This skill is adapted from the *Grid savvy* skill in *Dataware* (TSR2811).]

⊗ ***Increased Familiarity:*** As noted in the "Libraries and Information Sources" sidebar, this skill can be used to locate high-quality information sources on the Internet. As the hero's *net savvy* skill rank increases, his ability to locate such sources improves. The hero gains a –1 step bonus to skill checks used to locate information sources on the Internet at rank 4. This bonus improves to –2 at rank 8 and –3 at rank 12.

Perks and Flaws

The heroes of the early twenty-first century have a few quirks specific to their circumstances. The perks and flaws listed in Table D2 and Table D3 cover the new traits common to the heroes of the setting, as well as all the perks and flaws listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Perks

The heroes of DARK•MATTER need every edge they can get. The perks listed below are unique to this setting.

Gearhead

Cost 4, PER, Active
The hero has a natural affinity with mechanical systems and can often perform repairs more quickly than normal. The hero gains a –1 step bonus to all Technical Science–*repair* and *juryrig* skill checks.

Hidden Identity

Cost 3/6, PER, Active
The hero enjoys the benefit of a hidden or false identity. For 3 points, no records of the hero's identity exist in any database. The IRS, the FBI, and all other groups simply don't know the hero exists. This has a bit of drawback as well; the hero can't have any kind of credit card or bank account, so all of his transactions must be in cash (this version of the perk can't be taken with the Criminal Record flaw). For 6 points, the hero actually has a complete false identity, thus bypassing any problems that arise from having no identity whatsoever.

High Tech

Cost 4, —, Special
The hero owns an object of advanced (PL 6) technology. This could be something stolen from an advanced research lab or an item of alien manufacture, but it is not an Alien Artifact (as per the perk of the same name). The object has no drawbacks and functions normally for the hero until a Critical Failure is rolled while using the item, which damages it. For information on how to repair such an item, see the skill description for Technical Science–*xenoengineering* earlier in this chapter.

Networked

Cost 2, PER, Active
The hero gains a –1 step bonus to the use of contacts or allegiances.

Second Sight

Cost 4, WIL, Conscious
This perk simply allows the hero to see through illusions and visual trickery—including psionic illusions, FX phantasms, high-tech holographic imagery, and similar effects—to view the truth. The hero must concentrate on the object or person believed false to make use of his or her gift; this grants the hero a –1 step bonus on any skill check used to resist such effects (for instance, Awareness–*intuition* in the case of Telepathy–*illusion*). If such a check is not allowed, the hero may instead make a Will feat check to see through the false image.

Superior Talent

Cost 4/6, WIL, Active
This perk may only be purchased by a hero with a psionic talent (see "Mindwalking," below). The 4-point version allows the hero to purchase two psionic broad skills and up to two specialty skills from each of those broad skills. The 6-point version allows a hero to purchase up to four psionic specialty skills of a single broad skill, rather than only up to two. A hero may not select both versions of this perk. No matter which version of this perk a hero selects, no more than one psionic skill may advance beyond rank 6.

Well Traveled

Cost 4, PER, Conscious
The hero has acquaintances in many remote locations that might act as contacts for him. Whenever he travels to a

TABLE D2: PERKS

Perks	Cost	Ability	Type
Alien Artifact	8	—	Special
Ambidextrous	4	DEX	Active
Animal Friend	4	WIL	Conscious
Celebrity	3	PER	Conscious
Concentration	3	INT	Conscious
Danger Sense	4	WIL	Active
Faith	5	WIL	Conscious
Filthy Rich	6	PER	Conscious
Fists of Iron	2/5	STR	Active
Fortitude	4	CON	Active
Gearhead	4	PER	Active
Good Luck	3	WIL	Conscious
Great Looks	3	PER	Active
Heightened Ability	10	Special	Active
Hidden Identity	3/6	PER	Active
High Tech	4	—	Special
Networked	2	PER	Active
Observant	3	WIL	Active
Photo Memory	3	INT	Conscious
Powerful Ally	4	PER	Conscious
Psionic Awareness	3	INT	Active
Reflexes	4	DEX	Active
Reputation	3	WIL	Active
Second Sight	4	WIL	Conscious
Superior Talent	4/6	WIL	Active
Tough as Nails	4	STR	Active
Vigor	2/3/4	CON	Active
Well Traveled	4	PER	Conscious
Willpower	4	WIL	Active

All new Perks are underlined. Perks that must be purchased at hero creation are listed in *italics*.

remote or foreign location, he may make a perk check to "remember" one of these acquaintances. With any success, he locates an individual who serves as a contact (Information, Resource, or Expert, at the player's choice), though a +1 step penalty applies to any skill check used to solicit assistance. The acquaintance may only be utilized in this manner once, though he may be "remembered" again in subsequent visits with another successful perk check. The hero may only attempt to "remember" one contact in any given location in any single adventure or game session (Gamemaster's discretion).

If the perk check results in a Critical Failure, the hero's familiarity with the location backfires and he suffers a +1 step penalty to all Personality-based skill checks until he leaves the area (similar to the Infamy flaw).

Flaws

Nobody's perfect. In a setting as full of human weakness as the world of DARK•MATTER, that's truer than ever. Here are a few of the minor imperfections that heroes of the setting are prone to suffering.

TABLE D3: FLAWS

Flaws	+SP	Ability
Abductee	4	CON
Alien Artifact	5	—
Bad Luck	6	WIL
Clueless	2/4/6	INT
Clumsy	5	DEX
Code of Honor	3	WIL
Criminal Record	4	PER
Delicate	3	STR
Dilettante	5	WIL
Dirt Poor	5	PER
Divided Loyalty	4	PER
Forgetful	5	INT
Fragile	3	CON
Illiterate	5	INT
Implants	2	CON
Infamy	2/4/6	PER
Oblivious	4	WIL
Obsessed	2/4/6	INT
Old Injury	2/4/6	STR
Phobia	2/4/6	WIL
Poor Looks	3	PER
Possessed	4/8	WIL
Powerful Enemy	2/4/6	PER
Primitive	2/4/6	INT
Rampant Paranoia	2	PER
Rebellious	2	PER
Slow	6	DEX
Spineless	2/4/6	WIL
Temper	2/4/6	WIL
Wild Talent	6	WIL

All new Flaws are underlined. Flaws that must be purchased at hero creation are listed in *italics*.

Abductee

+4 Bonus Skill Points, CON

The hero has been abducted at some point in his life and was subjected to medical tests, mental scans, and possibly even brainwashing. As a result, the hero is irrationally afraid of one of the major species of alien beings (Gamemaster's discretion). Simply seeing an image of the abductor species unnerves the hero, and he may react strongly, even violently, if forced to spend time near the alien. This fear usually results in either a fight or a flight response.

In game terms, the hero must make a Resolve–*mental resolve* check each round to spend any amount of time in an alien's presence. The choice of fight or flight is up to the player and must be declared before the check. If the check fails, the hero attacks the alien for d4 rounds or flees the scene for d12 rounds. Any fleeing hero suffers 1 point of fatigue damage from his full-tilt panicked run. If the check results in a Critical Failure, a fleeing hero disappears for d4 days as he seeks out someplace he feels safe, while a fighting hero battles the alien until one of them is disabled or dead.

At the Gamemaster's option, the abductee may be the target of a follow-up visit at some point during the campaign, or he may develop complications from the procedures he endured while abducted.

Criminal Record

+4 Bonus Skill Points, PER

The hero has a significant criminal record (at least one felony conviction). Though she isn't necessarily wanted by law enforcement (though that can be achieved by combining this flaw with Powerful Enemy), being a convicted felon entails a whole other set of problems: The hero's personal information (name, age, residence, employment record, and fingerprints) is on file with all national (and possibly international) law enforcement agencies, employment is difficult to obtain, and government and law enforcement agencies generally distrust the hero. This means that law enforcement officials can track the hero's activities relatively easily if they so desire. If she leaves her fingerprints at a crime scene, the police soon arrive at her home.

This differs from the Infamy flaw in that the hero's criminal activities may not necessarily be well known to the public. This flaw may not be taken with the 3-point version of the Hidden Identity perk.

Dilettante

+5 Bonus Skill Points, WIL

The hero may not have any skill rank greater than his level, nor may he purchase rank benefits early.

Divided Loyalty

+4 Bonus Skill Points, PER

The hero owes a great deal of loyalty to someone or something other than her current organization and her fellow heroes. At some point in the campaign determined by the Gamemaster, the hero must place this other loyalty ahead of her other obligations.

She may be a member of another conspiracy, she may still owe loyalty to a former employer, or she may simply have goals that conflict with those of her current organization.

Illiterate

+5 Bonus Skill Points, INT
The hero cannot read and thus cannot gain or use untrained any skills that require literacy (such as Business, Investigate–*research*, or any Science skills). He cannot read documents, books, magazines, letters, notes, computer screens, or advertisements. Though he can sign his own name (barely), he cannot write. In most cases, the hero attempts to compensate by always having someone else read to him or write his reports for him.

Implants

+2 Bonus Skill Points, CON
The hero has been implanted with a small device that monitors some aspect of the hero's life: his location or health is typical. Removing the implant is dangerous because of its position; a typical implant is lodged in the hero's spine or along the interior wall of a major artery (usually with a tiny explosive charge to guard against tampering).

In most cases, the hero is unaware of this implant and may not even know its source. It may be a leftover from a previous employer, an abduction, or a hostile conspiracy. It may even be an alien artifact or a government tracking device. In any case, the device allows the hero's enemies to track the hero's movements and perhaps even observe his actions.

Possessed

+4/8 Bonus Skill Points, WIL
The hero's body is sometimes home to a bodiless spirit entity that can influence or even dictate the hero's actions. This is a 4-point flaw if the spirit is largely neutral or harmless, and an 8-point flaw if the spirit is actively hostile. Every time the hero is rendered unconscious due to loss of stun or fatigue points (or whenever he or she fails a Stamina–*endurance* skill check caused by Amazing damage), the spirit gains control of the host body and animates it, allowing it to move and act. Note that the host body may have significant penalties to its actions due to loss of stun or fatigue points (see the "Dazed" rule in *Chapter 3: Heroes in Action* in the *Player's Handbook*).

While the hero is possessed, the Gamemaster determines all his or her actions. In the case of a neutral or harmless possessing spirit, these actions may be similar to those the player would have wanted or they may not, but they are never self-destructive. Occasionally they prove helpful, though such help should command a high price.

A hostile spirit will not hesitate to put the possessed hero in mortal danger, to abandon companions, and in general make a mess of the hero's life, friendships, and property. It actively undermines whatever goals the hero is pursuing, and it may even turn violent against fellow heroes if they try to stop it. The hero must suffer the consequences of any fallout, such as murder charges, jail time, or accusations of fraud or theft.

While active, the spirit can be cast out by anyone capable of exorcising spirits (see Monotheism–*exorcism* in *Chapter 4: Arcana*). This casting out is never permanent unless the spirit has achieved its goal and the hero spends the appropriate number of achievement points to rid himself of the flaw. If the spirit is not cast out, it remains within the hero's body for days. The hero is entitled to a Resolve–*mental resolve* check each day to reassert control of his body with a –1 step bonus on the second day, a –2 step bonus on the third, and so on. The spirit leaves when such a check is successful; the hero remembers nothing of the intervening time or actions, and always suffers 1 point of fatigue damage when he "wakes up."

The Gamemaster should select an appropriate entity for the possession and determine its goals. The flaw can only be bought off through a combination of successful exorcism and the possessing spirit accomplishing its goals (of course, the appropriate number of achievement points must also be spent). See the "Possession" sidebar in *Chapter 4: Arcana* for more information on this topic.

Rampant Paranoia

+2 Bonus Skill Points, PER
The hero suffers from frequent bouts of persecution complex and paranoia and suspects even other heroes of working against him. In cases where the hero must trust someone else, the player must roll a Personality feat check. If the check succeeds, the hero overcomes his doubts and can act rationally. If the check fails, the hero is suspicious and suffers a +1 step penalty to all actions for d6 hours. With a Critical Failure, the hero falls into a delusional state and becomes convinced that "everyone is out to get him" until he makes a successful Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check (one attempt per day).

Rebellious

+2 Bonus Skill Points, PER
The hero suffers a +2 step penalty to any Personality-based skill checks when dealing with law enforcement or government agencies.

Wild Talent

+6 Bonus Skill Points, WIL
This flaw may only be purchased by a hero with a mindwalking talent. The hero has very limited control over her psionic powers—they frequently act up when least wanted. The hero must make a Will feat check immediately if she becomes dazed (see *Chapter 3: Heroes in Action* in the *Player's Handbook*) or if she fails a Stamina–*endurance* or any Resolve skill check. If the check fails, the hero's power is unleashed uncontrollably for d4 phases. This could be dangerous (in the case of Telekinesis skills) or distracting (as with ESP skills), but should always make the situation more difficult for the hero and her companions. The hero also loses 1 psionic energy point per phase of uncontrolled psionic activity. The Gamemaster must carefully adjudicate the use of this flaw; it should be significant, but not completely debilitating. If the hero ever buys off the flaw, she gains normal control over her power.

Careers

The careers presented below are for use in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. This section includes a basic description of each career and its role in the setting, along with a few items of signature equipment (see *Chapter 6: Sample Careers* in the *Player's Handbook*).

In addition, a skill package is listed for each career, representing the basic knowledge that any hero with that background should have. Don't forget the limit on a starting hero's number of broad skills; in some cases, a minimum Intelligence is required to purchase the career because of the number of broad skills in the package.

Each career description also provides appropriate perks and flaws. These are purely suggestions based on the "classic archetypes" of the careers; no additional game effect is acquired by selecting them.

Combat Spec

As in all places and times, there's room for a fighter. The soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the traditional armed forces aren't the heart and soul of the DARK•MATTER warrior cohorts, though—instead, the guerrillas, special operators, and behind-the-scenes strike forces are the most prominent warriors of the setting. As always, Combat Specs are the heroes most likely to fight and win against any threat; truly outstanding Combat Spec heroes also know when to fall back to fight another day.

Corporate Security Specialist

This hero handles security matters for a large corporation. At a minimum, this hero might be responsible for protecting corporate secrets and assets. A more active hero might also take proactive efforts to eliminate competition.

Those security specialists who venture into the field should improve their combat skills by picking up Unarmed Attack–*brawl* or *power martial arts*. The specialty skills of Manipulation and Stealth come in handy for the hero who frequently finds himself engaging in corporate espionage. Investigate–*search* and *track* are crucial as well. Business–*corporate*, Administration–*bureaucracy*, and even Street Smart can help a canny security specialist do his job.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol, battle vest, flashlight, corporate uniform.

Skill Package: Modern–*pistol;* Security–*protocols 2, devices;* Investigate–*interrogate*. Cost: 29 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Divided Loyalty, Obsessed.

Martial Artist

More than just practitioners of physical combat, martial artists recognize the spiritual, even mystical truth behind the purification of the body and mind.

Unlike many heroes, martial artists tend to concentrate on improving their existing skills rather than branching out into new areas of knowledge. Thus, additional ranks in the specialty skills of Acrobatics, Stamina, and Resolve are advised. Martial Artists preferring offense to defense learn Unarmed Attack–*power martial arts* or even Melee Weapons–*blade* or *bludgeon*. Those who recognize the need for new knowledge may learn Stealth or Investigate. Those who wish to pass on their talents to others pick up Teach. Martial artists especially in tune with their bodies might have a mindwalking talent such as Biokinesis–*rejuvenate* or ESP–*battle mind*.

Signature Equipment: Gi, katana or tonfa (club) as appropriate.

Skill Package: Athletics–*jump;* Acrobatics–*defensive 2, dodge, fall;* Stamina–*endurance;* Awareness–*intuition;* Resolve. Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Reflexes, Tough as Nails.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor.

Militiaman

Trained in survival, sabotage, and partisan tactics, the militiaman knows the governments and conspiracies of the world all too well and distrusts their every move. While some may view him as a raving paranoid lunatic, there's a grain of truth to his suspicions. Things aren't as they seem, and someone is hiding information that the public ought to know. While the militiaman is more likely to look for human political causes than paranormal sources behind every strange occurrence, he is also able to see beyond the status quo. And then blow it away.

Many militiamen have training in basic woodcraft such as Movement–*trailblazing* and Investigate–*track*. Additional combat skills, such as Melee Weapons or Unarmed Attack–*brawl* are useful as well. While they may or may not have built a fallout shelter in their backyard, they are committed, trained, and ready for just about anything.

Signature Equipment: .44 magnum, assault rifle, two concussion grenades, survival gear.

Skill Package: Modern–*pistol, rifle*; Survival–*training*, Demolitions; Lore–*conspiracy;* Interaction–*intimidate.* Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Hidden Identity, Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Criminal Record, Divided Loyalty, Powerful Enemy (U.S. government), Rampant Paranoia, Rebellious.

Police Officer

The police officer is a rank-and-file member of the police force. Depending on her background, she might be a county sheriff, a city cop, or a highway patrol officer. Some heroes with this career may actually be former cops, now working as security guards, corporate security officers, personal bodyguards, or at an unrelated job.

If the officer is on the road a lot, she should consider picking up Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle.* Particularly skilled police officers—such as those with ranks in Awareness, Investigate, and Street Smart specialty skills—may actually be police detectives. A member of a SWAT team would also have Armor Operation–*combat armor,* while a police officer on the bomb squad would have Demolitions–*disarm*.

Signature Equipment: Police nightstick (club), 9mm pistol, handcuffs, battle vest.

Skill Package: Melee–*bludgeon;* Modern–*pistol, rifle;* Law–*enforcement;* Investigate. Cost: 32 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant, Powerful Ally (police force).

Suggested Flaws: Old Injury, Powerful Enemy (organized crime; anybody the hero has arrested in the past).



Soldier

The soldier belongs to (or was recently discharged from) a standing military force. This career is particularly suited to enlisted men (officers should choose the military officer career), though this career would also suit an officer who has worked his way up from the bottom.

Additional skills to consider include more ranks in Modern Ranged Weapons specialty skills, Athletics–*throw,* Movement–*swim* and *trailblazing*, and Survival–*survival training*. Ranks in Awareness–*perception* and *intuition* are also always handy when you're on the battlefield.

Signature Equipment: Assault rifle, rations, survival gear.

Skill Package: Armor Operation; Heavy Weapons; Unarmed–*brawl;* Modern–*rifle;* Vehicle–*land;* Stamina–*endurance*. Cost: 32 points.

Suggested Perks: Powerful Ally (military organization), Reflexes, Tough as Nails.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Powerful Enemy (enemy military; terrorists).

Soldier of Fortune

This individual may once have belonged to a military organization but is now a mercenary, selling his skills to the highest bidder. He's no high-paid assassin, though he probably has few compunctions about killing, if it pays the bills.

The soldier of fortune should consider additional combat skills to improve his value in a fight, while training in the Stealth or Investigate specialty skills opens up the possibility of high-paying wetwork. More ranks in Interaction–*bargain* can help negotiate a fair price for his talents. He might also consider Teach–*combat spec* if he's looking for some quieter, less dangerous work.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol, 9mm SMG, survival gear.

Skill Package: Unarmed–*brawl;* Modern–*pistol, SMG;* Stamina–*endurance;* Movement; Survival; Interaction–*bargain, intimidate.* Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Infamy, Old Injury.

Street Punk

Street punks are brawlers and petty thieves, making a living by selling their muscle or stealing purses. They work for crime bosses, gang leaders, and other underworld types. Some serve as bodyguards or as part of a personal entourage, while others work as bagmen, legbreakers, or just general intimidators.

Pick up additional ranks in appropriate combat skills whenever possible, including Melee Weapons, Unarmed Attack, and Modern Ranged Weapons. Stamina–*endurance* and *resist pain* can be useful, as can Stealth and Street Smart–*street knowledge*. Those who work as bodyguards should consider Awareness–*perception* and *intuition* to improve their chances of

spotting a potential attacker. Finally, Interaction–*intimidate* and *taunt* can help a street punk end a fight before it starts, or start one that doesn't yet exist, respectively.

Signature Equipment: Switchblade, .38 revolver, expensive shades.

Skill Package: Melee–*blade;* Unarmed–*brawl;* Modern–*pistol;* Street–*criminal.* Cost: 30 points.

Suggested Perks: Powerful Ally (employer), Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Criminal Record, Old Injury, Rebellious, Temper.

Diplomat

Often more important than the detective or the soldier is the thinker who puts all the pieces together and who can weave her way through the maze of deception that separates disinformation from the truth. There are many approaches to the problem, and each type of Diplomat has her own strengths and weaknesses.

Antiquarian

Diplomat (Tech Op)

The antiquarian is a keeper of knowledge. He frequents libraries, used bookshops, and private collections to garner bits of obscure and ancient information.

The antiquarian should consider picking up additional Knowledge–*language* skills, as well as Social Science–*linguistics*, to help him understand and translate texts. Administration–*bureaucracy* and Interaction–*charm* can help him get access to otherwise restricted sources. Interaction–*interview* may be necessary if the desired knowledge isn't recorded anywhere but in an individual's mind. If he travels or corresponds with foreign libraries or officials, Culture–*diplomacy* and *etiquette* could come in handy.

Signature Equipment: Historical texts, rumpled clothes, various cultural artifacts.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, language (specific) 2;* Social–*anthropology, history 2;* Investigate–*research 2;* Lore. Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Photo Memory.

Suggested Flaws: Delicate, Slow.

Dilettante

Diplomat (Free Agent)

The dilettante samples knowledge and experience from a broad variety of specialties. She is often unable to focus her attention on a single topic for very long. Most dilettantes are at least comfortably well-off, if not wealthy.

It is recommended that the dilettante dabble in a variety of broad and specialty skills, spreading her skill points around as much as possible. Animal Handling–*animal riding* befits a wealthy youth, while Business–*corporate* or *small business* suggest that the dilettante has had some experience running the family business. It's a rare dilettante who hasn't dabbled in Entertainment–*act* or *musical instrument*.

Signature Equipment: Business dress, briefcase.

Skill Package: Business; Knowledge–*computer, language (specific);* Law; Social–*history;* Administration; Culture–*diplomacy, etiquette (specific);* Deception–*gamble;* Interaction–*bargain, charm.* Cost: 36 points.

Suggested Perks: Celebrity, Filthy Rich.

Suggested Flaws: Clueless, Dilettante, Oblivious.

Facilitator

Diplomat (Free Agent)

The facilitator is a chameleon, a bureaucratic hustler, and a shady operator. He keeps tabs on dozens of contacts, sifts the Internet for information, and pays a few reliable informants for the freshest leads. Why? He trades that information to others, or he keeps it to himself. Either way, he's a player with more pieces than the opposition, and thus a better chance of surviving.

A facilitator can be a contact person for working with any of a wide spectrum of other organizations, from organized crime families to government agencies to the military and the United Nations. In some cases, a facilitator simply keeps tabs on a string of independent sources scattered throughout universities, research compounds, embassies, departments, and various bureaucracies. Whatever the source of his information, a facilitator may come from any walk of life, from the top of the social pyramid to the bottom. He may have a shady past and a few arrests on his record, but few or no convictions. (Hey, with the right connections, working the court system is just like working a business deal.) Alternately, he may have a Harvard degree in political science, a University of Chicago law degree, or credentials from the Wharton School of Business and the New York Stock Exchange. In either case, he understands how people work, what motivates action, and how things really get done.

The most important specialty skills for a facilitator hero are those in the Interaction broad skill. After those are acquired (and

Table D4: Dark-Matter Careers

Combat Spec	Diplomat	Free Agent	Tech Op
Corporate Security Specialist	Antiquarian	Con Artist	Doctor
Martial Artist	Dilettante	Field Agent	Field Guide
Militiaman	Facilitator	Journalist	Forensics Expert
Police Officer	Military Officer	Paranormalist	Gadgeteer
Soldier	Occultist	Private Investigator	Hacker
Soldier of Fortune	Psychic	Professional Thief	Scientist
Street Punk	Visionary	Psi Agent	Xenoengineer

improved), consider Computer Science–*hacking*, Law–*court procedures*, Creativity–*forgery*, Investigate–*research*, Street Smart–*street knowledge* or *criminal elements*, Culture–*diplomacy* or *etiquette*, and Deception–*bribe*.

Signature Equipment: Cell phone, laptop computer with wireless modem, three Good-quality programs, address book or PDA crammed with names, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Skill Package: Business–*corporate, illicit;* Knowledge–*computer;* Law; Administration; Street Smart; Deception–*bluff;* Interaction–*bargain 2, charm, interview.* Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Networked, Powerful Ally, Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Infamy, Powerful Enemy.

Military Officer

Diplomat (Combat Spec)

The military officer is trained to lead troops into battle. Skilled both in combat and interaction, as both are necessary for the survival of the unit, military officers in DARK•MATTER may come from armed forces anywhere in the world. Some heroes with this career may be retired or discharged from service.

Military officers on the front lines might want Modern Ranged Weapons–*SMG,* Stamina–*endurance,* Survival–*survival training,* Tactics–*infantry tactics,* Resolve, and Leadership–*inspire.* Officers from a navy or an air force are likely to have System Operation specialty skills or Tactics–*vehicle tactics.* Those working behind the scenes should consider picking up Administration–*management,* Law–*military,* Teach–*Combat Spec,* and Culture–*diplomacy* and *etiquette*. Depending on the hero's specific duties, other useful skills might include Vehicle Operation–*air vehicle, land vehicle,* or *water vehicle,* Law–*court procedures,* Security–*protection protocols,* and Investigate–*interrogate*.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol, uniform.

Skill Package: Modern–*pistol, rifle;* Knowledge–*computer;* Tactics; Admin–*bureaucracy;* Teach; Leadership–*command*. Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Powerful Ally (military).

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Divided Loyalty, Powerful Enemy (enemy military, terrorists).

Occultist

Diplomat (Free Agent)

The occultist studied arcane lore and magic for fun until one day, she discovered that it actually worked. While the occultist's greatest powers are a function of Arcane Magic FX, almost as much of her allure comes from her ability to sway others and her aura of power and secret knowledge.

The most important additional skills for any occultist to acquire are new Arcane Magic specialty skills. Doing so may require learning additional languages (or Social Science–*linguistics*), then following clues to repositories of grimoires and the reading rooms of museums or university rare book rooms. Skills such as Deception–*bluff* or *bribe* may help an occultist get past security to access such restricted volumes.

Signature Equipment: Volumes of obscure rituals, formal or fashionable clothes, ceremonial amulet, candles and other trappings.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*language (Latin, Ancient Egyptian,* or *Ancient Greek);* Investigate–*research;* Lore–*occult;* Interaction–*charm;* plus one of the following (see *Chapter 4: Arcana*):

Alchemist: Hermeticism–*sleep of Morpheus*. Cost: 33 points.

Diabolist: Diabolism–*command*. Cost: 35 points.

Mystic: Enochian–*grace*. Cost: 31 points.

Suggested Perks: Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Psychic

Diplomat (Free Agent)

The psychic has only limited psionic powers but supplements them with deft Interaction and Deception skills. Though there are plenty of frauds in the field, psychic heroes have real power. Of course, to the average observer, such individuals appear no different from the majority of so-called "psychics." After all, smart psychics learn to hide their gifts.

A psychic begins the game with limited ESP skills; improving these skills is a good idea for the psychic hero's first few achievement points. The hero should remember that she has only a limited number of psionic energy points to spend, and relying too heavily on mindwalking skills could be dangerous. Therefore, improvement of Personality-based skills is also advised—all the better to talk your way out of a fight when your psionics fail you.

Signature Equipment: Tarot cards, runes, crystals.

Skill Package: ESP–*empathy 2, precognition*; Lore–*occult lore;* Deception–*bluff;* Interaction–*bargain, interview.* Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant, Psionic Awareness, Superior Talent.

Suggested Flaws: Wild Talent.

Visionary

Diplomat (Free Agent)

The visionary is a person who embraces the intangible, seeks out experiences that transcend the everyday, and believes that divinity is found in common things. While deeply pious, a visionary is frequently at odds with established religious doctrine and may be branded blasphemous or heretical for his or her trances, visions, and beliefs. Unlike the occultist, the visionary's power comes from an emotional bond sustained by faith in greater powers, not from arcane knowledge or formulas.

Visionaries should consider improving their Resolve–*mental resolve* skill (the better to deal with the horrors of daily life). Leadership–*inspire* is another appropriate skill, as is Teach. Of course, increasing their rank in various Faith FX specialty skills is a good way to go.

Signature Equipment: Volumes of revelations, dream journal, casual clothes, books about the spirit world.

Skill Package: Social–*history;* Awareness–*intuition;* Resolve–*mental,* plus one of the following (see *Chapter 4: Arcana*):

Monotheist: Monotheism–*guidance*. Cost: 34 points.

Shaman: Shamanism–*trance visions*. Cost: 33 points.

Houngan: Voodoo–*Legba rides*. Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Faith, Willpower.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Obsessed, Powerful Enemy.

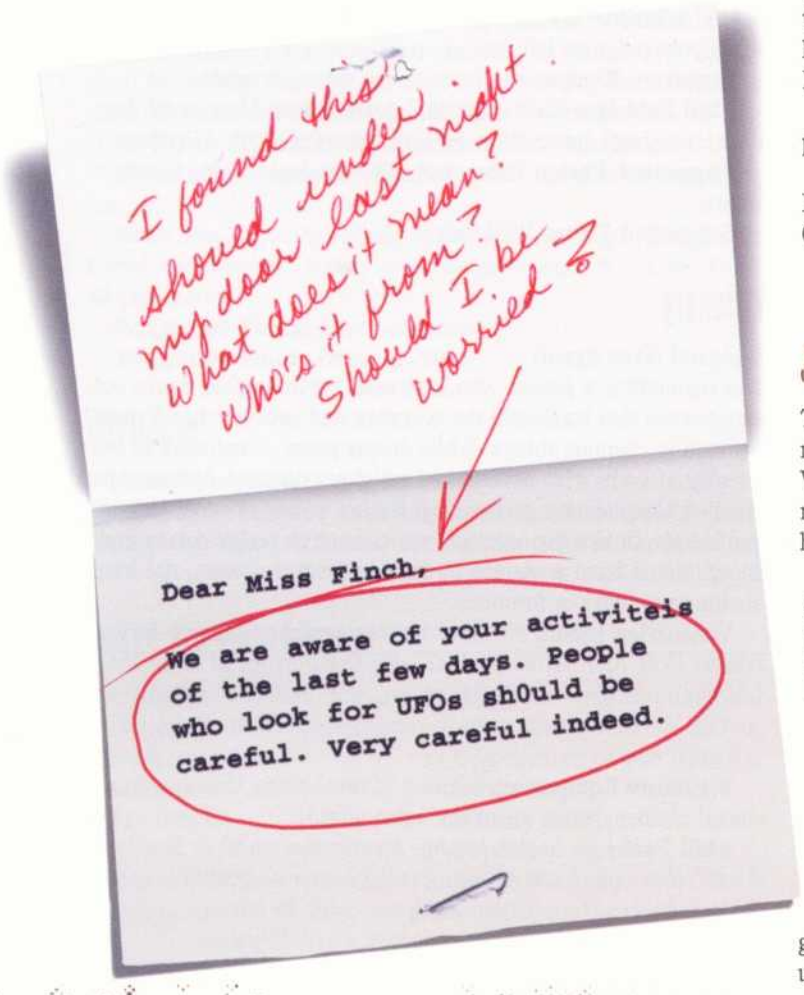
Free Agent

Free Agents are in their element in the DARK•MATTER setting; in a world full of mysteries and conspiracies, there is always a place for those who can investigate, uncover, and recover the facts. How far they are willing to go in pursuit of those facts separates the heroes from the villains.

Con Artist

While the professional thief pulls off jobs for big money, the con artist is strictly small-time. He hustles old ladies for meal money, cons tourists with counterfeit goods, and cheats in poker games. Most con artists are convinced that they're only one con away from the big score; unfortunately, the reality is that they're unlikely ever to escape the life they've chosen.

Since a con artist's life depends on his ability to convince others, additional ranks in the Deception and Interaction specialty skills are a must. Business–*illicit business* and Street Smart–*criminal elements* can help him get in touch with the local underworld. Creativity–*forgery* and Computer Science–*hacking* can offer additional routes to riches. Finally, sometimes even the best con goes awry, and the only skill to get you out of trouble may be Modern Ranged Weapons. A con artist with a useful psychic talent such as Telepathy–*suggest* could make himself rich very quickly.



Signature Equipment: Formal dress, deck of cards, fake jewelry.

Skill Package: Awareness–*intuition;* Street Smart; Deception–*bluff 3, bribe, gamble;* Interaction–*bargain, charm 2, seduce.* Cost: 33 points.

Suggested Perks: Good Luck.

Suggested Flaws: Criminal Record, Infamy, Powerful Enemy (law enforcement; previous con victims).

Field Agent

While policymakers and secret societies may plot and plan all they like in the comfort of their offices, someone has to actually go out into the world, find out what's going on, and report back. The agencies and conspiracies to which these agents report have a vested interest in learning about and manipulating the events of the modern world—and that's the other half of the field operative's work. Field agents are the men and women who travel, interrogate, and pursue the facts on behalf of a government or other patron organization. (Note that merely having this career does not automatically elevate a hero to the Institute rank of the same name.)

A field agent should expand into the remainder of the Investigate skills, namely *interrogate* and *track,* as well as Knowledge–*deduce*. Depending on how much time an operative spends trailing suspects, Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle* and *air vehicle* may be worthwhile, or Stealth–*shadow*. Some field agents pick up Medical Science–*psychology* and work as profilers, creating descriptions of criminal suspects based on the agent's knowledge of human behavior. Those who work in codebreaking should learn Investigate–*cryptography* and Computer Science–*programming*.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol, profession identification papers, rental car, handcuffs, cell phone, flashlight.

Skill Package: Modern–*pistol*, Knowledge–*computer, deduce;* Law–*enforcement*, Admin–*bureaucracy*; Investigate–*interrogate.* Cost: 35 points.

Suggested Perks: Powerful Ally (employer).

Suggested Flaws: Powerful Enemy (enemy of employer).

Journalist

The journalist career covers everything from cub reporters to news photographers to foreign correspondents to anchormen. Whether at the top of their field or just starting out, journalists must rely on a combination of good information and strong hunches to get the story.

Most journalists should focus on improving their existing specialty skills (particularly Investigate–*research* and Interaction–*interview*) before branching out into new skills. Street Smart–*street knowledge* and *net savvy* are two more useful skills to pick up. Beyond that, a journalist's particular area of expertise dictates additional skills. Photojournalists take Creativity–*photography,* while foreign correspondents must learn Knowledge–*language (specific)* and Diplomacy. Those investigating the business world should learn Business–*corporate* and Administration–*bureaucracy*, while journalists focusing on organized crime should consider Business–*illicit business* and Street Smart–*criminal elements*. Finally, journalists who place getting the story above following the law should pick up Manipulation–*lockpick*, Stealth–*sneak* and *shadow*, and Computer Science–*hacking*.

Signature Equipment: Laptop computer with cellular modem, cell phone, pager (plus camera for photojournalists).

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, deduce*; Awareness–*intuition*; Creativity–*journalism;* Investigate–*research 2;* Street Smart; Interaction–*interview*. Cost: 30 points.

Suggested Perks: Celebrity, Networked, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed, Powerful Enemy (somebody he's investigated), Rampant Paranoia.

Paranormalist

Some Free Agents are just exactly that: entirely free spirits. Many such seekers are UFOlogists, paranormal researchers, or abductees who are only able to pursue their goals part-time. They may work at New Age bookstores or in herbalist shops to pay the bills, but they are always motivated to learn on their own, shrugging off conventional wisdom. Over the years, they have gained a deep understanding of the paranormal because they care deeply about the field and about verifying their suspicions. Many traditional scientists don't give them any respect, so they're already used to being brushed off, but that doesn't deter them. They are relentlessly persistent.

However, while paranormalists know that strange things are going on in sealed meeting rooms around the world, they don't have all the pieces of the puzzle. They tend to operate on instinct rather than pure logic, but Knowledge–*deduce* and Administration–*bureaucracy* both help cut through the prevarication that functionaries and cover-up artists like to engage in. Deception–*bluff* or even *bribe* sometimes helps to get past the watchdogs to where the really juicy files are kept. Of course, improving existing Lore specialty skills is a must; after all, paranormalists have to keep up to date on current theories.

Signature Equipment: Journals of UFOlogy, videotapes of strange phenomena, and hundreds of files of unusual sightings and experiences.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, deduce 2*; Awareness–*intuition*, Investigate–*research 2*, Lore–*conspiracy, psychic, UFO;* Interaction–*interview.* Cost: 35 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Abductee, Implants, Obsessed, Phobia, Rampant Paranoia.

Private Investigator

The private investigator is a pure Free Agent, in business only for himself. He'll investigate just about anything, as long as it pays the bills. This has the unfortunate tendency to get him into trouble from time to time, but most private investigators accept such dangers, recognizing them as just part of the job.

Any P.I. worth his salt improves his Awareness, Investigate, and Street Smart skills as much as possible. Picking up Unarmed Attack–*brawl* or Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol* isn't a bad idea, though Manipulation–*lockpick,* Stealth–*sneak,* Security–*devices,* Deception–*bluff* and *bribe,* and Interaction–*charm* tend to be quieter and less messy. Don't overlook the value of Computer Science–*hacking,* Business–*corporate* or *illicit business,* or Administration–*bureaucracy* in obtaining information. For an extra twist, pick up a psionic talent and become a psychic investigator with ESP–*clairvoyance*, *postcognition*, or *psychometry*.

Signature Equipment: .38 revolver, lockpick set, binoculars, parabolic mike, videorecorder.

Skill Package: Modern Ranged Weapons; Knowledge–*computer, deduce;* Law; Awareness–*intuition;* Investigate–*search;* Street–*knowledge.* Cost: 31 points.

Suggested Perks: Networked, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed, Powerful Enemy (somebody he's investigated).

Professional Thief

The professional thief steals for a living. She doesn't waste her efforts on small-time jobs; instead, she focuses on high-paying gigs. After all, the better the take, the less often she needs to risk her neck.

Beyond the basic skill package, the professional thief should think about Athletics–*climb,* Computer Science–*hacking,* Security–*protection protocols,* Creativity–*forgery*, Street Smart–*criminal elements*, Deception–*bluff* and *bribe*, and Interaction–*bargain* and *charm*. A hero who finds herself in combat (a bad sign for any good thief) should look into purchasing Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol* and Acrobatics–*dodge*.

Signature Equipment: Formal dress, darksuit, lockpick set (Good quality), flashlight.

Skill Package: Manipulation–*lockpick;* Stealth–*sneak;* Business–*illicit;* Security–*devices;* Awareness–*intuition*. Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Observant, Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Criminal Record, Infamy, Powerful Enemy (law enforcement, someone she's robbed).

Psi Agent

As organizations have come to realize the power of psychic talents, the practice of identifying, recruiting, and training psionically endowed individuals has become more common (if still a secret to the general populace). After a rigorous course of training and instruction, psi agents are unleashed upon the unsuspecting public. As members of a powerful new elite, psi agents are usually very confident, very well paid, and very secretive about what they do. At the same time, psi agents are often beholden to whatever organization trained them; betrayal of its secrets can lead to immediate termination with extreme prejudice.

Psi agents specialize in the ESP broad skill (and are thus sometimes also called "ESPers"). The second ESP specialty skill selected by a psi agent should be linked to the agent's particular area of activity. The Investigate, Street Smart, and Security broad and specialty skills are useful for psi agents, as is Awareness–*intuition.* Psi agents should also consider Deception–*bribe* and Interaction–*intimidate*.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol, microcassette tape recorder, miniature camera, laptop computer.

Skill Package: Modern–*pistol;* Knowledge–*computer*, *deduce;* Awareness–*perception*; Resolve; Interaction–*charm, interview;* ESP–*mind reading*. Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Observant, Psionic Awareness, Superior Talent, Willpower.

Suggested Flaws: Divided Loyalty.



Tech Op

Tech Ops—whether scholar or scientist, engineer or net freak—make the world go round, and they can tell you why it works the way it does. In a world of high technology, someone needs to know how to fix the multitude of things that can go wrong.

Doctor

No matter what the setting or time frame, the doctor is an invaluable addition to any organization. Despite any group's best efforts, accidents sometimes occur that require this hero's special expertise. This career describes a general practitioner; specialists (such as surgeons, psychologists, or geneticists, to name a few) require additional skills as noted below.

Doctors should use extra skill points to improve their Medical Science specialty skills. Medical specialists should consider picking up *psychology*, *surgery*, or Life Science–*genetics*, as appropriate. Adding ranks in Awareness–*intuition* and *perception* is a good idea, and those engaged in investigative work should learn Medical Science–*forensics* and Investigate–*search*. Doctors looking to move into related fields might pick up Business–*corporate*, Law–*medical*, or Administration–*bureaucracy* or *management*.

Signature Equipment: First aid kit, lab coat, medical license.

Skill Package: Life–*biology;* Medical–*knowledge 2, treatment 2;* Physical–*chemistry*. Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor.

Field Guide

Occasionally working as native guides, tour group operators, or even drug smugglers, these Tech Ops are wizards at logistics and transportation, well beyond the moment that a plane touches down on a remote airstrip. Adventurers and safari-goers alike rely on these street-smart Tech Ops to get them into and out of remote areas.

But transport is just half of the field guide's job: the other half is to keep the city folk from panicking the first time supplies run low, danger threatens, or a critical part breaks down. A good field guide speaks the local language, knows whom to bribe and when, and can haggle for the supplies, equipment, and spare parts the team needs to get a job done. Once she's done ferrying a group of city slickers into danger, she can usually get them back out again as well. In all, the field guide is a crucial addition to any expedition into the wilderness or less developed countries.

Field guides usually pick up Street Smart–*criminal elements* if they do any smuggling and learn Knowledge–*first aid*, Modern Ranged Weapons, and Awareness–*perception* to cover emergencies. For field guides who lead expeditions into the truly distant outback, Athletics–*climb*, Movement–*trailblazing*, and Animal Handling–*animal riding* are common choices.

Signature Equipment: Light plane, forged passport, topographic maps.

Skill Package: Vehicle–*land, air;* Knowledge–*language (specific);* Navigation–*surface;* Technical–*repair,* Deception–*bribe,* Interaction–*bargain*. Cost: 32 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Gearhead, Networked, Reputation, Well Traveled.

Suggested Flaws: Criminal Record, Infamy, Powerful Enemy (local government or law enforcement).

Forensics Expert

Forensics experts usually work for an organization (such as law enforcement), though some are independent investigators. These heroes split their time between a lab or other facility and crime scenes.

Most forensics experts spend additional points to improve their science skills. Beyond this, such heroes should consider picking up skills that address the needs of the campaign. The Investigate specialty skills *research* and *track* come in handy in the lab or the field, respectively. Those interested in the mental processes of the criminals they track down should pick up Medical Science–*psychology*. Awareness–*intuition* helps heroes make logical leaps without the full array of facts. Those who deal with red tape should consider Administration–*bureaucracy* or Law–*law enforcement*. Finally, self-defense is useful to anyone in the field of investigation: Unarmed Attack–*brawl* or Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol* can fit that bill.

Signature Equipment: Lab coat, scientific journals, microscope, chemical identification kit, forensics kit.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, deduce;* Medical–*forensics 2;* Physical–*chemistry 2;* Awareness–*perception;* Investigate–*search*. Cost: 36 points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Gadgeteer

Everyone understands a little bit about technology: what it does, what it looks like, and how to operate it. A gadgeteer understands *everything* about technology: its materials, its principles, its functions, its interlocking systems, its component parts, and its standards and protocols, not to mention its warranty number and its technical support number. The gadgeteer knows all this because he thinks of technology as a hobby. He tinkers with his garage door opener, he steals free cable service, and he can rewire your microwave into a two-way radio—especially when you aren't expecting it.

The gadgeteer should improve his Security–*security devices* and Technical Science–*technical knowledge* skill ranks as time and interest allow. Improvements to *invention* and *repair* are also high on the list of priorities, but some nontechnical skills might prove useful as well. Interaction–*bargain* and Street Smart–*street knowledge* may allow a gadgeteer to acquire some of the more obscure materials, devices, testers, and parts he requires.

Signature Equipment: Soldering iron, wire stripper, socket wrenches, measuring tape, duct tape, and as many other tools as he can carry in a toolbox.

Skill Package: Security–*devices;* Technical–*invention, juryrig 3, repair 2*; *knowledge*. Cost: 32 points.

Suggested Perks: Gearhead, High Tech.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Hacker

Computer geek. Net freak. You can call the hacker by whatever derogatory name you want, but you'd better not let him hear you—that is, if you want your credit rating to remain intact. By their nature, hackers live a bizarre split existence, living both on the fringe of society and plugged into its very core. A good hacker can get around most basic computer security systems, poking around and taking what he wants. A *great* hacker can go wherever he wants, whenever he wants . . . and you probably won't even know he's been there.

Many hackers won't waste time with any skills other than Computer Science–*hacking* and Street Smart–*net savvy*. That's fine, but don't forget Manipulation–*lockpick*, Security–*security devices*, Deception–*bluff*, and Interaction–*bargain*, all of which might get a hacker into a location he can't hack from offsite. Hackers firmly on the wrong side of the law should also consider Business–*illicit business*, Creativity–*forgery*, and Street Smart–*criminal elements*. On the flip side, many government (and private) agencies hire hackers who know Investigate–*cryptography*.

Signature Equipment: Laptop computer and peripherals, four Good-quality programs, cellular modem.

Skill Package: Computer–*hacking 2, hardware, programming 2;* Street–*net savvy*. Cost: 32 points.

Suggested Perks: Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Infamy, Obsessed, Rampant Paranoia.

Scientist

The scientist spends most of her time in a laboratory or research facility. Occasionally, however, these Tech Ops venture into the great outdoors as part of a research team. Depending on the scientist's specific area of expertise, her skill package varies. Three examples are listed below; additional variations are possible at the Gamemaster's discretion.

Most scientists spend additional points to improve their science skills. After all, that's their job. Beyond this, the scientist should consider picking up skills that address the needs of the campaign. If she finds herself in the field frequently, Investigate–*search* and Movement–*trailblazing* can come in handy. Scientists involved in the business world should pick up Business–*corporate* and Administration–*bureaucracy*. Those who begin investigating more unusual topics should consider Lore–*fringe science*.

Signature Equipment: Lab coat, scientific journals, microscope (biologist, chemist only), chemical analysis kit (chemist only).

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, deduce;* Investigate–*research,* plus one of the following:

Biologist: Life–*biology 2, botany, zoology;* Physical–*chemistry*. Cost: 34 points.

Chemist: Life–*biology;* Physical–*chemistry 2, physics*. Cost: 32 points.

Physicist: Physical–*astronomy, chemistry, physics 3*. Cost: 30 points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Xenoengineer

The xenoengineer has formal training in physics, engineering, and reverse engineering, the process of re-creating a machine's schematics from a working example of the finished product. He takes apart technology captured or stolen from others, whether those others are national enemies or alien species, or both.

A xenoengineer needs to improve his *xenoengineering* skill as quickly as possible, since the skill checks involved in examining such devices often require stiff situation die penalties. In addi-

tion, he might want to pick up Computer Science, Physical Science–*chemistry*, and further Technical Science–*technical knowledge* ranks. System Operation specialty skills can also come in handy. If an employer or a contact can teach him Knowledge–*language (alien)*, so much the better.

Signature Equipment: Voltmeter, ammeter, batteries, fireproof suit, protective goggles, chemical analysis kit, metallurgical analysis kit.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*computer, deduce;* Physical; System–*engineering*, Technical–*repair 2, knowledge, xenoengineering 2.* Cost: 37 points.

Suggested Perks: Alien Artifact, Gearhead, High Tech.

Suggested Flaws: Alien Artifact, Obsessed.

Mindwalking

Somewhere on the line between science and the supernatural are the psionic powers long claimed by psychics, mediums, and charlatans of all stripes. With the rise of the Dark Tide, human ability to manipulate powers of the mind increased over the course of the twentieth century. Slowly but steadily, more and more people had personal experiences with a psychic power that they just couldn't explain away.

Despite this, the Mindwalker profession is unknown to humans in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. The broad training required for such a profession doesn't exist. Thus, heroes who wish to utilize psionic powers can only possess a mindwalking talent, as described in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*. To summarize:

- A talent (as such heroes are called) chooses a profession (and career, if desired) as usual.
- The talent may purchase one psionic broad skill and up to two psionic specialty skills within that broad skill. Talents pay 1 point more than the listed cost to purchase psionic skills (broad and specialty).
- Talents have a number of psionic energy points equal to one-half of their Will score, rounded up.

However, the DARK•MATTER setting makes the following changes to talents as described in the *Player's Handbook*:

- Instead of being limited to ranks 6 and 3 in their two specialty skills, talents may achieve rank 12 in one psionic specialty skill and rank 6 in a second skill. (Heroes with the Superior Talent perk may achieve rank 12 in one of their psionic specialty skills and rank 6 in all others.)
- *No* psionic specialty skills can be used untrained. Most present-day stories of psychic individuals describe a limited range of powers. That is, legendary mind readers almost never also possess powers of precognition or clairvoyance.
- Beginning at 6th level, a talent can increase the number of psionic energy points available to her. Each additional psionic energy point costs 6 achievement points. Only 1 additional point can be purchased at any given level, and a maximum of 3 additional points can be purchased over the hero's lifetime.

Of course, some nonhuman species may have superior psionic abilities (and perhaps even access to the Mindwalker profession), but such information is restricted to the Gamemaster.

Mindwalking Talent Archetypes

To help the player of a psionically endowed DARK•MATTER hero select the appropriate mindwalking skills (and to maintain the flavor of the setting), a number of psionic talent archetypes are listed below. These correspond to many of the familiar psionic archetypes of our times, such as empaths, precogs, and pushers. Each example includes the appropriate broad skill and one or two specialty skills, along with the skill point cost for a hero who chooses that archetype.

Gamemasters and players should treat these archetypes as suggestions only. Feel free to create a uniquely talented hero if you so desire!

Chameleon: Biokinesis–*morph* (12).
Dowser: ESP–*psycholocation* (9).
Empath: ESP–*empathy* (8).
ESPer: ESP–*mind reading, sensitivity* (13).
Fakir: Telekinesis–*levitation* (10).
Firestarter: Telekinesis–*pyrokinetics* (12).
Precog: ESP–*precognition* (11).
Psychic Detective: ESP–*postcognition, psychometry* (14).
Psychic Healer: Biokinesis–*heal, transfer damage* (15).
Pusher: Telepathy–*suggest, tire* (14).
Remote Viewer: ESP–*clairvoyance* (9).
Sparker: Telekinesis–*electrokinetics* (11).
Survivor: Biokinesis–*control metabolism, rejuvenate* (14).
Teke: Telekinesis–*kinetic shield, psychokinetics* (14).
Telepath: Telepathy–*contact, mind shield* (13).

TABLE D5: NEW MINDWALKING SKILLS

INT Skills	Cost
ESP	5
*Empathy**	1
*Mind reading**	3
Psycholocation	2
*Sensitivity**	2
WIL Skills	**Cost**
Telekinesis	6
*Electrokinetics**	3
*Psychokinetics**	3
PER Skills	**Cost**
Telepathy	5
Obscure	3
Possess	4
*Suggest**	3

* Additional information on this existing skill is provided below.

Talents pay 1 point more than listed cost for all psionic skills.

Note: Underlined type indicates a skill that can't be used untrained by Mindwalkers. For the purposes of a DARK•MATTER campaign, however, no psionic specialty skill may be used untrained by human talents.

ESP

Powers of ESP are among the most common in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. This book introduces a new ESP specialty skill: *psycholocation*.



Empathy

(The following text expands on the description of the ESP–*empathy* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

► ***Aura Reading:*** At rank 4, a hero gains the ability to see the body's bioelectric field and thus to evaluate a person's overall health and mental state. An Ordinary success allows the user to sense the target's state of health (healthy, injured, sick, diseased, dying, insane). While it can't diagnose a specific illness, a Good success provides valuable hints as to the biological, chemical, or psychological nature of an illness. An Amazing success suggests additional factors as determined by the Gamemaster, such as approximate time of infection, spread of illness, and estimated recovery time. In addition, the result of the skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus to any Medical Science (or Knowledge–*first aid* or Biokinesis–*transfer damage*) specialty skill checks used to treat the target. Attempts to read the aura of a species different from that of the user of this ability suffer a +1 step penalty.

Mind Reading

(The following text expands on the description of the ESP–*mind reading* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

⊗ ***Probe:*** At rank 6, this focused form of mind reading allows an individual to search through a target's mind for a specific piece of information. Attempting a mind probe on an alien species inflicts a +2 step penalty. Will resistance modifiers also apply if the target actively resists the attempt.

On an Ordinary success, the psychic gains the desired information. On a Good success, the hero also gains some context for the information, such as its source. On an Amazing success, the psychic gains the information's source and also the target's opinion of the information, such as whether it is credible, dangerous, or valuable.

Psycholocation

A hero with this skill uses psionic power to find lost or hidden objects. This power is commonly known as dowsing (particularly when it is used to locate water or metal deposits).

The range of *psycholocation* is limited to the hero's immediate area (a radius of approximately 30 meters). Locating large objects (car-sized or larger) grants a –1 step bonus, while finding small objects (no bigger than a suitcase) imposes a +1 step penalty. On an Ordinary success, the hero determines the direction of the object; with a Good or Amazing success, she also learns the distance to the object. This power cannot be used to locate living creatures.

Despite the common image of a person walking around a field with a Y-shaped stick, a focus is not required for the use of this skill. However, if a player so chooses, her hero can rely on such foci and receive a –1 step bonus to all uses of the *psycholocation* skill. In this case, skill checks made without the focus suffer a +1 step penalty.

⊗ ***Extended Range:*** At rank 6, the hero's range of *psycholocation* extends to 100 meters in all directions. At rank 9 this increases to 1 kilometer, and at rank 12 to 100 kilometers.

Sensitivity

(The following text expands on the description of the ESP–*sensitivity* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

► ***Channeling:*** At rank 6, the hero's sensitivity to psychic impressions allows him to act as a medium, a conduit between living beings and spirits. On an Ordinary or better success, the hero can successfully open his mind to ghostly presences, allowing them to communicate through him. Note that the hero has no control over what information (if any) is passed on by the spirit, and that the spirit has no power over the hero's physical body. The truth or falsehood of any information given depends not on the hero's skill, but on the will of the spirit or soul inhabiting him or her, and thus is entirely a matter of Gamemaster preference. Many spirits are uncooperative, and even friendly "spirit guides" that answer a channeler's call again and again often have their own biases, goals, and limitations.

The duration of the channeling is the same as for normal use of the *sensitivity* skill.

Telekinesis

Stories of telekinetics abound in psychic lore, particularly those with limited control over their powers. While this book introduces no new Telekinesis specialty skills, it expands the versatility of *electrokinetics* and *psychokinetics* with rank benefits.

Electrokinetics

This skill can't be used untrained.

(The following text expands on the description of the Telekinesis–*electrokinetics* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

► ***Datawipe:*** At rank 3, the character can bulk-erase all data from any electromagnetic recording medium, such as videotapes or computer diskettes and hard drives. The character's skill check determines the modifier to attempts to recover the data: Ordinary, +1 step penalty; Good, +2; Amazing, +3.

⊗ ***Tamper:*** At rank 6, the hero can use this skill to tamper with electronic sensors and recording devices. With an Ordinary success, the hero can blur electronic images taken by security cameras or other surveillance devices, fool electric eye or motion detection systems, and even trick X-ray machines or metal detectors. The quality of the device (Marginal, Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) applies a modifier to the use of this skill (0, +1, +2, or +3 step penalty, respectively).

⊗ ***Bypass:*** At rank 9, the hero can use this skill to bypass or override electronic locks and similar devices. A successful Security–*security devices* skill check grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success) to any *electrokinetics* skill check used in this fashion. Again, an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing quality system applies a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to the skill check.

⊗ ***Jamming:*** At rank 12, a hero can attempt to jam any electromagnetic signal (such as radio, television, microwave, or similar devices) within a range of 20 meters, plus 20 meters for each additional psionic energy point spent. Each successful skill check jams all signals for 5 rounds (1 minute); note that the hero must maintain full concentration when jamming and cannot take any other actions other than simple conversation.

Psychokinetics

(The following text expands on the description of the Telekinesis–*psychokinetics* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

► ***Manipulate:*** At rank 3, a character may attempt to psychokinetically operate small mechanisms such as locks, firearms, and computers. The character may substitute his Telekinesis–*psychokinetics* score for the appropriate skill if he has the appropriate skill already. If he does not, he can only attempt the action as if he were untrained in the appropriate skill (assuming the appropriate skill allows untrained use). Regardless, the attempt carries a +3 step penalty. At rank 6, this penalty drops to +2, and at rank 9, there is a +1 step penalty. At rank 12, there is no penalty. Note that if the hero attempts to manipulate a small mechanism that is currently actively controlled by someone else, the attempt is modified by the other character's Strength resistance modifier.

Telepathy

Another popular favorite among psionic talents, Telepathy specialty skills can greatly increase a hero's ability to get the job done. Two new specialty skills appear in this book: *obscure* and *possess*.

Obscure

Extended duration.

This skill allows a character to cloud the minds of others, obscuring details that those persons would otherwise have easily noticed. At higher ranks, this skill even allows the user to conceal certain details entirely.

At any point during a scene, the psionic character may activate this ability. While it is in effect, those who perceive her subconsciously ignore or alter details about the scene—usually, the character herself. (Details of the setting are generally already relatively firm in the minds of those affected before the ability is activated.)

If the affected targets later attempt to recall details about the time during which the *obscure* skill was active, they receive a +1, +2, or +3 penalty to their Will feat check depending on the success of the Telepathy–*obscure* skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing). Note that since these Will feat checks are made separately, it is possible for several people who were affected by the same use of the skill to have extremely different recollections of the specifics. In addition, this skill does not allow the character to be completely unnoticed; she must use some other skill if she wishes to be out of the perception of the targets before the ability wears off or she runs out of psionic energy points.

Additional individuals can be included in the same effect if they enter the scene after the skill check has been made, but doing so costs the telepath an additional psionic energy point for each new target.

Obscured memories can be recovered by the use of the Medical Science–*psychology* skill. This is a complex skill check requiring 8 successes (one check per 5 minutes). The success of the *obscure* skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) applies a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty on the *psychology* skill check.

Example: Maureen is infiltrating a government base when several officers discover her. She activates Telepathy–*obscure*, getting a Good success. She then uses Deception–*bluff* to convince them she has authorization to be there, and quickly departs. After she leaves, the officers discover that Maureen has stolen important papers. But when they attempt to describe her to the security staff, each officer has a +2 penalty on his Will feat check to recall that she was a fair-haired woman with an umbrella, wearing a gray suit and a black raincoat. Those who fail the check may describe her as a dark-haired, Mediterranean woman in a gray raincoat, or an older woman with white hair and a black suit, or even as a man carrying an umbrella (on a Critical Failure). However, they all remember that someone spoke to them.

⊗ ***Greater Duration:*** At rank 4, the character using this skill need only expend psionic energy points once every 5 rounds (1 minute) to maintain the skill activation.

⊗ ***Selective Amnesia:*** At rank 8, the character can will onlookers to completely ignore specific aspects of a scene, such as the presence of certain people (the hero, for example), specific actions undertaken by anyone in the scene (shots fired), or other events (an alarm going off). A number of individuals equal to the skill-user's rank can be affected, and each receives an additional +2 penalty on a Will feat check to recall the specified aspect. Note that each person affected by a single skill check must be "instructed" to ignore the same aspect.

Possess

This skill cannot be used untrained.
Special duration.
Possess is the power to enter the minds of others and seize control of their bodies. It works only against living creatures with nervous systems; machines and noncorporeal beings, for instance, are immune to this skill.

A simple skill check allows the hero to *possess* a target; the victim's Will resistance modifier applies to the attempt. Once the hero has taken control, he can animate the target body as desired. However, his own body remains inert and unconscious for the duration of this power.

The possession lasts until the target makes a successful Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check. With an Ordinary success, *mental resolve* skill checks may be made at the beginning of each round. A Good success allows *mental resolve* checks each minute, while an Amazing success allows a *mental resolve* check each hour. In addition, any action that would put the victim (or a loved one) in physical danger grants an immediate *mental resolve* check. A successful *mental resolve* check indicates that the victim has broken the control and the telepath has returned to his own body. The possessor may also end control at any time and immediately return to his own body.

During the possession, the hero uses his own skill ranks and mental ability scores (Intelligence, Will, and Personality), but adds any of his skill ranks based on the ability scores of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution to the appropriate ability score of the possessed body. Thus, a hero with a Strength of 8 and rank 2 in Unarmed Combat–*brawl* who possesses a target with a Strength of 12 has an effective *brawl* skill score of 14. In some cases (such as the action check score), entirely new numbers will be created by the combination of the two individuals' statistics. All actions made by the possessed body suffer a +1 step penalty. Note that the possessing hero gains no access to the victim's thoughts or memories during the possession, and the victim maintains a general awareness of what his body is doing (though specific memories may be a bit fuzzy).

Attempts to take control of sentient beings not of the possessor's species suffer a +1 step penalty. Attempts to take control of nonsentient beings suffer a +3 step penalty.

⊗ ***Increased Mastery:*** At rank 4, *mental resolve* checks made to break control suffer a +1 step penalty. This penalty increases to +2 steps at rank 8, and +3 steps at rank 12.

⊗ ***Greater Duration:*** At rank 6, the duration between the target's Resolve–*mental resolve* skill checks increases to 1 minute, 1 hour, and 1 day, respectively. At rank 9, the durations increase to 1 hour, 1 day, and 1 week, respectively. Note that at higher ranks, the possessing hero's body may require medical attention to ensure it doesn't starve or dehydrate.

Suggest

(The following text expands on the description of the Telepathy–*suggest* skill as presented in *Chapter 14: Psionics* in the *Player's Handbook*.)

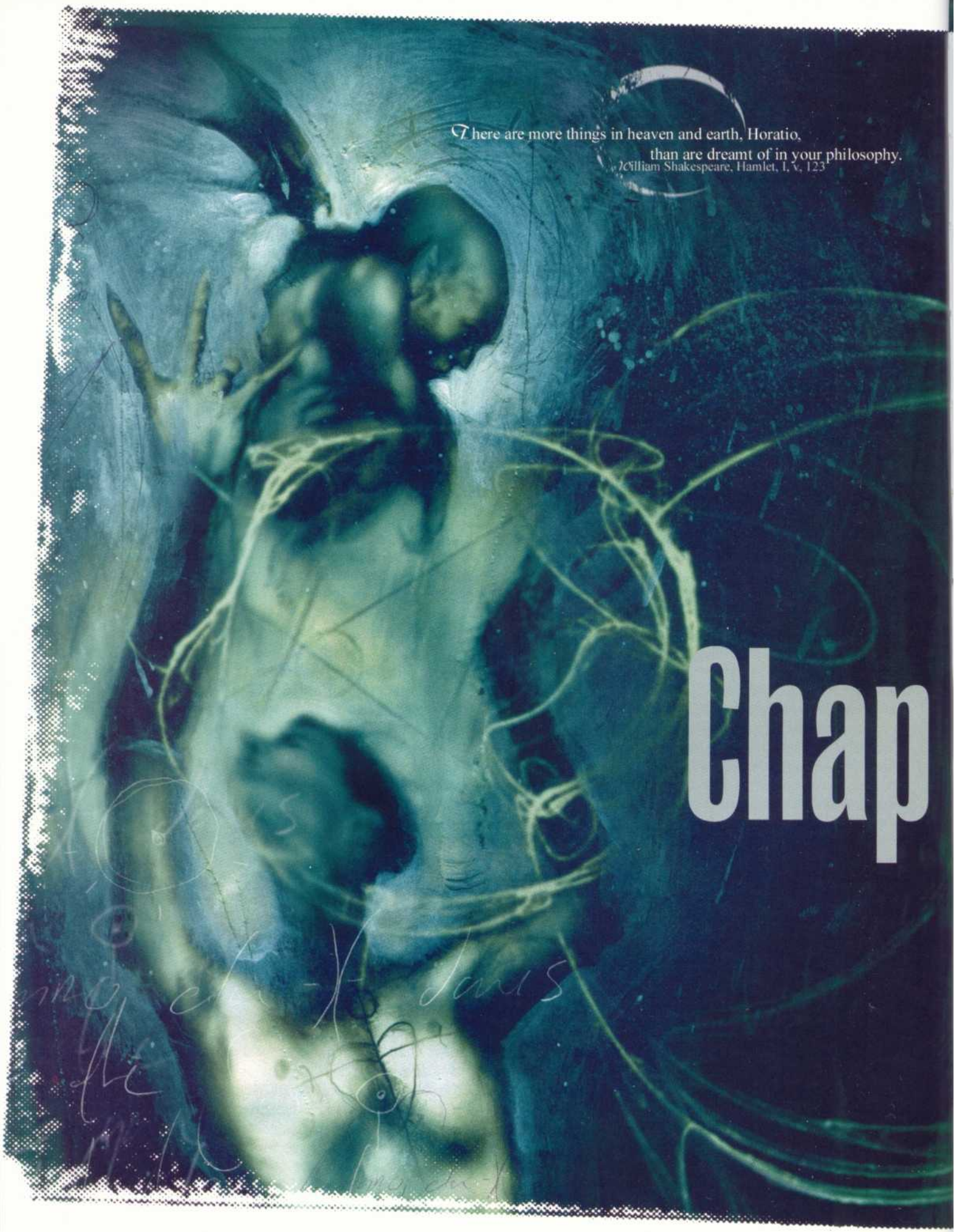
⊗ ***Programmed Suggestion:*** At rank 6, the character can implant a suggestion that does not immediately take effect. Instead, when the subject experiences some kind of sensory cue (hearing a code phrase, seeing a particular person, or other trigger), the subject acts upon the suggestion. The triggering event can be as long as 1 hour, 1 day, or 1 month later, depending on the user's skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing), and the subject may make a Will feat check as described in the *Player's Handbook* to determine if he or she remembers being "programmed."

FX, Mutants, and Cybertech

The powers of Arcane Magic FX and Faith FX are present in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. These topics are discussed in depth in *Chapter 4: Arcana*. In addition, that chapter contains new rules for the use of FX powers in the ALTERNITY game.

While the optional rules for altering heroes with these additional powers and abilities are in use in the DARK•MATTER setting, they are limited. Mutants are generally the products of government or alien experiments and are quite rare. All mutant heroes are restricted to Ordinary and Good advantages and drawbacks; remember that mutant heroes begin play without the +5 bonus skill points granted a human character. A Gamemaster can always choose to disallow mutant heroes in his or her campaign.

Cybertech is almost entirely unavailable to heroes in the DARK•MATTER setting. Even the cybergear that exists is extremely primitive (and well guarded). The Gamemaster should carefully consider what (if any) cybertech she wishes to allow in the game. Under no circumstances should the heroes have access to cybergear beyond that of PL 6, and gear of better than Ordinary quality should be completely unknown except to some alien species (the Gamemaster has more information on this topic).


There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
William Shakespeare, Hamlet, I, v, 123
Chap

chapter 4 arcana

MOST OF THE MAJOR WORLD CONSPIRACIES HOARD A SMALL STORE OF secret lore: the knowledge of how to tame and manipulate the powers of Arcane Magic and Faith FX. The general populace remains unaware of these secrets, which in past ages were collectively called magic. Students of the paranormal now realize that just as many are matters of science and psionics as of warlocks and witchery. Still, the study of such phenomena remains elusive. While a hero may begin the game with some understanding of one or two of these fields, it is unlikely that he will understand them all.

Esoteric knowledge has a long history of influencing even mainstream scientists. Isaac Newton, for example, discovered gravity because of his belief in occult forces; indeed, he was convinced that his work on theology and philosophy would be remembered as much more important than his studies in physics. However, his work in Rosicrucian cosmology lies forgotten today except among a select few.

The DARK•MATTER campaign explores two powerful yet different forms of "magical" ability: Arcane Magic and Faith. Though much of humanity's knowledge of how to manipulate occult forces has been lost to history, some fragments of knowledge are still available to a dedicated practitioner of the Art, or Arcane Magic. These arcane arts work, although only fitfully and sometimes at great cost. But the rise of the Dark Tide has seen a corresponding rise in the manifestation of Arcane Magic. Some theorists believe the arcane constitutes a unique mindwalking discipline, one that is activated only in the presence of the Dark Tide. Others believe it operates on different principles entirely, accessing dimensions or energy levels not measurable or quantifiable by current science. Since both Arcane Magic and mindwalking are so poorly understood, the truth remains elusive.

What is clear is that the arcane art depends on sacrifice to function. Its power can be phenomenal, but the price is usually high. Worse, even a practitioner willing to make the sacrifice usually finds the real principles behind the occult arts obscured by thick layers of rubbish, superstition, and false teachings. Most occult books are good for little more than burning. Finding true knowledge requires patience, ceaseless toil, and careful experimentation.

Human history also has strong traditions of miracles and wonders: the magic of Faith. Various beliefs provide one of the relatively few sources of knowledge about previous Dark Tides, in their hidden—or deliberately suppressed—texts. These take a variety of forms, from the *Book of Enoch* and the *Gospel of Thomas* (both suppressed by the Nicean Council of A.D. 325) to the oldest Hindu Vedas. They include the hidden archives of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, which rite has long been vilified by the Catholic Church and most emphatically by the papal bull *Humanum Genus* in 1884.

New FX Rules

The DARK•MATTER campaign setting contains revised rules for the learning and use of FX, including both Arcane Magic and Faith. These rules replace those found in the *Gamemaster Guide* and appear in the ALTERNITY game product *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX* (TSR11432, scheduled for a February 2000 release). That product is not required to play DARK•MATTER; however, players and Gamemasters interested in expanding the role of FX in their game may wish to consult it.

The spells and miracles of Arcane Magic and Faith FX are now structured in a manner similar to the rest of the ALTERNITY skill system. Each broad skill represents a different type of Arcane Magic or Faith (such as Diabolism or Voodoo) and usually has a specific set of rituals, trappings, or other requirements associated with its use.

Each FX broad skill has a number of FX specialty skills. Each of these represents a particular spell or miracle associated with that broad skill. As with normal skills, some of these may be used untrained by heroes who possess the appropriate broad skill, while the rest cannot be used untrained. Since no specific ability score is tied to each broad skill, untrained FX skill checks are made using a feat check using the ability score associated with

Magic vs. Miracles vs. Mindwalking

Some curious players will want to understand the difference between magical power, miracles of faith, and mindwalking powers. The simple and straightforward game explanation that "they use different sets of rules" usually isn't enough. In the DARK•MATTER campaign, they derive from distinctly different ways of tapping paranormal power sources.

Both Arcane Magic and Faith derive their power from dimensions not readily sensed by anyone untrained in such matters. Just as a two-dimensional creature has trouble imagining the geometry of a three-dimensional space, humans and other three-dimensional creatures have trouble imagining the source of powers that rely on higher dimensions. Both Arcane Magic and Faith tap into these higher dimensions to power their effects, but the real difference between the two is the key they use to unlock access to that power. Arcane Magic depends on special knowledge and the ability to manipulate the forces of the universe. Faith relies on ceremony, religious conviction, and belief in powers, spirits, or beings greater than oneself. Fundamentally, they are the difference between the mind and the soul.

The third of the paranormal trinity is mindwalking, which is powered by an internal source. As the name implies, a well-trained mind can change the universe. A Mindwalker's abilities are entirely biological, generated from within the mind. Psionic abilities use the mind as a source of energy, rather than using the spirit as a key to open the floodgates of the supernatural. Unlike the FX powers, mindwalking abilities seem little affected by the presence of the Dark Tide. However, the increased growth of psionic powers may well be related to the Dark Tide's tendency to speed up the evolutionary process by inducing mutations—such as psychic talents.

the specialty skill, rather than by making a broad skill check. *No FX specialty skill can be used untrained by a hero who does not know the broad skill associated with that specialty skill.* In addition, most Arcane Magic FX specialty skills cannot be used untrained, while most Faith FX specialty skills can.

Though *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX* presents an FX-wielding profession (the Adept), that option is not available to heroes in DARK•MATTER (unless the Gamemaster desires a particularly magic-intensive campaign). Instead, heroes wishing to utilize Arcane Magic or Faith FX must choose to be an FX talent, as follows:

- An FX talent chooses a profession (and career, if desired) as usual.
- An FX talent may purchase only a single FX broad skill. This can be done either during hero creation or later during the hero's career.
- The FX talent may purchase as many FX specialty skills as he wishes (again, at any time during his career), using the costs listed on the tables below. Skill ranks are improved as normal for the ALTERNITY game.

FX Energy Pool

FX skills cost FX energy points to activate, just as psionic skills require psionic energy points to use. All FX characters have an *FX energy pool* that is depleted when FX skills are used and can be restored over time.

Each FX talent starts with an FX energy pool of 5 points. This pool can be increased by spending achievement points, at a rate of 10 achievement points for 1 FX energy point. A DARK•MATTER hero's FX energy pool can be increased to a maximum of 10 points.

Using FX

Most FX specialty skills only cost 1 FX energy point to activate, but some of the more powerful ones cost 2 or even 3 points per use. If a character uses an FX specialty skill untrained, the cost increases by 1 FX energy point. (Remember that not all FX specialty skills may be used untrained.)

Recovering FX Energy

A hero's FX energy pool reflects the "inner strength" he has to power his FX skills. If this strength runs out, the hero can't use his FX skills until he recovers some of his FX energy.

A hero may recover lost FX energy points at a rate of 1, 2, or 3 per hour, based on the result of a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check as follows:

- Critical Failure, lose another FX energy point (or suffer 1 point of fatigue damage if no FX energy points are available);
- Failure, no recovery this hour;
- Ordinary, recover 1 point;
- Good, 2 points;
- Amazing, 3 points.

No recovery occurs during an hour in which a character tries to use FX. If a character spends a full 8 hours resting without any attempt to use FX, all FX energy points are recovered (unless, at the Gamemaster's discretion, the specific situation limits the hero's ability to regain FX energy points).

Arcane Magic FX

Arcane Magic encompasses a wide variety of FX, but most effects of this type rely on obscure formulae and rituals that allow the user to cause energy or beings to do her will. These rituals (spells) may change lead to gold, manipulate light, protect the caster, or command extradimensional beings, to give a few examples. Most users of Arcane Magic specialize in one category (or "school") of spells to the exclusion of all others; in DARK•MATTER, these include the arts of Diabolism, Enochian magic, and Hermetic magic. Each of these types of Arcane Magic is a separate FX broad skill, while the individual spells are specialty skills. It is important to note that while spells from different schools may have the same effect, each arcanist achieves that effect by a totally different method. Additional types of Arcane Magic, such as Feng Shui, Sutra magic, Tantric magic, Arcane Tattoos, and more may be developed at the Gamemaster's discretion. (*Beyond Science: A Guide to FX* has additional information on creating new FX broad and specialty skills.)

TABLE D6: ARCANE MAGIC FX SKILLS

Skill Name	Cost
Diabolism	12
Binding (PER)	4
Black warding (WIL)	3
Command (PER)	4
Hellfire (WIL)	4
Rend the weave (WIL)	2
Spiritwrack (PER)	4
Summoning (PER)	5
Tongue of the damned (PER)	2
Enochian	9
Eye of fate (WIL)	3
Grace (WIL)	3
Halo (WIL)	3
Lumen (WIL)	2
Peaceful shroud (WIL)	3
Unravel enchantment (WIL)	2
White salamander (WIL)	4
Hermeticism	10
Daedalus improved (INT)	4
Glamour (INT)	4
Homunculus (INT)	4
Ligature (INT)	3
Shapechanging (WIL)	5
Sleep of Morpheus (INT)	4
Transmutation (INT)	4

Note: Skills printed in underlined text can't be used untrained.

Diabolism

Diabolism focuses on the summoning and controlling of supernatural (and extradimensional) forces and beings of a malevolent source or nature. Demon-worshiping cults, a sorcerer bringing a curse or plague to a city, and a crazed man who performs cattle mutilations at midnight are all examples of diabolists in action. Whether or not the forces or creatures originate from a Judeo-Christian idea of Hell is irrelevant—the existence of the diabolist only requires that these beings can be contacted.

Diabolism is a relatively easy sort of magic to practice; after all, these supernatural creatures—call them demons, for simplicity's sake—constantly look for an excuse to visit the caster's dimension, and the rites required to attract their attention are simple. However, Diabolism is fraught with danger, as demons aren't friendly toward the human race and must be dealt with carefully. A Critical Failure result on the skill check usually has some sort of detrimental effect on the caster.

A diabolist must speak from a position of strength to the weaker demons and be respectful of those with greater power. Thus, most of a diabolist's spells are based on Personality, although those that call and shape energy (rather than creatures) use Will.

The core of a diabolist's bargaining position is an offered sacrifice—something to entice the demon to agree to a task (or to grant the energy required for the spell). For heroes who practice diabolism, such sacrifices take the form of personal life energy—stun, wound, fatigue, or mortal points—lost in the casting of the spell. The quality of the sacrifice (Marginal, Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) dictates the specific type of durability point lost (stun, wound, fatigue, or mortal, respectively). Such losses heal normally.

Diabolists appearing as Supporting Cast Members, particularly those who have devoted their lives to evil, may have alternative methods of powering their spells that allow them to escape

Occult Collections and Famous Books

Nearly all volumes of the most accurate theories, rituals, and standards of arcane practice are long out of print, and when they can be found are often auctioned off for quite inflated prices, as much as tens of thousands of dollars for the oldest and rarest volumes. Even such relatively well-known books as the first printing of the four-volume set of *The Golden Dawn* and the works of Aleister Crowley can command hundreds of dollars. An authentic papyrus manuscript of the original *Books of Thoth*, by comparison, is beyond price; such volumes are literally valuable enough that some would kill to possess them.

The French National Library in Paris organized the L'Enfer collection of heretical, pornographic, occult, and banned writings between 1836 and 1844. Much of this material was scandalously heretical or pornographic, but a small fraction of it was related to the occult. Kept in the upper floors above the library's reading room, the collection was restricted from the public, and only approved visitors were allowed access. France's famous poet, Guillaume Apollinaire, visited L'Enfer in 1911 and recorded his impression of its 930 volumes. Each was more sinful than the last. The collection remained inaccessible to the public until 1980, when it was broken up and sold. Many of the more titillating volumes were reprinted, while the most important volumes of arcana quietly disappeared.

Similar collections included the Private Collection of the British Museum, the Delta Collection of the Library of Congress, and the Special Collection of the New York Public Library. As with the French collection, access was restricted to all of these. However, these collections may simply have been reclassified or reshelved, as no rumors of their sale have ever been reported.

Only one occult collection is still publicly admitted to exist: The Vatican Library in Rome holds the richest and best stocked collection of pagan, shamanistic, Gnostic, and occult writings in the world. However, only scholars, serious academics, and priests of the Catholic Church have access to this treasure trove of ancient and forbidden books. Many of the Vatican volumes are kept under lock and key. The entire list of books known as the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Forbidden Books) is kept here as well. The *Index* was first compiled by a group of cardinals appointed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1559. Though Vatican reforms of 1966 supposedly did away with this collection, the *Index* continues to serve as a sort of road map for scholars of the occult. Its volumes speak loudly about the methods, procedures, and costs of heresy, diabolism, and arcane arts.

What are these hidden volumes, exactly? Their character varies from the ancient to the trivial. Among alchemical writings, volumes such as the fifteenth-century Ripley Scroll—named after its author, Sir George Ripley of Bridlington—and the *Mutus Liber* ("Wordless Book") of 1677 show in lavish illustrations how alchemists sought the Philosopher's Stone. Whether any useful knowledge can be derived from such sources depends primarily on how much of the works' symbology the occultist already understands.

Other books, such as Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1534) or Shiebel's *Faustbuch* (c. 1860), are much broader and clearer texts, dealing with secret scripts and alphabets, invocations and seals for binding demons, and further occult mysteries. The classic *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* (c. 1620, last reported to be in the grand ducal library of Weimar, Germany, in 1822) is said to explain the details of bilateral pacts with the devil. Other writings are clearer and more sensational but far less useful, such as Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal* (1818), a lavishly illustrated and largely fabricated work that was printed in dozens of editions throughout the nineteenth century.

Finally, it is worth noting that Napoleon plundered the Vatican Library in 1810, sending more than three thousand cases of books and other materials back to Paris. Much of this material was later returned, but some of the most important volumes remained in Paris. Though no one can be entirely sure of their final resting place today, those volumes may well have become part of the National Library's L'Enfer collection and then were sold off to private parties after that collection's dissolution in 1980.

the need to sacrifice personal life force. When such characters appear in game products, the Gamemaster will be provided with the pertinent information.

A caster can choose to make a greater sacrifice than required; each step up in quality grants a –1 step bonus to the skill check. On the contrary, each step down in quality (for instance, making a Marginal sacrifice when an Ordinary sacrifice is required) inflicts a cumulative +3 step penalty to the casting. No sacrifice may be raised above Amazing or lowered below Marginal.

Environmental conditions may also affect the diabolist's spellcasting. An area warded against the presence of demons (such as holy ground) gives a +1 to +3 step penalty, while a place that has seen especially vile deeds (such as a mass murder site or the trophy room of a serial killer) may give a –1 to –3 step bonus. The presence of like-minded cultists assisting in the ritual grants a –1 step bonus for every factor of ten participants above the required number of participants in the spell. (For example, a spell that can be cast alone would have a –1 step bonus for success if ten others assisted the primary caster, whereas a spell that requires ten people working together would need one hundred people cooperating for the –1 step bonus.) Note that even when more than one participant is involved in a ritual, only the caster himself may spend last resort points to improve the skill check.

Interestingly, most Diabolism spells originated from the demons themselves. Those knowledgeable about such subjects believe that demons often use these spells on each other, and therefore make such spells available to mortals who would summon and bind their hated rivals.

Famous Diabolists

Relatively few diabolists are well known, as most prefer to work their vile magic in secret. However, students of the occult can point to two famous (infamous?) diabolists: Erzsebet Bathory (the Countess Nadasdy) and Aleister Crowley.

Bathory was a noblewoman of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who ruled the realm of Dacia in Hungary. She is infamous for the power that influenced her king, Mathias II; for killing her husband by magic; and for retaining her youthful features for more than fifty years, supposedly by bathing in the blood of virgins. According to testimony given at her trial in 1611, she killed at least 610 young women over her lifetime. Many of them died horrible deaths, such as being literally frozen to death in an icy fountain. The Countess in Red died three and a half years after her trial, after having been immured (that is, walled up alive). Her demonic servant or master—its status is unclear—was named Ipolkar.

Aleister Crowley, who called himself "the Great Beast," was a showman, drug fiend, and Satanist of the early twentieth century. He attracted many followers to the Ordo Templi Orientis, seduced (and abused) scores of women, and claimed to have conjured creatures from beyond this dimension. His treatises on magic, *The Holy Books of Thelema, The Book of Thoth,* and *Magick in Theory and Practice*, remain classics in the field. Though he offended public morals and outraged his neighbors, he lived to a ripe old age and died in 1947. His female companions fared poorly: Two wives went insane and five of his mistresses committed suicide. Crowley claimed that his written works were "delivered to him" by a bodiless creature named Aiwass.

Binding

Transform spell: 1, 2, or 3 FX points
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell restrains demons so that the diabolist may bargain with them or force them into service. The spell functions normally against least demons. Against lesser demons, the diabolist must spend 2 FX energy points and cast the spell at a +3 step penalty. Binding a greater demon requires 3 FX energy points and inflicts a +5 step penalty. (The Gamemaster should consult *Chapter 8: Xenoforms* for descriptions of the various demon types.)

This spell is normally cast upon a magical circle or pentagram (which requires 1 hour to properly inscribe), into which the demon is summoned (see the *summoning* spell, below). It is also possible to attempt it upon a free-roaming demon, though this applies a +2 step penalty to the caster's skill check. A bound creature cannot leave its immediate location, attack the caster (or his assistants, if any), or use any magical ability (such as *rend the weave*) to dispel the *binding*. Typically, the diabolist keeps the demon imprisoned until it agrees to perform a service; the demon must make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check each week to keep from capitulating to the arcanist's demands (this check is made at a cumulative +1 step penalty for each week of imprisonment). If the *spiritwrack* spell is used in conjunction with the *binding* spell, the demon must check each day (and the penalty increases each day it is affected by the *spiritwrack* spell, rather than each week). If the demon agrees to the caster's demands, it is compelled to serve until the task is completed, at which time it may return to its dimension of origin.

Demands should be made in proportion to the power and nature of the demon. A yrgling could be asked to steal an object or harass a rival, a nali could be bound to assassinate an important official, and a demon prince might be required to break into an enemy fortification. Tasks should be finite in duration; demands such as "guard this spot for the rest of eternity" give the demon a –2 step bonus to any *mental resolve* skill checks made to resist the *binding*.

If a demand is not made of the demon within 1 day of the binding, it is automatically released and becomes free to act as it wishes.

The required sacrifice depends on the type of demon being bound. Binding a least demon requires an Ordinary sacrifice, a lesser demon requires a Good sacrifice, and a greater demon requires an Amazing sacrifice. The creature to be bound must be within 30 meters of the caster.

Critical Failure: If the spell fails utterly, the specific target creature can no longer be affected by the diabolist's spells.

Black Warding

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
A *black warding* creates a faint field of shimmering purplish-black light that protects the caster from all forms of attack, whether



melee, ranged, psionic, or magical. The aura grants +2 to the caster's resistance modifiers against attacks. If the caster suffers any wound damage (i.e., damage that is not absorbed by armor) while the spell is active, the caster must make a Resolve–*physical resolve* skill check or the spell fails. The spell automatically fails when the caster runs out of wounds or suffers any mortal damage.

The required sacrifice is a small drop of blood, which costs the caster a single stun point (Marginal).

Critical Failure: The caster suffers a –1 to his resistance modifier against all ranged and melee attacks until he stands in full sunlight for a full action round.

⊗ ***Increased Defense:*** At rank 4, the resistance modifier increases to +3; at rank 8, it increases to +4; and at rank 12, it increases to +5.

Command

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell bends the target's will to that of the diabolist. The caster can *command* a victim within 30 meters to perform any one simple action that can be described in less than a dozen words, such as "Walk out of town" or "Give me your money." The duration of the activity cannot exceed 10 minutes. The spell cannot affect a victim who does not understand the caster's language.

The victim is entitled to a Resolve–*mental resolve* check to resist the *command*, with a modifier based on the success of the diabolist's skill check (+1, +2, or +3 step penalty for Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success). Attempts to force a violent or self-destructive action grant the victim a –1 or –3 step bonus (respectively).

The spell requires a Good-quality sacrifice, regardless of the spell's success or failure.

Critical Failure: The victim becomes immune to further *command* attempts by that diabolist.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At rank 4, the commanded activity can take up to 30 minutes.

⊗ ***Increased Efficacy:*** At rank 8, the victim suffers an additional +1 step penalty to the Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check. At rank 12, this increases to a +2 step penalty.

Hellfire

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell calls forth demonic fire and strikes the diabolist's enemy. The *hellfire* can hit any target within 30 meters visible to the caster. It inflicts d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m (En/O), and armor is effective at reducing this damage. This spell requires a Marginal-quality sacrifice, usually a drop of blood (which costs the caster a single stun point).

Critical Failure: The attack is redirected against the caster, who suffers Ordinary damage.

⊗ ***Increased Damage:*** At rank 4, damage becomes d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m. At rank 8, the damage firepower becomes Good. At rank 12, the damage increases to d8+1w/d8+3w/d4+2m.

Rend the Weave

Transform spell: 1 FX point

This spell negates other magical spells (both Arcane Magic and Faith FX). It is automatically successful against the caster's own magic. When directed against another's spell (the primary effect of which must be within 30 meters of the diabolist), the check is modified by the Will resistance modifier of the targeted caster. Targeted spells from the Enochian Arcane Magic or Monotheism Faith FX broad skill inflict an additional +1 step penalty. A success means the targeted spell ends immediately. A failure indicates that the diabolist cannot attempt to negate that effect until his skill rank improves (or until nine full moons have passed).

This spell requires an Ordinary-quality sacrifice.

Critical Failure: The spell backfires upon the caster, causing the loss of an additional FX energy point (or a fatigue point if the caster has no FX energy points remaining).

Spiritwrack

Transform spell: 1 FX point

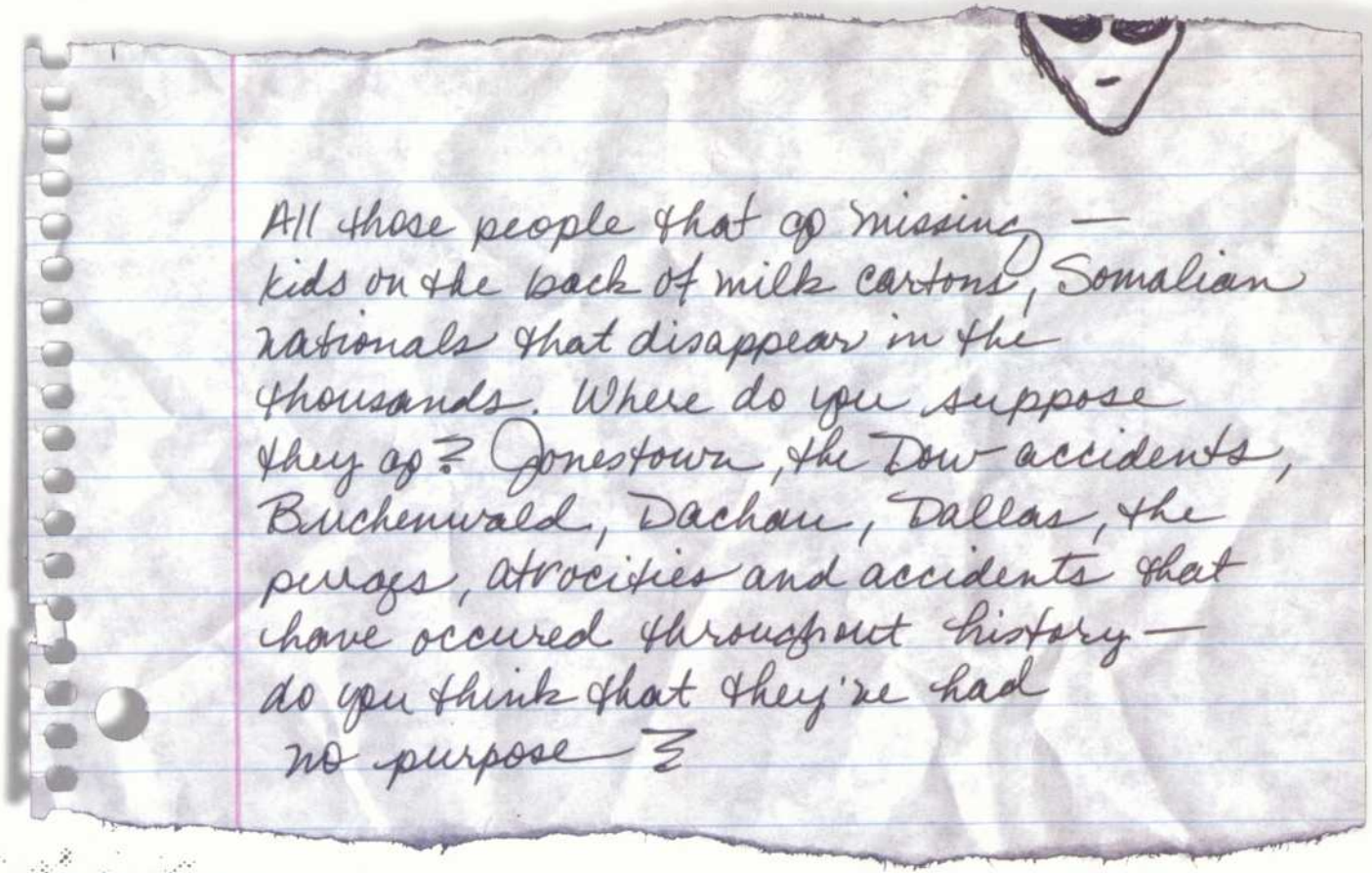
This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell creates a painful resonance against beings native to other dimensions, such as demons. The targeted creature (which must be within 30 meters of the caster) is wracked with debilitating pains; any actions attempted by the target suffer a +3 step penalty.

This spell requires an Ordinary sacrifice, plus specific components: an elaborate wooden tablet inlaid with gold, upon which is written the runes of the spell using the caster's own blood (which costs 1 fatigue point in addition to any damage from the sacrifice), and substances inimical to the creature (such as silver, powdered iron, or holy water). Due to the last requirement, this spell is normally prepared in advance against a particular creature or type of creature. A nonspecific *spiritwrack* is less painful and inflicts only a +1 step penalty to the target's actions.

If cast upon a creature held with the *binding* spell, the duration of the pain is determined by the result of the *spiritwrack* casting check: Marginal, 1 round; Ordinary, 1 hour; Good, 1 day; Amazing, 1 week. If cast upon an unbound demon, the duration is shorter: Marginal, no effect; Ordinary, 1 round; Good, 5 rounds; Amazing, 10 rounds.

Some diabolists prefer to use this spell instead of taking the time for extensive bargaining or making the appropriate sacrifices (see the *binding* spell). While this is less costly in the short run, demons subjected to this spell will tell others about it, making other demons less likely to answer the diabolist's call. Each time the diabolist uses this spell, he must make a Personality feat check or suffer the permanent effects of the 2-point Infamy flaw with respect to creatures from the spiritwracked being's dimension (this penalty is cumulative with repeated uses). Note that the Infamy penalty applies to the diabolist's Personality-based spells as well. A diabolist wishing to restore his standing with such creatures must make an Amazing sacrifice for each step of penalty he wants to remove.



Critical Failure: The spell only causes enough pain to enrage the demon. If bound, it receives an immediate Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check to break its binding. If not bound, it receives a –1 step bonus to any attacks against the caster for 24 hours.

⊗ ***Increased Efficacy:*** At rank 4, any penalty inflicted by this spell increases by +1 step. At rank 8, the penalty increases by another +1 step.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At rank 12, the duration of the spell increases. Any duration noted in rounds becomes minutes, minutes become hours, hours become days, days become weeks, and weeks become months.

Summoning

Summon spell: 1, 2, or 3 FX points

This spell allows a diabolist to summon a demon from its home dimension to the caster's current location and dimension. The demon is not required to serve its summoner, although it may be willing to bargain with the diabolist; the more reticent ones can be manipulated with the *binding* spell. A summoned demon is attracted by the words of the spell and inclined to be pleased with the summoner because of the sacrifice. The diabolist may then attempt to convince the demon to perform a service or reveal information. The demon appears within 30 meters of the caster.

This spell requires a complex skill check, with the number of successes required based on the type of demon summoned. Note that once summoned, a demon remains in the diabolist's dimension until it is slain or somehow returned to its home dimension (such as through an exorcism).

Summoning a least demon requires an Ordinary sacrifice, costs a single FX energy point, and can be accomplished by an individual caster. The complex skill check requires 3 successes, and the caster may make one check per phase.

The ritual required to summon a lesser demon requires ten participants and a Good sacrifice, costs 2 FX energy points, and applies a +2 step penalty to the skill check. The complex skill check requires 5 successes, and skill checks can be made once per round.

Summoning a greater demon requires a unique ceremony that should be designed by the Gamemaster. It should have elements that relate to the specific demon being summoned, and should require such components as one hundred or more participants and one or more Amazing sacrifices. Such a ceremony also costs 3 FX energy points and applies a +4 step penalty to the check. The complex skill check requires 8 successes, and skill checks are made once per minute.

Note that the caster can increase the time interval between rolls by one grade (phase to round, round to minute, minute to hour) to gain a –1 step bonus to the skill check. This increase may be applied only once to any particular casting.

Critical Failure: If the spell fails utterly, the creature to be summoned is aware of the call and is annoyed with the bungled attempt. It may choose to appear personally, send an inferior demon to investigate or attack the diabolist, or even attempt possession (in which case the caster must immediately make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check with a +2 step penalty or be possessed by the demon's spirit). The demon or its chosen subordinate has a –1 step bonus on all actions against the diabolist for a week.

Tongue of the Damned

Augur spell: 1 FX point (base)

Some demons keep up on events in the mortal world. This spell, which requires a Good-quality sacrifice, allows the caster to speak to them and gain information without having to actually summon a demon to the material world. A successful casting of this spell allows the caster to question a demonic intelligence, essentially duplicating the effects of one of the following psionic skills: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *postcognition*, *precognition*, *psycholocation*, or *psychometry*. The spell's degree of success determines the degree of success for the psionic skill. The caster may spend additional FX energy points to maintain the link with the demon on a 1-round-per-point basis.

Note that this spell can also be used to ask a single question that can be answered with one word or a short phrase; the effect is similar to the use of a spirit planchette (and demons sometimes answer the untrained calls of people who use such devices, whether or not they have any true aptitude for Diabolism). The degree of success determines the precision of the granted infor-

Possession

Some creatures (such as demons, shamanistic or Voodoo spirits, and even some psychics) have the ability to possess the physical bodies of others. The target of possession may or may not have a chance to resist this mental intrusion depending upon its origin (for example, the Voodoo houngan invites spirits into his body, whereas most victims of demonic possession are in that state involuntarily). An unwilling victim's Will resistance modifier generally applies to the attacking entity's possession attempt.

The possessing entity is able to use all of its normal skills in the body of the host; however, any skills based on physical abilities (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) use the host body's abilities instead of the possessor's. The victim's memories are unavailable to the possessor, as the victim's physical body (including its brain) is little more than a shell piloted by the invading intelligence. Some advanced beings may be able to utilize the possessed creature's skills as well.

More than one creature can possess a person at a time, but each being after the first gives a +1 step penalty to the possession attempt. Simultaneous possessors can communicate with each other through a sort of low-grade telepathy using the victim's own brain. Should more than one choose to act at a time, each much make a contested Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check (using the rules noted under "Character vs. Character" in *Chapter 3: Gamemasters In Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). The winner gains control of the body for 1 round.

A possessed victim can sometimes expel an intruder through force of will. In the case of demonic possession, a *mental resolve* skill check can be made (with a +3 step penalty) once every day to shake off the possessing spirit. In most cases, however, an exorcism (see Monotheism–*exorcism* under Faith FX, below) or similar magic is needed to drive out the possessing agent. The entity can leave its host and return to its own form at any time.

mation. An Ordinary result gives a vague but mostly truthful answer, a Good result indicates more precision, and an Amazing result grants a truthful and useful answer.

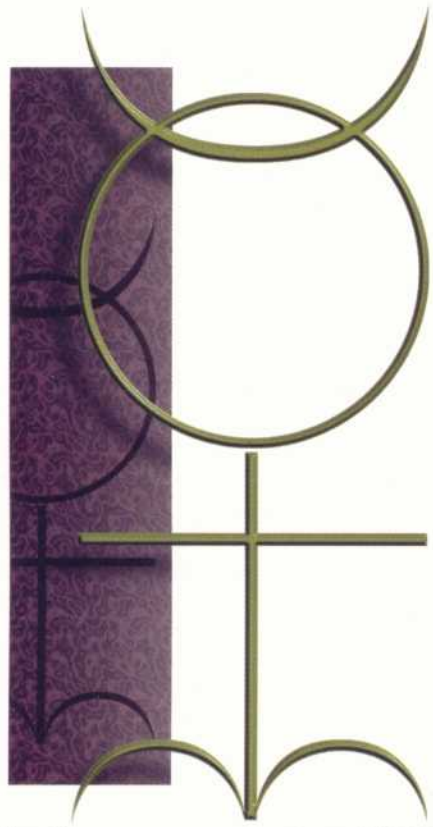
This spell can be assisted by the Lore–*occult lore* skill. A successful *occult lore* skill check grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success) to the *tongue of the damned* skill check. This represents the caster's ability to locate a specific demonic intelligence more likely to be able to answer his particular questions.

Critical Failure: The demon becomes irritated by the diabolist's questioning and attempts to possess the caster. A demon communicating through an object will spell out a terrifying prediction to those watching, hurl the object across the room, and attempt a possession. The caster must immediately make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check with a +1 step penalty or be possessed by the demon's spirit.

Enochian

Based on the writings of John Dee, an English magus of the Elizabethan era, the school of Enochian magic is concerned with the practice of changing the world through appeals to beneficent powers and humanity's own better nature. As such, it stands as the opposite of Diabolism and is often referred to as "white magic." The kind old man who tends the gardens of an abandoned church, the bright-eyed missionary to a poverty-stricken war zone, and the quiet nurse who brings candy and toys to her young cancer patients are all potential Enochian practitioners.

This school of arcana requires purity of thought and purpose, benign intent, and a deep knowledge of the spirits the Enochian magus—sometimes called a *mystic*—wishes to contact. Unlike Faith FX that contacts similar beings (which requires a natural aptitude for contacting celestial beings), Enochian magic relies on arcane formulae to draw the attention of these spirits, leaving the mystic in the position of a bargaining supplicant. Unlike the demons known to diabolists, the beings that grant the mystic his powers do not generally manifest themselves on Earth, nor can they be summoned by any known spell. Though most Enochian practitioners honor a specific faith, mystics are not required to have religious devotion; the fervent desire to serve the cause of Good provides the driving force for a mystic's spells.



Most Enochian spells require the caster to make a *vow* to the contacted being, promising a certain action in return for the power of the magic. The magnitude of a vow is always proportional to the power of the magic being requested. Weak spells call for only Marginal or Ordinary vows, moderate spells require Good vows, and the most powerful Enochian magics demand Amazing vows. Note that some vows are considered ongoing, which allows an Enochian mystic to use the spell repeatedly without making additional promises as long as he maintains the original vow (although skill checks are still required). One-time vows allow the mystic to use that spell for up to 30 days without making further pledges. Vows made to power Enochian magics should be carried out as soon as reasonably possible, because dawdling or putting off such vows is the equivalent of breaking them (see below).

Specific examples of Marginal vows include making a solemn promise to pray, giving a small offering such as candles or incense, adorning a saint's or martyr's shrine, and similar acts. The total duration of time required to carry out this vow should be no more than a few hours per month (for ongoing vows), or a one-time investment of a day or two. For example, a mystic might be required to light a candle every week on a specific shrine or to work in a soup kitchen every night for a week.

An Ordinary vow requires a greater service or commitment but should not unduly affect the hero's actions. The amount of time represented by the hero's vow should be measured in days per month (for ongoing vows), or a one-time investment of up to a week. For instance, an ongoing tithe of 10% of one's salary, spending one weekend every month building homeless shelters, or donating a week's salary to the renovation of a church would be appropriate.

Good vows represent significant personal sacrifices on the part of the hero. Such a vow should require a time investment of at least several days per month (for ongoing vows), or a one-time investment of up to a month. Examples include an ongoing donation of 25% of one's salary to a suitable charity, a pilgrimage (or delivery) to a distant land, or a temporary vow of silence or fasting.

Amazing vows are extreme pledges that greatly affect the character. They always involve a great deal of personal sacrifice and require a time investment of at least half the hero's waking hours (for ongoing vows) or a one-time investment of up to a year. Extreme fasting, forsaking human company, vows of silence, celibacy, or poverty, full-time dedication to a charitable profession, and epic quests or pilgrimages all qualify as Amazing vows. Ultimately, many Enochian magicians of the greatest power are willing to give their lives to serve a higher purpose.

If a vow to an Enochian power is broken or otherwise not fulfilled, the hero loses access to the spell for which he made that

Known Mystics

Besides John Dee, older Enochian mystics include Simon Magus and perhaps even King Solomon, who is said to have bound evil spirits to help him build the first temple in Jerusalem (unfortunately, whatever magics King Solomon may have used to command these spirits are long since lost). Dee's later disciples include the famous scientist and theologian Isaac Newton, who believed he would be remembered by posterity not for his experiments in physics, but for his theological and philosophical tracts.

oath. In addition, breaking an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing vow results in the application of a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to all of the mystic's actions and revokes any vows of lesser quality made by the mystic. This penalty (which is cumulative for multiple broken vows) can only be removed by atonement, which requires as much time spent in prayer or meditation (interrupted only by sleeping and eating) as it took to make the vow originally.

For example, a hero who breaks an Ordinary-quality vow suffers a +1 step penalty to future actions, and any Marginal vows in effect are automatically revoked. Later in that session, the hero breaks a Good vow. This increases his total penalty to +3 steps and revokes any Ordinary or Marginal vows in effect. After the adventure, the hero must spend time in prayer atoning for his actions equal to the time it took to make both vows.

Casting Enochian spells on tainted ground (such as a slaughterhouse, a mortuary, or a cesspool) adds a +1 to +3 step penalty to the magician's skill check. Using sacred materials as a focus or casting on holy ground grants the mystic a –1 to –3 step bonus when casting any Enochian spell.

The vows of a mystic require a steadfast will to maintain, and the beings that provide the energy for Enochian spells do not grant them to characters who lack in this regard. Thus, most of the mystic's spells are based on Will.

Eye of Fate

Augur spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell allows the caster to see a subject's future and to describe in limited detail one scene of danger that the subject of the spell will soon face. The Gamemaster must carefully adjudicate any use of this spell. *Eye of fate* should not be capable of ruining the Gamemaster's plots, though it can provide a useful plot device. Of course, *eye of fate* can only predict a possible future, and the heroes' actions may force history down an entirely different path. In general, the spell cannot predict events more than a few days or weeks away.

To represent the hero's newfound knowledge of his own future, the subject of the spell can choose to "store" one or more last resort points for use during that scene. When the predicted scene occurs, the hero may spend any stored last resort points for increased effect: Each stored last resort point spent can adjust the result by up to two degrees of success rather than only one (Free Agents spending stored last resort points may adjust the result by up to three degrees of success).

Stored last resort points still count against the hero's maximum. Since it's possible that the future danger never materializes, the hero can at any time choose to "discard" any saved last resort points, in which case they are lost without effect.

Casting the spell requires the presence of the subject and any divinatory tool of the mystic's choice (prayer and fasting, meditation, tarot cards, rune stones, bones, I Ching hexagrams, tea leaves, or any other tool the mystic feels comfortable with). A successful Lore–*occult lore* skill check grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus to the *eye of fate* skill check (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result).

The *eye of fate* requires an Ordinary vow, such as a promise to spend a few hours per week in a church or school teaching children to avoid strangers.

Grace

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell makes the target more friendly toward and receptive to the mystic. The target's Will resistance modifier is applied to the skill check for the spell. A success means the target's attitude (see TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER SKILL EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*) shifts one category in a favorable direction for each degree of success of the check. In addition, the spell also gives the mystic a –1 step bonus per degree of success on all Personality-related skill checks against the victim.

The target must initially be within 5 meters of the caster, and the spell lasts 5 minutes. Once the spell runs its course, the target must make a Resolve–*mental resolve* check to realize that his or her change in attitude was unusual.

Grace requires an Ordinary vow, such as volunteering two days per week to work with debate students or people with speech impediments.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At rank 4, the duration increases to 10 minutes, at rank 8 it increases to 15 minutes, and at rank 12 it becomes 20 minutes.

Halo

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell is a manifestation of the power granted to the Enochian mystic. A shining light surrounds the caster, providing an additional +3 step resistance modifier against all mundane attacks (melee and ranged) and a +4 step resistance modifier against hostile magic. These modifiers each increase by +1 step if the caster places himself in harm's way to protect someone who is helpless or otherwise defenseless (a small child, an unconscious ally, or other target). The spell lasts for 1 round plus 1 round per degree of success of the skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing).

This spell requires a Good vow that aids the helpless, such as building an orphanage, hospital, or shrine (measures such as purchasing or repairing an ambulance or school bus would also be appropriate).

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 6, the bonuses increase to +4 and +5. At rank 12, the spiritual presence of the *halo* is strong enough to cause harm to tainted beings (such as diabolists, demons, and undead) that touch the caster; such beings suffer d6s at each contact (or d6w per round of extended contact), and nothing can prevent or reduce this damage.

Lumen

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
With this spell, the Enochian mystic traces a magical symbol in the air or on any solid surface. The symbol begins to glow, increasing in intensity until it provides a steady light of Good intensity (equivalent to a well-lit room). The intensity decreases by one grade at 10 meters away, and each doubling of that distance (20 meters, 40 meters, and so on) decreases the intensity one additional grade (see "Surprise Modifiers" in *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). The light provides no heat. If placed on or in an object, it moves when the object is moved. Certain extradimensional creatures (such as demons and ghosts) find the light slightly uncomfortable but are not harmed by it. The light lasts for 1 hour plus an additional hour for every degree of success of the spell check.

This spell requires a Marginal vow, such as lighting a candle every week on a shrine to Florian, patron saint of firefighters.

⊗ ***Greater Intensity:*** At rank 6, the maximum intensity of the light increases to Amazing (equivalent to bright sunlight). Note that this could cause damage to creatures particularly vulnerable to sunlight.

Peaceful Shroud

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell is intended as a comfort for those that are suffering. While it heals no damage, it removes the target's pain and automatically negates 2 steps of penalties the target may be suffering because of damage (stun, wound, or mortal damage, but not fatigue). If the target's pain was keeping him awake, he can immediately fall asleep and remain so for 8 hours without further suffering. The spell otherwise lasts for 10 minutes per degree of success. It can be applied before a painful situation, successfully preventing up to 2 steps of penalties that accrue during the spell's duration.

This spell requires only a Marginal vow—such as visiting a burn ward once per month—as the benign powers that grant this ability espouse mercy and respite from pain.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** The spell negates 1 additional step of penalty from damage at ranks 4, 8, and 12, cumulatively.

Unravel Enchantment

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell dispels a magic spell (Arcane Magic or Faith FX). For every two ranks of difference between the skill rank of the caster of the target spell and the hero's *unravel enchantment* rank, apply 1 step of penalty or bonus to the skill check (round fractions down). Thus, a hero with rank 7 in *unravel enchantment* attempting to dispel a spell cast at rank 11 suffers a +2 step penalty, while the same hero unraveling a spell cast at rank 1 enjoys a –3 step bonus.

If the check succeeds, the targeted spell ends immediately. If the check fails, the hero cannot attempt another *unravel enchantment* skill check against that spell until he improves his skill rank (or until 1 year has passed). The targeted spell (or creature or item upon which it is cast) must be within 30 meters of the mystic.

Unravel enchantment requires only a Marginal vow (such as a full night of prayer). If this spell targets a beneficial magical effect, the skill check suffers a +2 step penalty; malign or neutral spells can be negated at normal chances. The mystic may always successfully unravel his own works with this spell.

White Salamander

Summon spell: 2 FX points
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell brings a small fire spirit in the form of a six-legged white salamander under the Enochian mystic's control, appearing anywhere in the caster's line of sight within 30 meters. The creature is 0.5 meters long and can do anything an extremely hot fire might, such as ignite combustibles, injure enemies, overheat and destroy equipment, and cause other such damage. Any individual targeted by the salamander must make a Constitution feat check as if he were exposed to direct flame (see *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). Repeated strikes by the salamander on a flaming target are not cumulative.

The caster need not maintain strict concentration to stay in control of the salamander. However, commanding it to take any particular action requires an action on the caster's part. Otherwise, the salamander remains where it is (possibly igniting any nearby objects).

The salamander's movement is instantaneous to any point within the spell's range. As it is invisible to normal sight (a spell or supernatural ability is required to view it), all effects of the salamander appear to occur spontaneously. It cannot be damaged or affected except by effects that specifically dispel magic (such as *unravel enchantment* or a diabolist's *rend the weave*). The salamander remains for 1 minute, 2 minutes, or 3 minutes, depending on the degree of success of the skill check.

This spell requires a Good vow, such as spending one day each week working with terminally ill children.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration of the summoning increases by 1 minute, cumulatively.

Hermeticism

Hermetic magic (or alchemy—a more ancient name for this type of magic) dates back to Egyptian and Arabic practice. The original name itself comes from *Al Keme*, the name of the rituals the Arabians used when robbing tombs in Egypt (from their name for Egypt, *Keme*, meaning "black land" for the fertile soil of the Nile's banks). These magic words were believed to open and reveal "invisible tomb treasures," valuables hidden from plain sight through magic. Indeed, much of its content is encoded knowledge from the Egyptian magicians. But because Hermetic secrets are hidden in codes and symbols, few alchemists make much progress in perfecting themselves and their experiments. Later, the word "alchemy" came to mean the transmutation of matter by spells and incantations.

Based on the writings of Hermes Trimegestes, Hermetic magic combines astrology, philosophy, and Gnosticism. Most of its secrets are written in Classical languages, though some of the oldest Hermetic texts are actually Egyptian. The later codification of Hermetic principles from Egyptian knowledge remained remarkably true to the ancient ways, but many adepts argue that the greatest secrets were hidden or stolen away by the Compan-

ions of Horus, a group that lived in Egypt for centuries before leaving for the East (presumably with much esoteric knowledge in hand). The medieval alchemist, the Egyptian seer-priest, and the odd British lore-scholar are potential alchemists.

Hermeticism works through the use of complex *mystic formulae*, which give structure to the energies of the spells. The formulae are on the whole difficult to find, usually require some deciphering, and require materials that are rare, illegal, or dangerous. Any errors in performing the spell, such as substituting components or focus items, mispronouncing the words of the spell, or using incorrect proportions of the necessary ingredients, inflict a +1 to +3 step penalty toward casting the spell. A Critical Failure result while casting the spell means that some error has arisen, and the magic backfires upon the Hermetic magician.

Because the early practitioners of alchemy were very secretive, their books of knowledge were usually written in code and with strange nonalphabetic symbols. Many aspiring alchemists do not get very far in their studies before reaching a difficult cipher. Every time an alchemist discovers a new formula, she must decipher the text in order to learn the spell. If the hero has at least one rank in the language of the text, she may make a complex Knowledge–*language* skill check to learn the spell. If she has no training in the language of the document to be deciphered, she may be able to use the Social Science–*linguistics* skill instead (see skill description), though this applies a +1 step penalty to the attempt. In either case, the complex skill check requires a number of successes equal to twice the base skill point cost of the spell being learned (so a *glamour* spell, for example, requires 8 successes). The hero may make one roll per day of studying. If the hero has previously decoded a spell by the same author, she receives a –1 step bonus to the skill check.

Success indicates that the hero has learned the spell (and must immediately pay the appropriate skill point cost). Failure means the alchemist cannot make another attempt to translate the spell until she improves her skill rank in the language of the document (or improves her ability to translate documents as per the *linguistics* skill).

A beginning hero with this broad skill should start with knowledge of no more than one or perhaps two spells; the player should work with the Gamemaster to determine the hero's starting spells.

Since a sharp mind is needed to properly process the complex components of this magic, most Hermetic spells depend on Intelligence.

Daedalus Improved

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell gives an alchemist the ability to fly at her Fly (or Glide, at the hero's option) movement rate. She may move in any direction at will and can hang in place effortlessly. This spell even works underwater or in space, although it gives no ability to survive without air (furthermore, the drag from the water reduces any movement in that environment to 1/4 of the Fly rate).

Active flight requires thinking about abstract mental equations, so penalties apply to other actions taken during flight (see TABLE P11: COMBAT MOVEMENT EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*). Hovering requires no effort and imparts no penalty. The spell lasts 10 minutes per degree of success.

Critical Failure: The caster suffers from severe vertigo for 1 minute (5 rounds). All actions during this time suffer a +2 step penalty, and her movement is reduced to half normal.

⊗ ***Enhanced Speed:*** At rank 4 the alchemist's speed when flying or gliding increases to double the listed rates; the base rates triple at rank 8, and quadruple at rank 12.

Glamour

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell creates strong auditory and visual illusions that change as the caster desires. It can be used to alter a single creature or item, or an area of less than 30 square meters. The light and noises it makes can be no brighter and louder than Good intensity (see "Range of Vision" and "Sound" in *Chapter 3* of the *Gamemaster Guide*), but the illusion is otherwise so realistic that it inflicts a +3 step penalty to all Awareness–*perception* checks of those viewing it and attempting to discern what is real. Note that the illusion can even fool electronic equipment (such as cameras).

While the illusionary effects can cover an object with the image of another object of larger size or obscure a sound with a louder sound, they cannot make something disappear or silence a noise. Particularly unlikely results (green flying pigs, for instance) automatically entitle a viewer to an Awareness–*perception* check with a –1 to –3 step bonus to detect the illusion, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

The duration is 1 hour, and the alchemist must remain within 30 meters of the area, item, or creature affected. If the caster leaves this area before the end of the spell, the spell lasts for d6 minutes (up to the maximum duration of the spell). The spell requires a powder made from a fistful of narcotics, sweat taken from an onstage performer, and crushed leaves of the poisonous herb belladonna.

Critical Failure: The alchemist's senses are affected by spectral visions and noises (perceived only by him) for the duration of the spell. The caster suffers a +1 step penalty on all actions that require sight or hearing during this time.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 4, the caster's control of auditory and visual effects extend beyond a human's sensory capabilities. Thus, the caster could create a high-pitched sound audible only to dogs, or mask an infrared component (to thwart IR sensors). At rank 8, the area of effect increases to 100 square meters. At rank 12, the visual and auditory images can be of Amazing intensity.

Homunculus

Transform spell: 1 FX point (permanent)
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell allows an alchemist to slowly grow an artificial life form that obeys its creator's will. The process requires a broad range of ritual materials, including human bodily fluids (especially the blood of the caster), mandrake root, bear's gall bladder, shark cartilage, and human growth hormones extracted from brain tissue or bought from a medical supply or biochemical company (more primitive alchemists used entire ground-up brains). Any deviation from this process applies a +1 to +3 step penalty.

The spell requires a full month of near-constant activity (at least 12 hours per day) to grow and shape the homunculus, after which time the alchemist must make a *homunculus* skill check. If successful, the homunculus is fully developed, knowing the caster's language and having the ability to act independently (though it remains under its creator's control). Failure indicates that the partially formed homunculus dissolves into a useless sludge. Regardless of success or failure, the FX energy point spent on the spell is lost permanently (though the alchemist may spend achievement points to replace it per the rules for gaining FX energy points).

Homunculus game statistics appear in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*. A trained homunculus can act as a messenger, spy, and scout. With a successful *homunculus* skill check (and the cost of 1 FX energy point), the hero may communicate with her homunculus telepathically at any distance for up to 1 hour.

Critical Failure: The creation process has gone awry, and the homunculus flees immediately. It haunts its creator for the rest of its existence, perhaps even seeking out an enemy of its creator to offer its services. Strangely, this does not affect the caster's chance or ability to telepathically communicate with her homunculus, though such communication grants the caster no power of control over her failed creation.

⊗ ***Sensory Relay:*** At rank 4, the creator may, with a successful skill check (and the cost of 1 FX energy point), use the homunculus's sensory organs as if they were her own for up to 1 hour. At rank 8, the homunculus's sensory capabilities grant a –1 step bonus to any skill checks made by the creator using its senses. At rank 12, the durations of telepathic communication and sensory relay increase to 6 hours. Note that these rank benefits apply even to homunculi created before the rank benefit is obtained.

Ligature

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This spell wraps the target in hundreds of magical metallic threads that snap tight and restrict movement. The target's Strength resistance modifier applies to the alchemist's *ligature* skill check. On an Ordinary success, the target is only partially bound; he moves at half normal rate and suffers a +2 step penalty on all Strength- and Dexterity-related skill and feat checks for the next d4 rounds. On a Good success, the target is rendered immobile for d4+2 rounds. On an Amazing success, the target is held motionless for d8+2 rounds. In any case, the victim may still use abilities that do not require movement (such as psionics and mentally activated mutations and cybernetic devices).

The strands from the *ligature* spell cannot be broken by strength alone, but they can be cut away. The strands have a durability of 3 and Ordinary toughness; only damage from edged or energy weapons can sever them.

Critical Failure: The ligature entangles the alchemist as if the spell result were a Good success.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the alchemist creates more and thicker strands, cumulatively increasing the duration of the spell by 1 round at each of these ranks.

Shapechanging

Transform spell: 2 FX points
This skill can't be used untrained.
This complex and dangerous ritual allows the caster to assume the exact form of a specific animal, gaining its movement, vision, special abilities, and skill ranks. (Note, however, that this does not grant the caster any specific factual information known by the animal; thus, this can't be used on a dead opponent to "read his mind.") The caster retains her own Intelligence, Will, and Personality scores.

To complete the ritual, the caster must have a well-tanned hide of the animal whose form she chooses to adopt. The ritual requires a full round to complete. *Shapechanging* can even allow an alchemist to assume the form of a human, an alien, or a supernatural creature such as a demon, as long as a well-tanned skin is available; however, assuming the form of a nonterrestrial creature applies a +2 step penalty to the skill check.

In addition to the tanned hide, optional ritual materials for *shapechanging* include rendered bear fat, whale oil, or another lubricant, which makes the transition from one shape to another easier (–1 step bonus). Items do not transform with the alchemist, and the animal skin must be held against the alchemist's own skin during the casting. Wearing any natural items (such as cotton clothing and leather shoes) during casting imposes a +1 step penalty to the check, while metal, plastic, or other artificial items inflict a +2 step penalty. Thus, to maximize chances of success, most casters choose to perform this spell naked. The spell lasts 4 hours plus 1 hour for every degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) of the spell check.

Critical Failure: The mystic loses partial control of her own faculties and suffers a +1 step penalty to all actions for 1 hour.

⊗ ***Increased Durability:*** At rank 4, the alchemist gains a bonus stun, wound, fatigue, and mortal point when she assumes animal form. Any damage taken is first subtracted from these bonus points (which are lost when the hero returns to normal form). An additional point is gained in each category at rank 8 and again at rank 12.

Sleep of Morpheus

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This skill can't be used untrained.
This simple spell causes a living creature (up to 30 meters away from the caster) to fall asleep for a few minutes. The victim is entitled to a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check to resist the effect entirely. The mystic's degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) inflicts a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to that check. Particularly vigilant targets (such as sentries) receive a –1 step bonus to resist this spell.

If the victim succumbs to the spell, he falls asleep for a number of minutes equal to 20 minus his Constitution (minimum of 1 minute). Attempts to wake the target entitle him to another *mental resolve* skill check. If the victim is attacked or otherwise injured while asleep, he immediately wakes to full consciousness. Noise alone cannot wake the victim.

The ritual material for *sleep of Morpheus* is a spinning or swinging object, such as those used by hypnotists.

Critical Failure: The spell affects the alchemist, who has a +2 step penalty to the Resolve–*mental resolve* resistance check.

⊗ ***Increased Efficacy:*** At rank 4, *mental resolve* checks made to resist the spell suffer an additional +1 step penalty. At rank 12, the penalty increases by another step.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At rank 8, the duration of the *sleep of Morpheus* increases to 30 minutes minus the target's Constitution.

Transmutation

Transform spell: 1 or 2 FX points
This skill can't be used untrained.
This carefully guarded spell allows the alchemist to transform one substance into another. The rare alchemist who discovers and deciphers this spell rarely shares this secret, and so the total number of copies of the spell remains unknown.

The spell requires an extended ritual (a complex skill check requiring 10 successes, one roll per 2 hours); failure means the spell fails and the material to be transformed becomes corrupted and unusable. The ritual involves a fully stocked alchemical or chemistry laboratory (a setup cost of $5,000, plus maintenance expenses of $100 per casting) and ingredients such as aqua regia, exotic mineral salts, a source of flame, and large amounts of quicksilver (mercury). Each use of the spell can transform up to 500 grams of matter.

For the purposes of this spell, four types of substances exist. In increasing order of complexity, these are light elements (such as oxygen and hydrogen), heavy elements (such as mercury, iron, lead, and gold), simple compounds (such as water, pure alcohol,, and carbon dioxide), and complex compounds (such as wood, leather, wine, blood, and gasoline). Any *transmutation* involving one or more compounds requires 2 FX energy points rather than 1 FX energy point.

A bonus or penalty is applied to the skill check based on the original and desired substance, as noted on the table below. For example, an alchemist changing nitrogen (a light element) into helium (another light element) would have a –1 step bonus to the skill check. If the hero wished to transmute oxygen into water (a simple compound), he would suffer a +3 step penalty to the skill check.

	Light Element	Heavy Element	Simple Compound	Complex Compound
Light Element	–1	+1	+3	+5
Heavy Element	+1	0	+2	+4
Simple Compound	+3	+2	+1	+3
Complex Compound	+5	+4	+3	+2

Note that the alchemist has no control over the temperature of the material; thus, he couldn't turn oxygen into liquid oxygen (which requires intense cold) or stone into magma (which requires great heat).

The new material appears in the approximate shape of the old material (taking into account the potential difference in size due to changes in density). The alchemist cannot transmute a hunk of granite into a statue or an iron bar into a gold ring. Also, this spell cannot affect living tissue (animal or plant), nor can it create living matter. Thus, the alchemist could not transmute a tree into a flagpole or a corpse into a living creature.

The duration of the transmutation depends on the result of the skill check. On an Ordinary result, the duration is 1 hour per skill rank. With a Good result, this duration is 1 day per skill rank. With an Amazing result, the transmutation is permanent.

The Physical Science–*chemistry* skill can be used to assist *transmutation* skill checks. The result of a *chemistry* skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus to the *transmutation* attempt.

Critical Failure: The transmutation spell goes awry and creates a volatile or explosive material, injuring all nearby and destroying valuable equipment. Anyone within 5 meters of the spell may make an Acrobatics–*dodge* skill check to duck out of the way; those who fail take d8+1w (En/O), and the alchemist must rebuild the laboratory, which takes d4+2 weeks and the appropriate expense.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 4, the alchemist can transmute up to 1 kilogram of matter. At rank 8, this increases to 3 kilograms, and to 5 kilograms at rank 12.

Faith FX

Human history—whether oral or written—holds strong traditions of miracles and wonders. Even today, the everyday experience of believers mirrors the paranormal. Miraculous sightings, divine impregnations, and spontaneous recoveries from fatal illnesses happen in many countries. Priests still perform exorcisms to remove demonic influences from those troubled by outside forces. And faith sustains the poor, the downtrodden, and the desperate in times of trouble. The heroes of the DARK•MATTER setting need all the sustaining faith they can muster.

TABLE D7: FAITH FX SKILLS

Skill Name	Cost
Monotheism	14
Aura (PER)	4
Blessing (WIL)	4
Cure (WIL)	3
Demon ward (WIL)	4
Exorcism (WIL)	3
Guidance (PER)	2
Signs and portents (PER)	4
Vision (PER)	4
Shamanism	13
Animal voice (PER)	3
Dreamwalking (WIL)	5
Ghost dance (PER)	4
Guide my hand (WIL)	3
Hunter's stare (WIL)	3
Spirit of the beast (WIL)	2
Trance visions (PER)	2
Venom spirit (WIL)	4
Voodoo	13
Ayza's juju (PER)	2
Erzuli's fetish (WIL)	4
Gris-gris (WIL)	2
Helpful possession (WIL)	4
Legba rides (PER)	2
Loa of healing (WIL)	2
Negate the spirit (WIL)	5

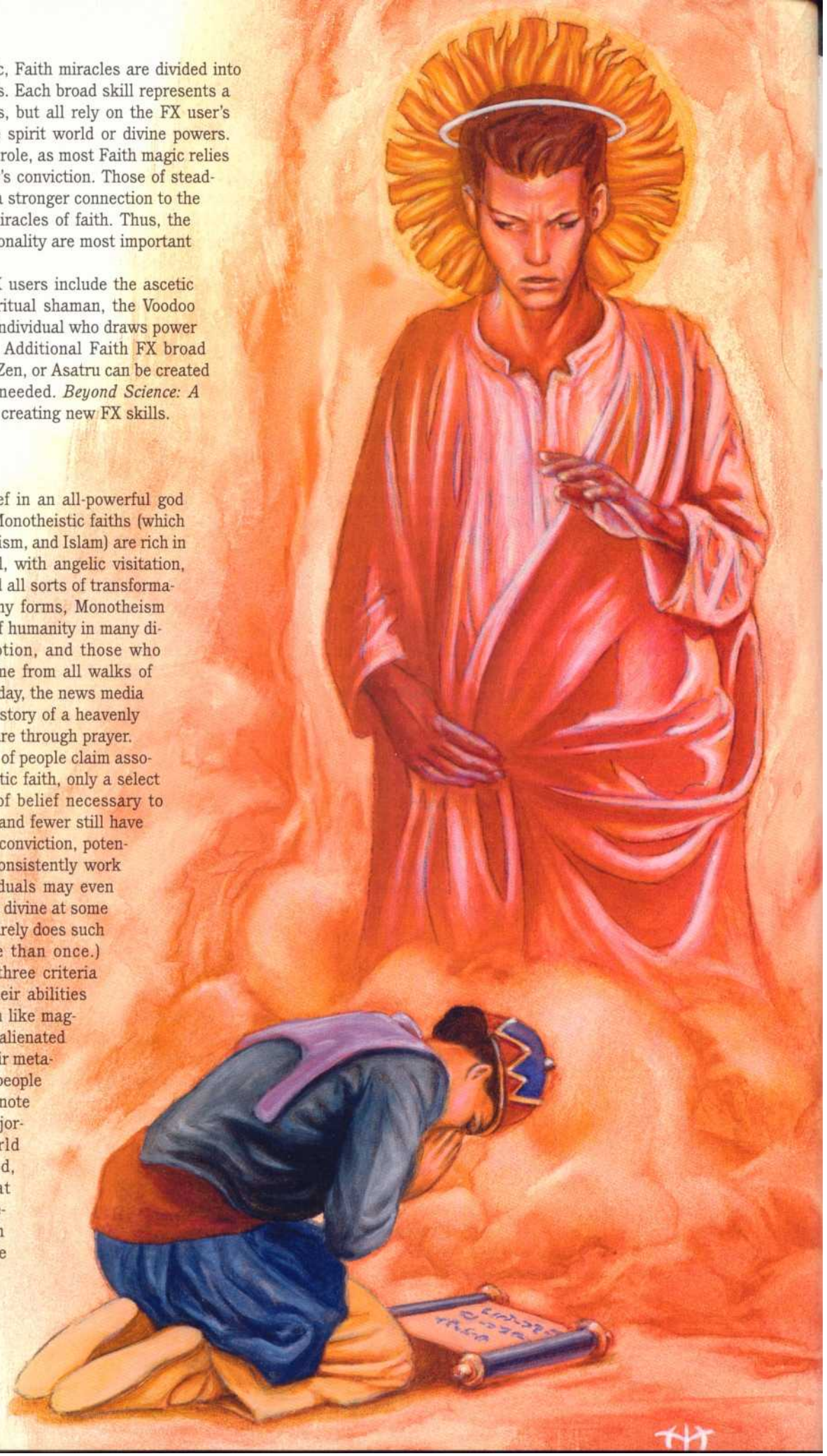
As with Arcane Magic, Faith miracles are divided into broad and specialty skills. Each broad skill represents a different set of teachings, but all rely on the FX user's strong connection to the spirit world or divine powers. Belief also plays a major role, as most Faith magic relies on the power of the user's conviction. Those of steadfast belief tend to make a stronger connection to the powers that grant the miracles of faith. Thus, the abilities of Will and Personality are most important to Faith FX users.

Examples of Faith FX users include the ascetic Christian monk, the spiritual shaman, the Voodoo houngan, and any other individual who draws power from his or her beliefs. Additional Faith FX broad skills such as Druidism, Zen, or Asatru can be created by the Gamemaster as needed. *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX* has rules on creating new FX skills.

Monotheism

Stemming from the belief in an all-powerful god who created the world, Monotheistic faiths (which include Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) are rich in tales of the supernatural, with angelic visitation, spontaneous healing, and all sorts of transformative miracles. In its many forms, Monotheism has pushed the culture of humanity in many directions since its inception, and those who practice its miracles come from all walks of life. Even in the modern day, the news media are rarely without some story of a heavenly vision or a miraculous cure through prayer.

While a great number of people claim association with a Monotheistic faith, only a select few have the strength of belief necessary to pursue a life of religion, and fewer still have the right combination of conviction, potential, and inclination to consistently work miracles. (Certain individuals may even have been touched by the divine at some point in their lives, but rarely does such a visitation occur more than once.) Those who meet these three criteria often either find that their abilities draw supplicants to them like magnets, or find themselves alienated from others as fear of their metaphysical talents pushes people away. It is interesting to note that in a time when a majority of the Western world claims to believe in God, those who declare that they speak to a divine creator or channel such powers often face ridicule and disbelief. The role of the Monotheistic Faith FX user is not an easy one.



Unlike other types of Faith FX presented here, the monotheist does not require any sort of trappings or ceremony. Rather, the priest (and this is a very loose term, merely referring to one who can use this sort of FX) simply offers a brief prayer to God or Allah (or perhaps Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit, or various saints) for divine intervention. In rare cases, the miracle occurs before the invocation is made, or even when the priest isn't expecting it (spontaneous healings as a result of the priest's touch or presence fall into this category).

Monotheistic faiths collectively have a multitude of holy relics, from pieces of cloth left at holy sites to bones of prophets and saints to items handled by aspects of divinity. However, most of these items retain very little preternatural value, have lost their power over time, or are complete fakes. A Monotheist priest who possesses a genuine holy relic receives a –1 step bonus to any attempts to perform miracles of his faith (or, if the activity is particularly relevant to the relic, the bonus could improve to –2 or even –3 steps). For example, Marcus (a social worker and Christian priest) quietly prays for a *divine blessing* to help himself and some of his young charges run from a group of men with guns. Marcus receives a –1 step bonus to his skill check because he carries with him a holy relic. If the relic were specifically dedicated to Sebastian, patron saint of athletes, it would grant a –2 step bonus to the act. Some items are powerful enough or tied so strongly to the source of this faith's energy that they give this improved bonus to all Monotheism Faith FX rolls (a fragment of the original tablets of the Ten Commandments would give such a benefit). Certain holy sites may give a similar bonus, although these are equally rare.

Note that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are addressed by this FX broad skill, even though there are several theological distinctions between these faiths and differences of opinion about the nature of divinity. Manifestations of each type are very likely to be different even for the same spells. For example, Judaism states that the flesh of man cannot tolerate the true image of God, and so divine manifestations for that faith are of burning bushes and pillars of fire, whereas Christianity reveres a deified man as an aspect of God, and so images from on high are usually of Christ or the cross. This is but one small manner in which the faiths differ; a Gamemaster who wishes to further codify each belief as separate FX can find abundant resources on these religions at a local library or bookstore.

Like most Faith FX, Monotheistic spells are based on Will or Personality.

Aura

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This spell surrounds the priest with an invisible aura of divine energy. This *aura* provides a +3 resistance modifier to all attacks (mundane, psionic, and FX) against the priest. Furthermore, all viewing the priest automatically have their attitude shifted one step toward Fanatic (see TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER SKILL EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*). The aura lasts 1 round plus 1 round per degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) of the skill check.

⊗ ***Damage Infernal Denizens:*** At rank 4, the *aura* gains the ability to inflict damage upon creatures of tainted or infernal origin, such as demons or evil spirits. Such beings automatically take d4w on each contact with the priest, and nothing can prevent or reduce this damage. At rank 8, this damage increases to d8w, and at rank 12 to d4m.

Blessing

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell gives indirect aid to the priest and any of his allies within 30 meters. All affected gain a –1 step bonus to their action checks and +1 to all resistance modifiers for the remainder of the scene. Believers recognize the touch of the divine in this spell, but others do not recognize that anything out of the ordinary is going on.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 4, the effect increases to a –2 step bonus and +2 to resistance modifiers. At rank 8, the spell's area of effect increases to a 100-meter radius. At rank 12, the spell affects all allies within the hero's line of sight.

Cure

Transform spell: 2 FX points
This spell channels holy power into the target, healing wounds and (at higher ranks) curing diseases or afflictions.

With an Ordinary success, the hero can heal 4 stun, 2 wound, or 1 mortal or fatigue point. A Good success doubles these numbers, while an Amazing success doubles them again (to 16, 8, or 4). In any case, excess cured points from one durability category can not be transferred to another type of damage.

▶ ***Cure Diseases:*** At rank 6, the hero can *cure* diseases or other physical afflictions. The result of the skill check indicates the amount of improvement in the target: An Ordinary result improves the target individual's condition by one level (for instance, from Extremely Ill to Ill), a Good result improves it by two levels, and an Amazing result improves it by three levels (i.e., from Terminally Ill to Healthy). This effect cannot be used on a particular individual more than once unless the individual's condition worsens (for instance, if a diseased individual's condition is improved from Extremely Ill to Ill but later worsens again to Extremely Ill, the spell may be used again) or the individual is suffering from a different disease or affliction. If the target individual suffers from an affliction that does not fit into the disease categories established *in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide,* the Gamemaster should adjudicate the effects as he sees fit.

Demon Ward

Conjure spell: 1 FX point
This spell protects all within 5 meters of the caster from the presence of demons, diabolists, and hostile spirits (such as ghosts). Once the ward is created, any such being must make a Resolve—*physical resolve* skill check (with a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty based on the success of the *demon ward* skill check) to pass into the affected area (a Critical Failure on the target's check means the being flees for 2d4 rounds). Any such creature within the ward suffers a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (again, based on the success of the initial *demon ward* skill check) to all actions. The ward lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the check.

⊗ ***Increased Area:*** At rank 4, the radius of the warded area increases to 10 meters. The radius increases to 20 meters at rank 8 and 30 meters at rank 12.

Exorcism

Transform spell: 2 FX points
This spell involves a long, complex process that can banish demons and evil spirits from the physical world or otherwise rid a host of a possessing foreign presence. The ritual must be conducted near the location or person to be exorcised and requires great faith, several ritual objects, and dedicated chanting or prayer. The creature being exorcised can resist this process with physical or magical action, such as attempting to flee, attacking the exorcist, specifically resisting the attempt, or threatening to destroy its host.

The *exorcism* requires a complex skill check based on the nature of the target. A least demon requires 3 successes, a lesser demon, spirit, or psionic possession requires 6, and a greater demon or Voodoo loa demands 9. The hero may make one roll per round. The target's Will resistance modifier applies to the *exorcism* skill check. If the target specifically resists the exorcism (and attempts no other actions during the ritual), it may make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check each round (with the exorcist's Will resistance modifier applied), the result of which is applied to the hero's *exorcism* skill check (+1, +2, or +3 step penalty for Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result).

If the *exorcism* skill check succeeds, the being is banished from its host or location and sent back to its home dimension (or its own body, in the case of a psionic possessor).

⊗ ***Increased Efficacy:*** At rank 4, the hero receives a –1 step bonus to *exorcism* skill checks. This improves to a –2 step bonus at rank 8 and a –3 step bonus at rank 12.

Guidance

Augur spell: 1 FX point
With this spell, the priest prays for advice on a particular problem or course of action currently facing the heroes, such as "Should we pursue the strange hermit into the foothills?" or "Can I trust this government agent?" The priest is answered with a feeling or sense of rightness or wrongness about the possible actions. A Good success give more precise answers to similar choices, and an Amazing success may point out an alternative the character had not considered.

Signs and Portents

Transform spell: 2 FX points
This spell causes obvious signs of the divine to manifest in the area around the priest. Trees and flowers bloom in the heart of winter or from dead wood, fierce animals lie down at the priest's feet, lights shine in the skies, levitations occur, and the like.

The hero can choose to make the manifestations visible to any or all within 30 meters of him. The effects last for the duration of the scene.

Signs and portents can never be used as an attack, but the effects can grant up to a –3 to –5 step bonus to various Personality-based skill checks depending on the nature of the manifestations. For instance, clouds obscuring the sun and rolls of thunder would grant the hero a bonus to Interaction–*intimidate* skill checks, while flowers blooming at the hero's feet might give a bonus to Interaction–*charm* or Leadership–*inspire* skill checks.

⊗ ***Increased Area of Effect:*** At rank 4, the effects of *signs and portents* can extend up to (or be visible to anyone within) 100 meters. At rank 8, the range increases to 10 kilometers and at rank 12, to 1,000 kilometers.

Vision

Augur spell: 2 FX points
Visions are signs from the divine, often enigmatic or symbolic but leaving no question as to their truth or origin. The priest may pray for a *vision* when he needs strong guidance on a particular issue. If the priest's faith is particularly strong or weak, the Gamemaster may give bonuses or penalties to the check (or simply declare the attempt a Failure for the weakest supplicants).

On an Ordinary success, the priest sees some existing object or person in a new way. The subject of the *vision* is recognized as an object of spiritual significance or as an omen of good or evil. For example, a priest serving as part of a combat unit questions whether he should continue to support the unit commander, who has been making erratic decisions. His prayer for a *vision* is answered when the commander pauses as he steps over a hill, his head surrounded by the fiery halo of the setting sun.

On a Good success, the priest has a miraculous *vision* that somehow relates to his question and cannot be mistaken for anything mundane. The priest in the previous example might see a *vision* of the commander dressed in white with a religious icon upraised in one hand, leading the unit out of darkness. Only the priest perceives the *vision*, of course.

If the check is an Amazing success *and* the Gamemaster believes that the priest has been exemplary in his or her faith, he is granted a direct or indirect visitation. A heavenly messenger comes to the priest either during waking hours or in a dream to pass along a simple message related to the problem under consideration. Though the intent is much clearer than that of an omen or a symbolic *vision*, the heavenly messenger is just as invisible to unbelievers as any other form of *vision*. The priest in the foregoing example might have a dream of an angel telling him that the commander is tortured by memories of bad decisions but will make the right choice when he is most needed by the forces of Heaven.

Shamanism

The shaman is a holy man, a guide and adviser to a tribe gifted with the ability to send his consciousness into the spirit world at will and interact with the creatures there. This ability to accomplish what most can only do accidentally in dreams gives the shaman strength in the spirit world, allowing him to rouse the spirits of the dead, see the future, and enlist the aid of animal spirits. Shamanism is normally restricted to human tribes that have retained their ancient beliefs in the face of encroaching technology and new belief systems. The Native American liplit (known colloquially as a medicine man), the kahuna of Hawaii, and the shamans of Siberia all practice this sort of Faith FX. Note that such a believer need not reject the modern world; as long as he maintains his faith in the ancient ways, he may take up any career that suits him.

Most Shamanistic magic does not occur instantaneously. The shaman typically must first enter a *trance*, which allows him to shift his mind into the spirit world. Entering a trance always re-

quires a complex Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check; the intensity of the trance (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing as indicated in the description of the spell) dictates the number of successes required. The shaman may make one roll at the beginning of each round of the trance. Rituals such as drumming and chanting give the shaman a –1 step bonus, and other methods of entering an altered state of consciousness (such as certain drugs or hypnosis) can grant another –1 step bonus.

Once in a trance state, the shaman may perform the spell. Trying to cast a spell before reaching the necessary level of trance inflicts a +1 step penalty to the skill check for each trance success required by the spell but not achieved (so a spell requiring 4 successes suffers a +2 step penalty if the shaman tries to cast it after making only 2 successes).

While entering or in the trance, the shaman becomes somewhat disconnected from the real world and suffers a +1 step penalty on all actions not directly related to maintaining the trance or using Shamanistic magic. The shaman may pull himself from a trance simply by taking an action to do so; otherwise, he remains in touch with the spirit world, even if wounded.

Note that any spell that requires an Amazing trance (8 or more successes) has a risk of delaying the shaman in the spirit world. Whenever such a trance is successfully achieved but the skill check for the spell results in a Critical Failure, the shaman's spirit has lost touch with the real world and must wander the spirit world until he finds a way back. While the shaman is in this state, his body remains unconscious (as if he had run out of stun points).

Finding the path out of the spirit world requires a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check, which can be made once per hour. Success means the shaman returns to the material world. Failure means the loss of 1 fatigue point (which cannot be regained until the shaman's spirit returns to the material world), and the shaman continues to wander. A Critical Failure indicates a loss of 2 fatigue points, and a +2 step penalty is applied to future attempts to return.

If the shaman loses all his fatigue points while his spirit wanders, his spirit loses all connection with his body. The spirit persists for a number of days equal to the shaman's Will, after which it fades forever, leaving the shaman's body in a vegetative coma. The wayward spirit can be found and reunited with its body by another shaman (or by a psionically endowed individual with the ESP–*sensitivity* rank benefit of channeling) as long as it is returned before it fades completely. The searching shaman makes a Resolve–*mental resolve* check (or a *sensitivity* skill check for a psionic hero), modified by the *opposite* of the lost spirit's Will resistance modifier (i.e., a strong-willed spirit is easier to find); success indicates that the spirit reunites with its body.

Most of a shaman's spells are based on Will, as the shaman must push hesitant or restful spirits into action. A few use Personality, especially those that involve detailed communication with the spirits.

Animal Voice

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell allows the shaman to speak to animals by becoming attuned to an animal spirit. The shaman communicates through bestial sounds that make sense to animals, but which others interpret as nothing more than grunts, howls, or bird calls. The shaman can continue to communicate with animals as long as the trance is in effect and he spends 1 FX energy point every hour.

Animals perceive their surroundings differently than people do, and so they are often unable to provide more than general information to the shaman. Numbers, colors, and words are usually less important to an animal than location, smell, and whether a target is a threat or potential prey.

This spell requires a Marginal trance (2 successes).

⊗ ***Command:*** At rank 4, the shaman can make a minor request of the animal with which he is communicating, though the favor cannot put the animal at risk or take longer than 10 minutes to complete. At rank 8, the duration of the task can be up to 1 hour, and at rank 12 up to 4 hours.

Dreamwalking

Transform spell: 2 FX points
The *dreamwalking* spell gives the shaman the ability to send his consciousness outside his body and perceive distant events, seeing and hearing locations within 1 kilometer. The shaman may change the targeted location as often as every round, his dream-world "eye" moving at the speed of thought.

The spell lasts for 10 minutes and requires an Ordinary trance (4 successes).

⊗ ***Increased Range and Communication:*** At rank 4, the shaman can communicate simple concepts to any intelligent creature at the target location (as if using the Telepathy-*contact* psionic skill). At rank 8, the range increases to 5 kilometers, and moderate telepathic discussion is possible. At rank 12, the range becomes 10 kilometers, and the shaman can communicate as if he were present.

Ghost Dance

Summon spell: 2 FX points
The ghost dance summons protective spirits (animal spirits, ancestor spirits, or simply helpful spirits, depending upon the beliefs of the caster) to protect the shaman and tribe. These spirits are invisible but can hear the shaman speak and even interfere in the physical world. The caster (or one person chosen by the caster) has an additional +3 to his resistance modifier against all melee and ranged attacks, and all other creatures participating in the ritual gain an extra +2 resistance modifier to all ranged attacks and an extra +1 resistance modifier to all melee attacks.

This spell normally requires (and can affect no more than) a full dozen participants for a ritual dance that must continue throughout the casting of the spell. For every three dancers less than this number, apply a +1 step penalty to the skill check (to a maximum of +4 steps if the shaman completes the spell alone). The spell requires a Good trance (7 successes), and its effects last for 1 hour. If the spell fails, all participants take 1 point of fatigue damage.

⊗ ***Greater Effect:*** At rank 4, the shaman can affect up to fifty dancers participating in the ritual. This number increases to 250 at rank 12.

⊗ ***Increased Duration:*** At rank 8, the duration of the ghost dance increases to 4 hours.

Guide My Hand

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell calls upon an appropriate helpful spirit (ancestor, animal guide, or other suitable spirit) to lend the shaman its skill in combat. The shaman gains a –2 step bonus to his choice of one of the following skills: Melee Weapons–*blade* or *bludgeon*, Unarmed Combat–*brawl*, or Primitive Ranged Weapons–*bow* or *sling*.

This spell requires an Ordinary trance (3 successes) and lasts 1 hour.

Hunter's Stare

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell requires no trance, only a whispered word and an effort of will. With a successful skill check (modified by the target's Will resistance modifier), the shaman momentarily assumes the mind of a predator and is able to paralyze with fear a target up to 3 meters away. On an Ordinary success, the target loses its next action. On a Good success, the target is frozen for two actions, and on an Amazing success, the target is paralyzed with fright for three actions. In any case, the paralysis is broken if the victim is injured or treated in a way that would normally wake a sleeping person.

Spirit of the Beast

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell lets the shaman take on one of the qualities of a particular animal. The shaman actually gains 4 ranks (to a maximum of rank 12) in a specific specialty skill (including the broad skill, if he doesn't already possess it) for 1 full hour. Sample animals and the ability they grant include the following:

Ape	Athletics–*climb*
Crocodile	Stamina–*endurance*
Deer	Movement–*race*
Great Cat	Stealth–*sneak* or *shadow*
Mouse	Stealth–*hide*
Owl	Awareness–*perception*
Wolf	Investigate–*track*

This spell requires a Good trance (6 successes), although if an animal of the appropriate type is within 50 meters when the trance begins, the shaman only needs to achieve an Ordinary trance (3 successes).

Trance Visions

Augur spell: 1 FX point
This spell allows the shaman to gain a glimpse of the future, although this vision is altered by the perceptions of the spirits that bring it. The events, people, and locations in the vision are represented by allegorical, magical, or symbolic depictions that often have only vague similarity to their actual selves. How much information this passes to the shaman depends on his ability to interpret the descriptive vision the Gamemaster provides.

The degree of success determines how obvious the symbolic forms appear. For example, a tribal shaman considering a visit to the closest civilized law enforcement office to report poaching on his tribe's land may make an Ordinary success on the spell check. The shaman might receive a vision of a cave (the police station) guarded by two bears (officers lingering at the door); inside the cave is an owl at a crossroads (the duty sergeant), beyond which is a cage (the jail downstairs) and a great eagle soaring overhead, scanning the ground for prey (an officer already investigating the case). On a Good success, the vision could show more human parallels (a lodge instead of a cave, tribal warriors instead of animals). An Amazing success would provide an even clearer picture (the searching warrior pursues a man carrying a number of animal pelts).

This spell requires an Ordinary trance (3 successes). The duration of the spell is no more than 10 minutes (although a complex vision may seem to take longer than that).

Venom Spirit

Summon spell: 1 FX point
This spell allows the shaman to summon and direct leechlike spirit creatures to attack the life energy of an enemy. The casting of this spell requires a Good trance (5 successes), as well as the shaman's ingestion of a small amount of natural poison. This can be venom from an animal, an alkaloid toxin such as peyote, or a very small dose of the amnita, or "death angel," mushroom. The shaman must make a Constitution feat check with a –2 step bonus to continue the spell; failure indicates the trance is broken and the spell cannot be attempted without entering a new trance.

If the spell check is successful, the target takes 1 point of fatigue damage at once. Every 4 hours, the target must make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check to avoid losing an additional fatigue point (if the result of this check is Amazing, the target takes no further damage from this casting of the spell). These fatigue points cannot be recovered while the spell is in effect. When all fatigue points are lost, the victim falls into a coma (treat as Terminally Ill). It is possible for this spell to be used multiple times on the same target; each venom spirit attacking the character has its own sequence of causing fatigue damage.

A shaman can remove the venom spirits attacking a victim by entering a Good trance (5 successes) and making a successful *venom spirit* check, penalized by the number of fatigue points the target has suffered (the spirits grow stronger as they feed). Any success drives off the venom spirit, while a Critical Failure means the spirit instead attaches itself to the shaman as if a new *venom spirit* spell had been cast.

Voodoo

Voodoo is the Hollywood name of an African religion called *vodun* (the name can be traced to an African word for "spirit"). The practice of Voodoo revolves around possession of the living and the summoning and control of spirits. Unlike Shamanism, in which the spellcaster enters a trance and travels to the spirit world, Voodoo brings spirits from the spirit world to the physical world and bribes or forces them into action. The Voodoo priest (called a *houngan* for men, a *mambo* for women), uses the power of the spirits and those who believe in them to heal, make prophecies, and even create a spirit-controlled slave called a *zombi*. Most Voodoo priests work to bring good fortune and healing; the ones who practice black magic are called *caplatas*. Learning to contact this world of spirits is an art lost to most of the Westernized, indus-

trialized world, but believers still teach the craft in Ghana, Haiti, and parts of Brazil.

A Voodoo priest summons spirits called *loa* (singular and plural). Most forms of Voodoo organize the loa in a hierarchy, somewhat like the saints of the Catholic Church. However, the loa are much more concerned with everyday matters—and have a distinct fondness for material things. The origin of these spirits is unknown; some have parallels to Christian saints, and others appear to be of darker origin, but the believers of Voodoo claim that the loa are neither good nor evil, but rather individual spirits with multiple aspects.

Performing a Voodoo spell requires a *ceremony* in which the houngan calls to the appropriate spirits and offers them sacrifices such as rum, food, cigarettes, and other everyday items. Each loa has its own preferences, and some difficult spells require the sacrifice of an animal (usually a chicken or goat). The required length of each ceremony is noted in the spell's description. A group of at least six worshipers assisting in the ceremony gives a –1 step bonus to the spell's check, as does an animal sacrifice when one is not required.

Critical Failure results when casting a Voodoo spell indicate that the summoned spirit becomes displeased and attempts to possess the priest. To avoid this possession, the houngan or mambo must offer a service to placate it and make a successful Interaction–*charm* skill check. Appropriate services include building a new shrine, making an elaborate feast, or something else particularly desirable to that loa. If the priest's offering is acceptable and he or she succeeds on the *charm* skill check, the loa returns to its own realm once the offering is complete. Until that time, the loa remains nearby and makes an annoyance of itself, applying a +1 step penalty to the priest's actions.

If the offering is unacceptable or if the priest fails the Interaction–*charm* check, the loa possesses or "rides" its summoner for several days, pretending to be the summoner but displaying its natural personality through its actions (lustful, wrathful, or mischievous). This possession lasts a number of days equal to 20 minus the priest's Personality, or until it is driven out magically (such as by *exorcism*). If the Interaction–*charm* check was a Critical Failure, the ride lasts twice as long and the houngan's or mambo's personality is permanently altered to resemble that of the loa (displaying such inclinations as a craving for rum, a tendency toward flirtatiousness, or an obsession with funerals).

Voodoo spells rely on Will or Personality.

Famous Voodoo Practitioners

By far, the most famous of Haiti's Voodoo practitioners was François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, a small man with a commanding presence. Born in 1907, he attended the University of Haiti's school of medicine and then worked as a hospital staff physician. Duvalier's political career began in 1946, when he was appointed the director-general of the National Health Service. By 1957, he had been elected president of the island nation, a position he held for the remainder of his life. When elected, he was supported by the United States and other governments, who believed he was a simple country doctor with good intentions. In fact, his reign became a dictatorial rule of terror, based on Voodoo principles and frequently employing ritual hexes and curses against his enemies. Papa Doc himself believed his patron was Baron Samedi, loa of graveyards, death, and powerful hexes. He died of cancer on April 21, 1971, and was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude, who became known as "Baby Doc."

In the United States, the most famous Voodoo practitioner was probably New Orleans' Marie Laveau (born in 1796 in either the French Quarter or on Hispaniola—accounts vary). By means of her magic, she quickly rose through the ranks of New Orleans society. One of her most famous feats, influencing a murder trial to provide a "not guilty" verdict, even won her a house on Rue St. Anne from the accused man's grateful father. Stories of orgiastic festivals, the cooking of orphans or abandoned children, and other foul practices were common during her lifetime, but never proven; they may merely have been the result of jealousy at the success of a mixed-race African-American woman in white society.

Marie Laveau died in 1881, long after being deposed as Voodoo Queen. She left behind fifteen children and dozens of grandchildren. By the present day, her descendants number in the thousands. Many of the family in New Orleans and elsewhere now manifest Arcane Magic or Faith FX. The direct scions of Marie Laveau's daughter—also named Marie and also a Voodoo mambo—are said to be the most powerful practitioners of the Art in the South.

Ayza's Juju

Conjure spell: 2 FX points
This spell invokes the watchful eye of Ayza, a protector loa. At any time during the spell's effect, the houngan may choose to have Ayza intervene in his favor; this does not count as an action by the hero. This intervention ends the spell immediately and acts exactly like a last resort point being spent by the hero.

The ceremony for this spell takes 1 minute, requiring only sugar candy and rum.

The spell lasts for 10 minutes for every degree of success of the spell check. This spell may only be cast upon the Voodoo priest, and only one casting can be in effect at any time.

Erzuli's Fetish

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell creates a link between a Voodoo doll and a victim. Casting this spell requires hair, nail clippings, or an item taken from the victim to provide the magical link to the doll. Putting the fetish together and reciting the proper appeals to the spirits takes about 2 hours, after which the victim can be attacked through the doll at any time with only a simple ceremony (1 phase).

The houngan may choose from three different effects when casting the spell: pain, paralysis, or illness. The pain effect grants a –2 step bonus to the *Erzuli's fetish* skill check and causes the target to suffer a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (based on the success of the *fetish* skill check) to all actions for 1 hour. The paralysis effect renders the target immobile for 24 hours. Choosing the illness effect inflicts a +2 step penalty to the *fetish* skill check, but if successful it immediately causes illness in the target

(see "Disease" in *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). This effect lasts until the target recovers completely or until the houngan ends the spell. Multiple effects cannot be used on the same target at the same time.

Whatever the effect chosen, the victim receives an immediate Resolve–*physical resolve* skill check (with a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty, based on the success of the *fetish* skill check) to avoid the effect. An Amazing result on the *physical resolve* skill check renders the target immune to further uses of *fetish* by that particular houngan.

Another houngan can lift the *fetish* spell effect by making a successful Voodoo–*gris-gris* skill check (see below), penalized by one step for every degree of success of the original *fetish* check.

Appropriate sacrifices for this spell include strong drink and tobacco.

Alternatively, the houngan can prepare a fetish doll without the personal attunement. He can then spend an FX point to use the fetish on any person within 30 meters, causing momentary pain or a twitch in a limb; this gives the targeted person a +2 step penalty on his next action. The fetish can be used multiple times, targeting the same or a different person each time, each use requiring an action (and the spending of an FX point) by the priest. The effect is not cumulative (the houngan cannot "build up" a penalty on the target beyond +2).

Gris-Gris

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell (pronounced "gree gree") is a mixture of positive white magic and negative black magic that may be used for benign or malevolent purposes, either warding off hostile magic or affecting the victim with a powerful hex. It is usually made in the form of a bag of powders, herbs, and rare materials; the recipes for the ingredients are closely guarded by the houngan, but commonly include cayenne pepper, human hair, powdered brick, dried blood, John-the-Conqueror root, and alligator scales. Creating the bag and completing the ceremony requires 30 minutes, after which it begins to work immediately upon meeting the conditions noted below. Note that the houngan can prepare the bag in advance of casting the spell; in this case, only a single round of ceremony is required to activate the bag's powers. A houngan can have no more than one prepared *gris-gris* bag per skill rank.

A positive *gris-gris* provides a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (depending upon the degree of success in enchanting it) to harmful magical or psionic attacks made against anyone wearing it. A negative one inflicts a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to the target's actions; the victim must be within 5 meters of the bag at some point every day for it to function or must have touched it in the past.

If at any time a target realizes he has been struck by a negative *gris-gris*, he may make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check to end it. Of course, any penalty inflicted by the *gris-gris* applies to the *mental resolve* skill check. Also, another houngan can cast a positive *gris-gris* to reverse the effects; apply a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (per the result of the original *gris-gris* skill check) to the second *gris-gris* skill check. Otherwise, the *gris-gris* lasts a number of days equal to the houngan's *gris-gris* skill rank. Sacrifices for this spell usually involve food and alcohol.

The priest can also make lesser forms of the *gris-gris* (with a –1 step bonus to the skill check), A lesser helpful charm is called a *juju*, a lesser harmful one is a *mojo*. A *juju* grants its bonus only against a certain type of magic or psionics (such as charms or mind reading), while a *mojo* inflicts its penalty only against those skills associated with a single ability (for instance, all Strength-related skills). These lesser forms require a ceremony of only a single round but last a maximum of 1 hour per skill rank.

No single target can be affected by more than one *gris-gris* (including *jujus* and *mojos*) of the same type—positive or negative—at any one time. This spell can also be used to lift the effects of an *Erzuli's fetish* spell (see above).

Helpful Possession

Summon spell: 1 FX point
This spell calls a helpful loa to possess a willing follower and grant that person additional powers for the duration of the spell. The houngan summons a spirit relevant to the task at hand (combat, thievery, or other proficiency) and grants that spirit residence in a willing host body within 30 meters (typically a believer in Voodoo, but sometimes the houngan volunteers his own body). Summoning the spirit requires a 1-minute ceremony. This ceremony can be rushed if necessary (to a minimum of 1 round); each round subtracted from the ceremony inflicts a +1 step penalty on the skill check.

Once summoned, the loa automatically enters the body of its host. The result of the *helpful possession* skill check indicates the number of steps of bonus granted to the target (–1, –2, or –3 step bonus). These steps may then be divided among as many specialty skills as the host desires; this must be done as soon as the skill check is made. This spell lasts for 24 hours.

A person can be a host to more than one loa at a time, but each additional spirit beyond the first gives a +1 step penalty to the summoning rolls.

⊗ ***Increased Effect:*** At rank 4, an additional step of bonus is granted on any successful *helpful possession* skill check. At rank 8, this increases to 2 additional steps of bonus, and at rank 12 to 3 additional steps of bonus.

Legba Rides

Augur spell: 1 FX point
This spell asks Legba, the loa of the crossroads between the spirit world and the real world, to possess the houngan and answer his questions. Legba answers one, three, or five questions, depending upon the degree of success of the skill check; his answers take the form of a short sentence (no more than ten words). Legba is a helpful but busy spirit; his answers are terse and to the point.

Legba's preferred sacrifice is food hung in a sacred tree. Rum, fresh chicken blood, or sweets are also pleasing to him and give a –1 step bonus to the spell if combined with the regular sacrifice. The ceremony for this spell takes 10 minutes to complete.

Loa of Healing

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell summons Ogou Balanio, a loa of healing, to possess the houngan and cure injuries. The ceremony lasts 1 minute (5 rounds) and involves food, rum, and burning herbs, after which the spirit enters the body of the priest and begins to heal the target. The loa works slowly, restoring only 1 durability point per round. It always begins with whatever mortal damage the victim has suffered and moves on to wound damage when that has been healed. The loa does not cure stun or fatigue damage.

This healing physically taxes the houngan, whose body is used by the spirit to channel the restorative energy. The houngan takes 2 points of stun damage for every mortal point cured and 1 point of stun damage for every wound point cured. The spirit can heal multiple targets as long as the host has stun points remaining. If the houngan runs out of stun points, he collapses and the loa returns to the spirit world. The houngan suffers 1 fatigue point of damage when the spell ends. The spell can be cast in advance of use, but the loa departs if the houngan does not begin healing a target within 1 minute.

Negate the Spirit

Transform spell: 2 FX points
This spell suppresses the victim's spirit, making him or her into a mindless slave called a zombi. The preparations for the spell include making a zombi potion (requiring 1 hour), which must be fed to the victim for the spell to work. The victim is forced to drink the potion, and then ritually or literally buried for at least 8 hours. The potential zombi falls into a comatose state and can be dug up after the next sunrise.

The skill check for this spell is modified by the victim's Will resistance modifier, species (attempts against nonhuman beings suffer a +2 step penalty), and religion (believers in Voodoo grant a –2 step bonus). On an Ordinary or better success, the victim becomes a zombi from that time forward, unquestioningly following the commands of its master.

On a Marginal success, the victim is temporarily poisoned but will eventually recover; a Stamina–*endurance* check determines the length of the effect (1, 4, 12, or 24 hours for an Amazing, Good, Ordinary, or Marginal success). A victim who rolls a Critical Failure on this *endurance* check remains a zombi for a full week, then makes another check.

Note that Voodoo zombis are living beings under the control of another. Their bodies still require air and food and have no supernatural resistance to damage (although they do not react to painful stimuli).

Spells that drive away possessing spirits (such as *exorcism*) can effectively return zombi victims to normal, although their memories during their altered state will be few and confusing.

A houngan can have a number of zombis under his control equal to twice his skill rank.

The Great Loa

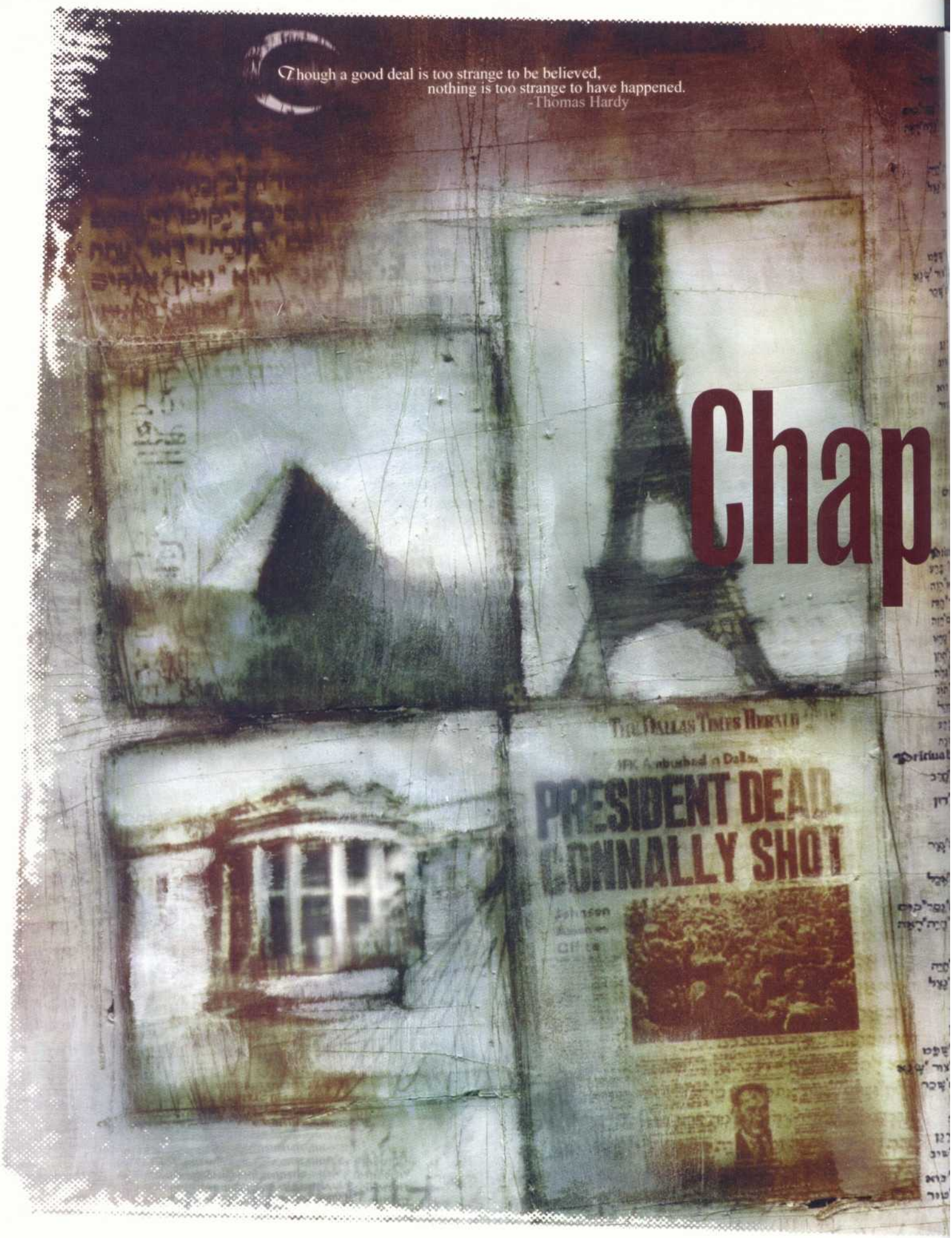
Voodoo distinguishes many spirits worthy of worship, but a few stand out as among the greatest (and most popular). While each loa has an aspect that is helpful to humans, they are also easily slighted and may turn against a houngan or mambo without warning. While only a few major loa are described briefly here, there are many others, such as Brigitte-La-Croix, loa of wealth; Damballah the snake loa; and Papa Zaca, loa of agriculture.

Baron Samedi, the loa of death, is a fearful spirit that no one dares to insult by ignoring. He is the chief of an entire order of Guedes, spirits who live in cemeteries. He wears a top hat and sunglasses and smokes a cigar. His color is black, his symbol is the cross, and his preferred sacrifice is a black goat. A gluttonous trickster, when Baron Samedi rides a follower the loa uses the possessed body to make rude gestures, curse, and demand food, cigars, and strong drink. His holy day is April 24.

The goddess of love, romance, and dreams (as well as jealousy, discord, and vengeance), Erzuli is the embodiment of the feminine. She enjoys champagne, sweet cakes, perfume, makeup, and even jewelry; she also loves giving or receiving gifts. Her colors are pink and blue, and her favorite sacrifice is a white dove. She always wears three wedding rings to show her allegiance to three husbands (Ogoun, Damballah, and Agoue), but in Christian churches she is always associated with the Virgin Mary. Anyone ridden by Erzuli begins by dancing and flirting, but ends in weeping for lost loves and unrealized dreams.

Legba, the loa of the crossroads, is always the first to be summoned in any ceremony of spiritual possession; he opens the gates between the real world and the spirit world. His role is to remain at the intersection of the two. He appears as an old, crippled man who uses a cane. Like Samedi, his sign is the cross and his color is black, but he prefers sacrifices of food hung in a straw sack in a sacred tree.

Very much a male loa, Ogoun is the loa of war, signifying strength and power. Bearing a sword symbol and favoring the color red, Ogoun is associated with lightning, fire, and metal. Also identified with St. Jacques, Ogoun is usually depicted in a military uniform and riding a horse; when he appears, he often bears the national flag and the national anthem plays. He drinks rum and prefers red roosters as sacrifices. When a Catholic saint must stand in Ogoun's place, St. George is usually called in as understudy.


Though a good deal is too strange to be believed,
nothing is too strange to have happened.
-Thomas Hardy
Chap
PRESIDENT DEAD
CONNALLY SHOT

COMPREHENDING THE WORLD OF DARK•MATTER HINGES ON UNDERstanding that all things—no matter how seemingly unrelated—are connected. Furthermore, the screen of everyday life masks the real shapes of power and the true nature of important events from the unsuspecting mass of humanity. Deep in the shadows, alien creatures, powerful conspiracies, and forces from beyond Earth constantly work to take and hold power.

Overview

In cosmology and particle physics, "dark matter" is a technical term that refers to a class of particles we cannot detect. The mass of these invisible particles keeps the universe from expanding into infinity. In other words, dark matter literally holds the universe together.

Chapter 5 history of the world

In the DARK•MATTER campaign, the presence of these particles also has a distinct effect on living beings. During periods of high dark matter—called Dark Tides—concentrated quantities of the strange substance pass through star systems, disrupting basic physical laws. Some species undergo significant physical alterations as their normal mutation rates increase exponentially. In addition, dark matter dramatically enhances the powers of the mind (psionics) in some species. At particularly high levels of concentration, dark matter even makes the impossible possible, and events consigned to legend become real. Miracles occur with greater frequency, strange beings from other worlds step through interdimensional doorways, and sorcerers wield magical abilities beyond scientific understanding.

The latest Dark Tide is the defining event of the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. A wave of dark matter is crashing through our local stellar cluster, irrevocably changing lives and altering the course of history. But this isn't the first time that dark matter has impacted human civilization. As this chapter explains, the Dark Tide has visited Earth before. In particular, the third millennium B.C. and Europe's Dark Ages mark two additional "high tide" points. But since most records from these times have been lost or simply disregarded, the human race has not yet become aware that the world underwent dramatic changes during those periods.

This time, however, the strange visitors arriving in the vanguard of the tide face serious opposition. Humanity has developed a global culture and powerful technology. Stalwart allies—both earthly and otherwise—stand at our side, prepared to help us survive. But this tide threatens to crest higher than ever before. Only time—and the actions of a few brave individuals—will tell whether humanity will stand or be washed away.

Ancient History

The strange happenings of the present are rooted in the past—often in those very periods about which information is murky at best. Powerful (often global) conspiracies fought secret wars that stretched, in many cases, over centuries or even millennia. Some conflicts date back to a time before recorded history, when aliens interacted with—and some say shaped—human civilization.

The following summary is necessarily expurgated and compressed, but more complete descriptions of these events are available to researchers of Top Secret clearance or higher through the Hoffmann Institute archives located in Philadelphia. That organization still investigates (and sometimes actively opposes) several of the forces described in this history. Just as important, researchers connected with the Hoffmann Institute are constructing a more accurate account of historical events, drawing on records of both humans and other species.

The First Strangers

Sometime around 10,500 B.C., the first known Strangers (a collective term for any visitors who arrive via the Dark Tide) set foot on Earth. Dark matter concentrations in central and northern Africa created a number of interdimensional doorways, allowing the reptilian bipeds called *kinori* to step through from another world. Kinori legends are unclear as to whether these particular beings were colonists or refugees.

When they arrived, Earth was in the grip of an ice age. During this period (approximately 15,000 to 7000 B.C.), a kilometers-deep coating of ice covered Europe and North America, and the planet's weather patterns were far different from those we know today. However, the kinori found the warm lands of North Africa to their liking, and their civilization flourished, spreading across the northern half of the continent.

At the same time, humanity was beginning to make its mark on the world, building great temples and monuments. In these early days, humans and kinori coexisted peacefully and interacted only rarely, as both races had plenty of room for expansion. One notable exception occurred soon after the kinori arrived, when they engaged in many battles with the Qadans—a relatively advanced civilization that flourished in the upper Nile region—before peace was declared. Some kinori even taught the arcane art of alchemy (Hermetic magic) to scholars and rulers and instructed them in some of the secrets of dark matter, including the concept of doorways.

The Arrival of the Greys

Around 6000 B.C., a massive starship arrived in our solar system bearing thousands of members of a humanoid alien race. Humanity later came to know these beings as the Greys. Why they came to Earth is still a mystery; the Greys have always been remarkably silent about their homeworld and origins.

After two centuries of observation, the Greys made the decision to land on Earth. Drawn by a flux of energy, the aliens concentrated their attention on the volcanic island now known as Thera, where some humans had established a surprisingly advanced civilization. The culture of this island nation, which the in-

habitants called Atlantis, appeared much more sophisticated than any other culture on Earth at the time. Indeed, the Atlanteans had already crossed the Atlantic Ocean, settling in Central America, where they built the city of Lubaantun in about 7500 B.C.

It was not the culture that had drawn the Greys' attention, however. On Thera stood a set of huge, greenish stones arranged in an unusual pattern. These stones resembled machinery more than sculpture, and upon investigation, the aliens discovered that they were indeed part of some mechanism, the likes of which they had never seen anywhere else. (It did, however, bear some resemblance to stonework later seen in photographs of Mars.) Intrigued, the Greys tried to discover the secrets of this strange technology, but it proved remarkably resistant to dissection and analysis. Obviously the stones were not of human creation.

The Theran device lacked an apparent power source and did not seem to be operational. Since it was clear that its builders had long since disappeared, the Greys decided that the stones were abandoned, unused and perhaps even unusable.

The Rise of Atlantis

Though they presented a united front to humanity, in fact there were three major factions of Greys aboard the city-ship, each of which favored a different approach to interaction with humans. The conservative (and majority) *Ahotti* faction preferred a cautious approach, doling out advanced technology slowly over time. The *Iltan* Greys pushed for an aggressive plan of open interaction and technological grants to the Atlanteans. The *Ziljir*, little more than a fringe splinter group, initially sided with the Ahotti's plan. Indeed, for over five thousand years, this course of action proved effective in improving human understanding of science and scholarship.

The humans and aliens lived in peace on the island for many years, during which the humans benefited greatly from the Greys' technology and knowledge. Soon the Atlanteans began to interact with the growing Egyptian civilization, bringing advanced scientific disciplines and technology to northern Africa. The Greys hoped that this infusion of scientific knowledge might discourage the Egyptians from continuing their pursuit of Arcane Magic, which most Greys did not understand, and thus distrusted or even feared.

The Atlanteans founded colonies in Africa so that they could live among the Egyptians and help them progress. The first of these was the colony of Seyne, an astronomical observatory near the island of Elephantine, which now lies beneath the waters of the Aswan Dam in Egypt. The

Dark Matter Timeline

In this timeline, the Gamemaster will find relationships between important events, topics for further research, and numerous adventure hooks. Though many of the events on the timeline are not described elsewhere in this book, a Gamemaster can find out more about them through the bibliography at the end of the book and Internet research—or she can make it up herself. The timeline was created through consultation of many different sources, but particularly Neal Wilgus's excellent book, *The Illuminoids*.

28,000,000 B.C. Recent epoch of geology begins.

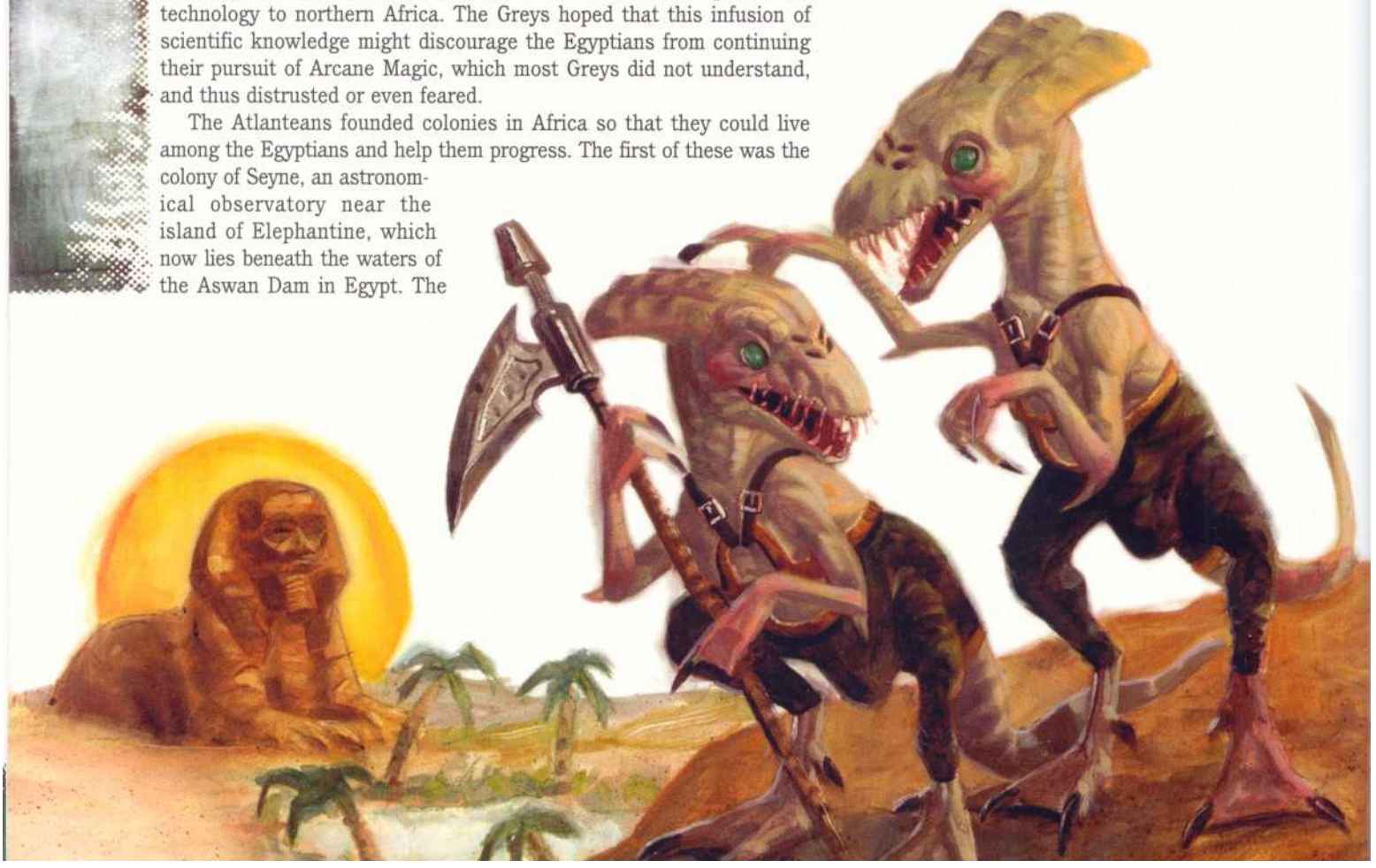
28,000 Neanderthals become extinct.

15,000 Most recent Ice Age begins.

10,000 Unknown builders construct Tiahuanaco (in modern-day Bolivia).

10,000–9000 Qadan culture flourishes in upper Nile region; they practice advanced agriculture and ritual burial.

10,500 Kinori arrive on Earth through doorways in North Africa, immediately encounter Qadan civilization. Many battles occur before peace is declared. Qadan agricultural progress slows. Tiahuanacan civilization falls.



10,000 Approximate beginning of widespread agriculture. Estimated date of inscriptions on stone disks attributed to the Dropa tribe, a diminutive people of the Bayan-Kara-Ula Mountains on the border of China and Tibet; disks describe how the tribe came to Earth in flying machines; ancient Dropa graves contain human remains with huge heads and small bodies. Earliest estimated creation date of the Mitchell-Hedges crystal skull "found" at Lubaantun in the Yucatan. Hyborian Age in Europe. Earliest suspected construction date of the Sphinx at Giza and Osireion Temple at Abydos.

7600 Ice Age retreats. North African crops fail as climate shifts. Proto-Atlanteans spread throughout Mediterranean and parts of Central America, settle island of Thera as capital.

7500 Lubaantun founded in Yucatan by Atlantean settlers.

6000 Greys arrive in solar system, begin observation of humanity.

5000 Grey city-ship lands on Thera. Greys begin interacting with Atlanteans, who in turn spread knowledge throughout region.

5000 Non-Atlanteans first develop an alphabet.

4000 Atlantean-fostered culture rises to new heights worldwide. Approximate date of discovery of metals, birth of sophisticated cities and trade, and first recording of constellations. Egyptians begin placing small pieces of crystal on the foreheads of deceased persons prior to mummification.

3119 Trephination (cutting a hole in the skull) practiced by people all over the world.

3100 Lubaantun abandoned. First Egyptian dynasty founded.

3000 Indus Valley civilization develops complex government, writing, and well-planned cities. Minoan civilization flourishes on Crete. Earliest parts of the Bible written. Beginning date of Olmec calendar in Central America.

2705 Warlike Strangers step through Theran doorway and are defeated by Grey/human alliance.

2650 First Egyptian pyramid built at Saqqara by kinori-trained sorcerer-architect Imhotep. Commonly accepted construction time of the Sphinx and Great Pyramids.

2150 Approximate date for the destruction of Thera/Atlantis. Greys retreat across Atlantic to Central America.

2000 Stonehenge and other stone circles built in England.

2000–1000 Legendary Thule civilization in the Gobi region supposedly destroyed by a catastrophe; survivors migrate to Agharti and Shambhala.

1800 Huge Silbury Mound constructed near Stonehenge.

1700 Babylonian Enuma Anu Enlil, early roots of astrology based on celestial phenomena.

1500 China unified under Shang dynasty.

1360 Akhenaton's monotheistic sun worship in Egypt.

1358 Olmec "sacred almanac" initiated on August 13.

1344 Tutankhamen (Akhenaton's successor who revived polytheism) buried at Thebes; curse reading "Death comes on swift wings to he who opens this tomb" written on tomb doorway.

encroachment of Atlanteans on the Egyptian civilization concerned the kinori, but the saurian leaders chose a path of peaceful observation, preferring to remain in hiding and keep contact to a minimum. Later events would prove this plan deleterious to their interests.

As the Atlantean civilization expanded, it spread to other portions of the world. Trade was widespread; ships frequently sailed between Africa and the Americas, and some evidence even points to contact with settlements in Antarctica. At some point around 3100 B.C., the Yucatan city of Lubaantun was abandoned; interestingly, this date coincides closely with the rise of the First Dynasty of the Egyptians.

In 2705 B.C., the mysterious Theran stones suddenly glowed. A series of devices somehow powered up, and a new group of aliens stepped through the doorway. The strange creatures were hostile, wielding fiery swords that blazed with the light of the sun. Though the invaders were few in number, the humans and the Greys, working jointly to defend their island, barely managed to defeat them. Fearing that the ill-equipped Atlanteans would be unprepared to deal with future attacks of this nature, the Iltan reignited the controversy of technological sharing with the humans. This time, the Ziljir faction threw its lot in with the Iltan, tipping the balance away from the Ahotti. Despite strong dissent from the Ahotti, the Greys began to grant even greater technological advances to the Atlanteans.

The kinori also reacted to this event. Reasoning that the opening of the Theran doorway was most likely tied to a rising Dark Tide, they instituted a long and complex building program designed to seal the existing doorways between this world and theirs. The reasoning behind this plan is unclear—perhaps the kinori feared pursuers from their own world—but the results were dramatic. In the case of the Two Kingdoms, the Egyptians buried the dark matter doorway under a great step pyramid at Saqqara, leaving future visitors who might use that doorway trapped inside a huge mound of stone. Later dynasties copied and improved upon these building techniques, but it is unlikely that these newer pyramids—including the Great Pyramids at Giza—served the same purpose. The kinori's precise plans for dealing with the other suspected African doorways is unknown, as are the results of any actions they took.

The First Conspiracy

Many humans, particularly the Egyptians and Mesoamericans, saw the Greys as gods. The aliens did not openly dispute this, entrusting the truth of their origins only to the elders of Atlantis, who would later take their secrets to a watery grave. Some of the aliens, particularly those of the Ziljir faction, even took advantage of their elevated status and reveled in the personal power it brought them.

The Greys of the Ahotti faction, however, continued to disagree with the actions of their people. They warned that humanity was not ready for the rapid technological advancement that their gifts and teachings had engendered. In addition, some Iltan also held different views on Arcane Magic, lacking the innate Grey bias against this practice. Eventually, these rogue Greys approached members of the Egyptian intellectual elite (including the kinori-taught sorcerers) and even made contact with the kinori themselves, who had largely retreated from human-controlled regions. Together, these disparate beings dedicated themselves to the continuing free trade of ideas and knowledge. For many years, this conspiracy between a select few members of Earth's three dominant species—humans, Greys, and kinori—remained hidden. Humankind would later come to know this group as the Companions of Horus.

Then, in 2150 B.C., disaster struck. The Greys had built a machine called a telluric generator on Thera, perhaps to seal the doorway that had opened in 2705 B.C. The device's cataclysmic failure unleashed the

pure power of the volcano, and the resulting explosion shattered Thera into three smaller islands, scattering ashes and stone over 200,000 square kilometers. Not much survived on these daughter islands—the eruption killed livestock, poisoned the soil, and ruined crops standing in the fields. In addition, accompanying earthquakes raised tidal waves 90 meters high, washing away all coastal towns within 150 kilometers and destroying the hard-won human gains on the north coast of Crete. Only the city-ship's durable construction saved the Greys from total disaster, though the damage would take decades to repair fully.

No one knows for certain who or what caused the disaster. Many Greys (particularly those of the Ahotti faction) blame the Egyptians or the kinori, believing that the arcanists felt threatened by the encroachment of Grey technology and sabotaged the generator. Still others suspect that Atlantean tampering with the standing stones triggered the explosion, or that the Ziljir, perhaps in conjunction with extradimensional beings later dubbed "demons," sought to lessen human reliance on technology. One of the more intriguing (and unverifiable) theories holds that the catastrophe was an Ahotti plot to weaken the Iltan's political power while at the same time painting the kinori and their allies as the enemies of humanity.

Regardless of the cause, the effects on human civilization in the region were devastating. With Atlantis destroyed, the growing human empire in Egypt—which had become dependent on the Atlanteans' ability to manipulate the weather—suffered serious setbacks. The conditions in northern Africa slowly deteriorated until desert once again claimed the land. Civil wars were common over the next ninety years or so, until the Eleventh Dynasty king named Mentuhotep Nebhepetre reunited the land under his rule in 2040 B.C.

The Atlantean survivors didn't accept doom quietly. They had learned much from the aliens, and their Mindwalkers had grown capable in their own right. They struggled mightily to retain some of their high technology, to restore the arts they had learned and lost, and even to spread their knowledge beyond the Mediterranean basin. Some turned to magic as a potential replacement for their missing technology. However, as local concentrations of dark matter were declining during this period, even that desperate strategy proved untenable. Over time, the few remaining alien devices became worn and unworkable, and the fates themselves seemed to conspire against the Therans. Despite their best efforts, their civilization died.

The Alien Retreat

After the fall of Atlantis, the Greys retreated to their massive city-ship. Perhaps stunned by the failure of their efforts, they departed quickly, abandoning technological items that humans continued to use as long as they could: gravitic induction devices, astounding weapons, and even power cells for simple electrical networks. In time, though, each of these wonders ran out of power or simply fell apart. Many of them were buried with kings or other leaders; others were simply destroyed when they wore out. Traditional archaeologists have since recovered a few of these relics and, unable to see them as technological constructs, labeled them "ooparts" (out-of-place artifacts).

This period also marked a time of political upheaval among the Greys. With the catastrophic end of their interaction with the Atlanteans, the Iltan lost standing among their people, becoming second in power behind the conservative Ahotti (who remain in control of the Greys to this day). Never again would the Greys work so openly and aggressively to improve humanity.

The cataclysm also forced the kinori to retreat farther from human civilization, as most humans believed them responsible for the fall of Atlantis. Those kinori who had been working closely with humans lost their influence as new, more militant factions took control of the saurian

1300–1224 Rule of Rameses II, pharaoh of Egypt during the Jewish Exodus.

1200 Height of Olmec culture.

1184 End of the Trojan War; Ilium falls to the Greeks.

1000 Huge sacrificial table built at Mystery Hill near North Salem, New Hampshire.

950 Approximate construction date of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, traditional origin of the Masonic fraternity; alleged assassination of Temple master mason Hiram for refusing to reveal Masonic secrets.

900 Approximate time settlers from Europe and the Middle East established colonies in North America.

753 Legendary founding of Rome by Romulus.

700 Jordanian city of Petra carved out of sandstone by unknown culture.

600 Approximate beginning of money with first coins in Lydia.

600–500 Time of Buddha, Lao Tse, Confucius, Zarathustra, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Zachariah, and Daniel: an Illuminated century.

586 Temple of Solomon destroyed.

575 Nebuchadnezzar completes Tower of Babel in Babylon.

450 Development of the twelve constellations of the zodiac in Mesopotamia, recognizing the importance of the plane of the ecliptic through which the Sun, Moon, and planets move.

400 Druids active in England. Astrological ideas from Enuma Anu Enlil transmitted to India.

355 Plato's "Timaios" and "Kritias," earliest accounts of Atlantis.

332 Last native Egyptian dynasty falls; Ptolemaic dynasty founded. Companions of Horus flee to Himalayas.

323 Death of Alexander the Great.

300 Invention of Mayan calendar in Yucatan, based on advanced astronomy.

270–232 Rule of Asoka, king of India who allegedly founded the Nine Unknown.

250 Kinori settle in India.

250–224 Parthians construct liquid electrolyte batteries for an unknown purpose.

100 The Great Teacher of the Essenes. Essentials of modern astrology devised.

47 Much of the Library of Alexandria destroyed.

44 Assassination of Julius Caesar.

30 Last Greco-Egyptian dynasty falls; Egypt becomes province of Roman Empire.

4 Birth of Jesus of Nazareth, accompanied by various "high strangeness" trappings: three early Men In Black disguised

as the Wise Men, strange lights in the sky, miracles such as visits from angels, prophecy, and suspension of time reported.

0 Carnation-Painted Eyebrows Society, Copper Horses, Iron Shins, and other secret societies active in China.

A.D. 30 Assassination of the radical Jesus, more "high strangeness" trappings: an eclipse, an earthquake, visitors from the sky roll away the stone from the sepulcher and liberate the crucified Jesus.

100 Hero of Alexandria devises primitive steam engine.

125–150 Simon Magus, Menander, Valentinus, and others develop Gnostic religious doctrines of esoteric knowledge (illumination).

125 Approximate date Ptolemy records 1,022 stars in "Almagest"; also recorded astrological ideas from Enuma Anu Enlil in his "Apotelesmatika."

150 Roman Mithraism competes with Christianity. Yellow Turban Society subdues northern China; Triad cult formed in opposition.

200 First book of the Kabbalah, *Sepher Yetzirah*, compiled.

202 China reunified under the Han Dynasty.

216–276 Life of Mani the Illuminator, who founded Manicheism based on ideas from Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, and other religions.

272 Remainder of the Library of Alexandria destroyed.

325 Council of Nicaea in which Christianity begins to codify its doctrines.

400 Estimated carving date of stone statues found on Easter Island.

428–488 Kukulcan travels throughout Mesoamerica.

455 Vandals sack Rome.

500 Chinese first use gunpowder.

570–632 Life of Muhammad, founder of Islam.

672–735 Life of the Venerable Bede, the greatest scholar of Saxon England, whose *Ecclesiastical History of England* (published in 731) contained many occult and unexplained occurrences.

c.700 Teotihuacan destroyed.

700 Sufi mysticism begins.

772 Charlemagne allegedly establishes Holy Secret Tribunal, which becomes the Holy Vehm.

900 Beginning of the Bogomils of Bulgaria, a Manicheian sect, roots of Cathari. Kinori spread throughout southeast Asia.

999–1003 Life of Pope Sylvester II, who allegedly visited the Nine Unknown in India.

1000 Spread of Cathari Manicheism throughout Europe. Leif Eriksson explores North America.

people. Several small skirmishes occurred, conflicts escalated, and the kinori eventually turned from peaceful neighbors to bloodthirsty enemies of the humans. The Companions of Horus, once allies of the kinori, had no choice but to become the secret protectors of the humans in Egypt. Over time and in secret, they helped the people rebuild their nation, destroyed kinori mummies, and routed bands of the reptilian predators that haunted the Nile. Tales of the lizard folk gradually grew into the worship of Seth and Sebek, dark gods among the Egyptians.

During this time, rogue Greys (likely of the Ziljir faction) were active as well, working against the Companions from the shadows. It appears that they collaborated with the kinori, teaching the saurians certain aspects of alien technology in exchange for the secrets of mummy manufacture and other dark arts. Perhaps these rogues wished to advance knowledge for all, or perhaps they simply worked for their own benefit, seeking to influence pharaohs, build their own wealth and comfort, and remain the unifying power behind entire dynasties. In the end the Companions left, traveling to the East.

Passing into Legend: The Silent Epochs

With the collapse of the world-spanning Atlantean civilization and the exodus of the Greys from the area, humanity gradually forgot the aliens, or at best remembered them only as changelings, gods, and demons. Mediterranean and European cultures made significant progress on their own from 2000 B.C. to A.D. 500. As the Dark Tide receded, the Egyptians kept their high culture alive and continued the building program the kinori had begun long ago, constructing more pyramids at Giza and elsewhere (though these new sites had nothing to do with doorways).

Elsewhere, tribes of people influenced by the sophisticated Atlantean culture flourished, free of alien influence. In Britain, one such tribe finished the Stonehenge structure (which closely resembled the standing stones of Thera) that the Atlanteans had begun there long ago. Dedicating it to the memory of those lost days of prosperity, the Britons used Stonehenge as a temple for many years. On the continent, similar tributes and monuments arose as the locals attempted to reestablish their connection with the lost continent.

As time passed, so too did the memory of Atlantis. A sophisticated society eventually grew in Greece, but its people barely recalled those earlier times. Rome rose and fell, China unified, and the great world religions sprang up—all with little or no influence from the Greys or other Strangers. Technology advanced slowly, with occasional setbacks and dead ends, but knowledge grew and spread from place to place.

Of course, adversity still lurked in a world that remained largely unconquered. Indeed, many vast stretches of land on Earth were still free of human influence. Other species appeared among humans from time to time, inspiring legends of vampires, angels, demons, and other supernatural creatures. In most cases, these species were unable to establish any permanent presence, perhaps because humans actively tried to root them out.

Fragmentary records from this period mention not only the significant Grey presence in Central America (see "Mesoamerica: A New Canvas"), but also some new Grey colonies in the more thinly settled regions of the Earth: Australia, certain Pacific islands, and even portions of the high Tibetan plateau. In many cases, these sites seem to have had negative influences on nearby human populations. This is not to say that the Greys were hostile; humans may have tampered with dangerous alien technology or encountered Strangers from other worlds. Likewise, historians cannot definitively ascribe certain volcanic or meteoric events near Grey settlements to alien actions. The truth remains hidden from everyone but the Greys themselves, and they refuse to discuss their "past failures" with present-day acquaintances.

Mesoamerica: A New Canvas

The collapse of the world's oldest civilization didn't entirely end alien intervention in human culture. The Greys simply became more circumspect in their interference. Moving across the Atlantic in their city-ship, they founded a new home in Central America, though its precise location is unknown today. The Greys had observed this region before, but it now became the center of their attention.

A few of the human successor cultures that arose in the following centuries—the Olmecs, Mayans, and Aztecs—kept devices, fragmentary stories, and other traces of the technology that the Greys had brought with them to Earth. However, the humans lacked the knowledge required to keep these machines operational. The Incas, on the other hand, copied the metallic machines in stone form and used them as ritual objects. Eventually the alien relics of the Aztecs were sacrificed to the greed of Spanish conquistadors, who melted down the machines and icons for the precious metals they contained (such as the gold and silver used in wiring) and sent them back to Madrid in the form of ingots.

As was often the case, a few individual Greys had a great deal of influence on humanity during this time. In particular, an alien emissary known as a nameless feathered serpent to the Olmecs, as Kukulcan to the Mayans, as Quetzalcoatl to the Aztecs, and as Viracocha to the Incas served as a great disseminator of knowledge. This mythic figure (or figures, as the time involved suggests multiple individuals) seems to have mentored humanity through the rise and fall of several cultures.

Olmecs

The Olmec civilization arose during the second millennium B.C., reaching its height around 1200 B.C. Like the Egyptians, the Olmecs commanded a large agricultural base that depended on flooding controlled by a sophisticated system of levees. However, the Greys apparently did not gift the Olmecs with any of the technology they had granted to the Atlanteans. Historians agree that the growing power of the Ahotti faction probably had a strong influence on the Greys' decision to establish a less intrusive presence here than they did in Atlantis.

Telluric Generators

Several species from beyond the veil have attempted to create (or close) doorways between dimensions artificially through such diverse methods as mental powers, diabolic magic, and high-energy, reality-warping machinery. This last method requires a device capable of producing immense power—roughly equivalent to the current energy needs of North America for a year. To generate the necessary energy levels, the Greys designed a device known as the telluric generator.

The generator achieves its high power output by tapping into the geomagnetic forces of a planet's magnetic field and translating that power into electrical current. Enabling the device requires sinking a magma tap down through the planet's crust and raising a series of small antennae (about 20 meters high) perpendicular to the prevailing magnetic field. Most such generators can operate continuously; a few built with weaker alloys require daily power-downs to allow for a cooling cycle. All operate almost silently except for a thrumming vibration.

Obviously, telluric generators cannot be installed on spaceships or other mobile platforms. The moon, which lacks a sufficiently strong magnetic field, is also an unsuitable location.

1094–1124 Life of Hasan-e Sabbah, founder of the Assassins of Persia. Member of the Ismaili sect, Hasan seized fortress of Alamut in Daylam in 1090, split with Fatimid dynasty in 1094. Assassins flourished for next several centuries.

1050 Approximate date of founding of the Order of Hospitallers in Jerusalem.

1088 First Crusade.

1100 Approximate date Sufi Gilani founds Arabic school of illuminati, Kadiri Order of Sebil-el-ward, in Baghdad. Assassins infiltrate Thug cult of India. Bogomil leader Basil burned in Constantinople. Albigensian Cathari sect flourishes near Albi, France. Avengers and Beati Paoli active in Italy. Joachim of Floris founds primitive Christian sect, Illuminated Ones. Robin Hood active in England.

1110 Knights Templar founded in Palestine.

1140 Rapid growth of Cathari sect begins.

1170 Assassination of Thomas à Becket.

1178 English monks report seeing an explosion on the Moon.

1200–1300 House of Wisdom in Cairo, roots of the Afghan Roshaniya. Origin of the Mafia in Sicily.

1208 Albigensian Crusade begins suppression of Cathari heresy.

1212 The Children's Crusade. Genghis Khan invades China.

1231 Founding of the Inquisition to suppress Cathari and other heresies.

1244 Massacre of Cathari at Montsegur, France.

1250 Hulagu Khan defeats the Assassins.

1275 Assembly of traveling Mason guilds in Frankfurt. *Zohar*, second book of the Kabbalah, compiled by Moses de Leon in Spain.

1280 Roger Bacon, deviser of early eyeglasses, independently invents gunpowder.

1291 Hospitallers retreat to Cyprus.

1300 White Lotus Society founded in China. Inquisition begins suppression of witches and other pagan groups.

1307 Philip IV of France suppresses Knights Templar for witchcraft and heresies; de Molay imprisoned in the Temple in Paris.

1310 Hospitallers acquire the Isle of Rhodes.

1312 Knights Templar dissolved by papal decree.

1314 De Molay and others burned in Paris.

1300s Outbreak of bubonic plague (Black Death) in China.

1347 Black Death reaches Europe, supposedly via Italian trading vessels returning from China.

1360 Approximate date of the earliest known Satanic cults; black masses celebrated in France.

1370–1402 Alleged life of Christian Rosenkreuz, fictitious founder of Rosicrucianism.

1453 Constantinople falls to Mehmet II; renamed Istanbul.

1458 Abramelin's *Book of Sacred Magic* translated from Hebrew to French according to followers of the cult of the Guardian Angel.

1478 Spanish Inquisition begins.

1492 Rodrigo Borgia, head of the powerful Borgia family, becomes Pope Alexander VI. Columbus sails to North America.

1493–1541 Life of Paracelsus, possible founder of Rosicrucianism; discovers zinc around 1530; model of the Faust legend.

1500 Approximate founding date of Roshaiya, Illuminated Ones, in Afghanistan. Beginning of Alumbrados in Spain and Charcoal-Burners in Scotland. Cesare Borgia has his brother-in-law assassinated.

1500–1550 Height of Aztec culture.

1503–1566 Life of Nostradamus, visionary prophet.

1530 Hospitallers given Isle of Malta by Charles V, become Knights of Malta.

1532 Incan Empire falls to Pizarro; rulers flee to Machu Picchu.

1542 Roman Inquisition founded.

1575 Approximate founding date of British Intelligence services.

Relics from this time consist primarily of jade carvings and basalt monuments, such as the huge heads carved between 900 and 400 B.C. at La Venta (see *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*). Indeed, the Olmecs were the first culture to produce art in Mesoamerica. Much of this related to their kings and gods, particularly the primary Olmec deity known as the "werejaguar," who was represented over and over again in artwork of the period.

The Olmecs prized jade above all other stones, and some historians have suggested that their empire-building was largely a result of their continuous quests for this precious material. The Chinese also prized jade and even ascribed considerable arcane value to it. This cultural parallel may indicate that the Olmecs were sorcerers of no little ability, perhaps skilled in magic very like that used in ancient China. However, the Greys' stance against the arcane arts brings this hypothesis into serious question, and the coincidence may be just that—a coincidence.

The Olmec culture continued to flourish until about 400 B.C., when it went into a steep decline and never recovered. The reasons for its sudden demise are unclear; nothing so catastrophic as the destruction of Atlantis occurred as far as historians can determine. The Olmec culture died out sometime between 400 and 200 B.C.

Mayans

The Mayan civilization arose from the ashes of the Olmec culture and flourished from approximately 300 B.C. to A.D. 900, though the southern, highland Mayan culture collapsed somewhat earlier than its lowland cousin—around A.D. 800. Historians have dubbed the latter years of this period (from about A.D. 150 to 900) the "Classic period" of Mesoamerican civilizations. The linguistic and cultural ties between the Mayans and the Olmecs have led many to believe that the first Mayans were refugees from the older civilization.

The city of Tikal is probably the best known purely Mayan site. Chichen Itza was Toltec-Mayan; although it was founded under the



Mayans, it did not reach its ascendancy until well after that culture had fallen into decline. Regardless, filled as it was with temples, palaces, and plazas, the city of Teotihuacan (so named by the Aztecs, who came later) flourished as the region's cultural, religious, political, social, and economic center. (Some claim that Teotihuacan, with its pyramids of the Sun and Moon, dates back well before this period—perhaps as far back as 1000 or 1500 B.C.—but evidence is sketchy on this point.)

All the legends agree that a being known as Kukulcan traveled extensively in the region between the years A.D. 426 and 488, teaching astronomy, stonework, agriculture, and metalworking to scattered villagers. Perhaps this emissary had high ideals of progress and advancement, but once humans had mastered the agricultural and stoneworking arts, they quickly began to pursue their own interests.

The Fall of Teotihuacan

From A.D. 534 to 593, the Mayans built no new monuments, and Teotihuacan's influence over the region faltered. Its population dropped dramatically, and many other Mesoamerican cities were completely abandoned. Historians point to a climatic shift toward aridness, perhaps exacerbated by massive deforestation, as the probable cause. Then sometime between A.D. 650 and 700, a group of unknown invaders deliberately torched the city of Teotihuacan. With this loss, the unifying force of the region disappeared, and the days of great kingdoms gave way to an era of petty militarism. Never again would the cultures of this area attain such a high point.

But who was responsible for the fall of Teotihuacan? Was it the work of locals angered by the city's rulership of the region? Some stories from later years celebrated the event, claiming that the destruction of the city had "freed the people from the shackles of Teotihuacan." Perhaps one of the Grey factions, displeased with the course of Grey–human relations, orchestrated the destruction. Or it may have been the act of Strangers such as those who came through the ancient doorway at Thera, wielding weapons of destruction with a callous disregard for human civilization. The truth is lost in the depths of history.

Aztecs

The Aztec Empire existed from about A.D. 1325 to 1550 in the area that is now Mexico. According to both versions of their own origin story, the Aztecs burst onto the scene from elsewhere. In fulfillment of a prophecy, they founded their capital city Tenochtitlan (literally, the "place of the prickly-pear cactus") in 1325 on a site not far from the remains of the Mayan city they named Teotihuacan (meaning "place where gods are born").

The Aztecs had been notable mercenaries before this, and their experience with warfare enabled them to conquer their new neighbors almost immediately. Once they had established their empire, Aztec rulers began making annual pilgrimages to ruined Teotihuacan to pay homage to the older culture—but why? Perhaps Aztec legends hold the secret. According to these tales, the land was once a paradise—home to the gods and the ancestors of all humans. During this time, giants built Teotihuacan "to transform men into gods." The Toltecs (the Aztecs' name for their immediate predecessors in this region) then took up residence in that sacred city. These tales seem to be the foundation of the prophecy that helped the Aztecs decide where to found their capital.

Other Aztec stories asserted that the world had been created and destroyed four times, and that the fifth epoch (already in progress) was destined to come to an end on December 23, 2012, when a terrible earthquake would destroy humanity. The tales further insist that our present era exists only because the gods sacrificed themselves for hu-

1587 English colony established at Roanoke Island, Virginia; no trace of the "lost colony" found when supply ships return three years later.

1589 A Spanish soldier apparently teleports 14,500 kilometers from the Philippines to Mexico.

1597 Anonymous alchemist seeks to start Rosicrucianlike society in Europe.

1605 Rosicrucian constitution published.

1614 Publication of "Fama Fraternitatis," fictional story of Rosenkreuz by Johann Valentin Andrea.

1623 Posters appear in Paris warning that the Rosicrucians are "amongst you . . . visibly and invisibly."

1640 Beginning of subliminal persuasion when Rembrandt embeds the word "sex" in a painting.

1645–1715 "Little Ice Age" freezes much of Europe.

1646 Earliest known Masonic Lodge to allow nonprofessional or "free" Masons in Warrington, England.

1680 Madame Le Voisin, innovator of modern Satanism, executed in Paris.

1688 William III of Orange becomes king of England, allegedly through the plotting of the illuminati.

1692 Salem witch trials begin.

1694 Bank of England founded.

1701 Earliest record of "operative" or professional Masonic Lodge in Alnwick, England.

1717 Founding of modern Freemasonry with the establishment of the Grand Lodge of London by Desaguliers. Voltaire imprisoned in the Bastille.

1721 British King George I cracks down on the Hell Fire Clubs, popular Satanic cults.

1723 Anderson's "Constitutions of the Freemasons" published. "Ebrietatis Enconium" and other early anti-Masonic works published.

1724 Publication of the anti-Masonic "Grand Mysteries of the Freemasons Discovered."

1731 Benjamin Franklin initiated into Freemasonry.

1738 Death of the last leader of the Afghan Illuminated Ones.

1744 Grace Pett burns to death in her bed in a case of spontaneous human combustion.

1750 Hell Fire Clubs continue to flourish in Dublin and London.

1757 First year of Swedenborg's "New Era."

1768 Comte St.-Germain founds chemical dye factory in Holland, forerunner of I. G. Farben; disappears with 100,000 guilders. Franklin invents bifocals.

1791 St.-Germain discovered living in Russia. Chinese Emperor issues edict against secret societies.

1770 British Tea Tax on colonies leads to Boston Tea Party protest. Alleged meeting of Meyer Rothschild and others to plan a world revolution. Suppression of the Jesuits.

1774 First Continental Congress. Washington begins training troops. Louis XVI becomes king of France. Casanova becomes secret agent for the Inquisitors of Venice.

1775 Second Continental Congress authorizes naval warships, sets up secret committee to procure weapons, and names Washington commander-in-chief of the new American army.

1776 Illuminati founded by Adam Weishaupt. Jefferson writes American Declaration of Independence, which is adopted by the Continental Congress. Franklin becomes ambassador to France and affiliates himself with French Masonic lodges. Opening of Freemasons' Hall, permanent headquarters of English Masonry. Cagliostro (aka Joseph Basalmo) initiated into Masonry.

1777 Weishaupt joins Munich Lodge of the Order of Good Council. Articles of Confederation adopted by Continental Congress. Washington has mystical vision of the future of the United States while at Valley Forge.

1778 Franklin assists in initiation of Voltaire into Masonic Lodge of Paris. Masonic Convention in Lyons organizes Knights of Beneficence.

1780 Illuminati begins rapid growth. First use of the title Odd Fellows. Order of the Brotherhood of Asia (Rosicrucian offshoot) founded.

1782 Commissioning of the "Eye in the Pyramid" Great Seal; Illuminati dominate European Masonry. Casanova retires as secret agent.

1784 Bavarian Monarch Carl Theodore outlaws secret societies. Cagliostro moves to Lyons from Bordeaux to found the Mother Lodge of Egyptian Masonry. Alleged death of Comte St.-Germain.

1785 Weishaupt flees to Gotha; new edict outlaws Illuminati; lightning kills high-ranking Illuminatus Lanz and police find Illuminati papers on the body. Rosicrucian Order suppressed in Austria. Anonymous pamphlet appears in Germany revealing secrets of ancient Egyptian ceremonies.

1790 Wisdom Lodge founded in Virginia. Secret congress in Frankfurt where Illuminati condemn Louis XVI of France and Gustavus III of Sweden to death. State authorities confiscate Italian Illuminatus Buonarroti's library of Masonic and subversive books.

1791 The anonymous "Vie de Joseph Balsamo," first recorded link of the Illuminati and the French Revolution, appears in several European countries. First performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute,* which contains Masonic elements.

1793 Louis XVI imprisoned in the Templars' Temple tower. Catherine II outlaws Masonry in Russia. "Life of Joseph Balsamo" translated into English in Dublin.

1793 Year One of the French Republic; the year of the Terror. Louis XVI found guilty of conspiracy, condemned to death. French government kills thousands of its citizens.

1798 Illuminati scare in New England. Knights of Malta lose their island to Napoleon. Rosetta Stone found.

1800 Napoleon comes to power, allegedly through Illuminati manipulation.

manity's benefit during a great meeting at Teotihuacan sometime in the distant past.

Could these legends describe a time when the Greys and humans interacted? If the Greys helped build Teotihuacan, what alien influence inspired such tales of earthly creation and destruction? Could there be a link between these stories and the fall of that city? The Greys are silent on this matter. In any event, no definite evidence links the Greys to the Aztecs. This may explain why the latter were unable to stand against the Spaniards, whose horses, iron weapons, and superior armor brought them a quick triumph.

When Cortes arrived in 1519, two leaders descended from parallel royal lineages were ruling the Aztec Empire jointly. Montezuma (or more properly, Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin) was the "Speaker" (Tlatoani) who dealt strictly with the external relations of the city and empire. The "Female Serpent" (Cihuacoatl) directed internal city affairs. When Cortes eliminated the Tlatoani, resistance in the city actually increased due to the stronger control of the Cihuacoatl. In the end, even that wasn't enough, and the Aztec Empire fell to Spanish conquest.

One of the most interesting Aztec developments was a social group called the *pochteca*, which most conventional historians consider an economic institution. The pochteca was a hereditary guild of traveling merchants who often journeyed in disguise at night, ostensibly to avoid ambushes. But perhaps they traveled by night for another reason—they weren't human. It's impossible at this late date to determine who these merchants were, as almost no records of the period survive. It seems likely, however, that some of them worked with the Spanish conquerors. If this is the case, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*) may have records of them and their activities.

Incas

The Incan Empire arose very late in the pre-Columbian history of the Americas, in a location far from the Mesoamerican empires of the Mayans and the Aztecs. As far as anyone can tell, the Incan state existed between A.D. 1440 and 1530, and its administrative heart was the mountain city of Cuzco. Its height came in the second half of that period, between A.D. 1490 and 1530. The empire undertook huge construction projects involving stones weighing as much as 200 tons. In a few short years, the Incas built a huge kingdom spanning the length of the Andes—an empire of a glory not seen since in those high peaks. Indeed, the cities of Cuzco and Machu Picchu are remarkable achievements for any culture, much less one that lasted just a few generations. How did such a brief flash in the parade of world events create so many lasting structures? Incan legends offer one explanation: The cities they ruled had stood long before the first Incan emperor proclaimed himself the living embodiment of the sun god. Certainly this is true of Tiahuanaco (see *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*), which predates even the Greys' arrival on Earth. What nation—or race—raised these cities?

The Greys almost certainly had some impact on the Incan civilization. With their preference for thinner air than is found at sea level, it is reasonable to expect that they established at least one settlement (perhaps a station-ship) in the Andes. In addition, humans living in the region transmitted the legends of a Grey named Viracocha (literally, the "Foam of the Sea") to their descendants. Over time, the Viracocha legend grew, and his influence remained centuries after the departure of the Grey settlers. Viracocha preached against human sacrifice and taught the civilized arts of agriculture, metalworking, and architecture; he seems to have been one of the Iltan (or perhaps a Ziljir) who defied the Speaker of the Greys to train humans in the higher arts of civilization. It's unclear what ultimately happened to Viracocha. The legends claim that he "returned to his home beyond the sea," but that statement

could just as easily refer to his voluntary return to the Grey settlements as it could to an arrest and forced repatriation.

Incan society was unusual in other ways as well. The emperor ordered frequent rearrangements of the population to prevent the formation of revolutionary groups, yet the empire itself functioned as a form of primitive communistic society. The state provided all newlyweds a start on life. All citizens gave a third of their income or labor to the nation and a third to the gods, keeping only a third for themselves. All gold went to the emperor. Knotted cords called *quipu* preserved detailed information in their intricate patterns. Some Peruvians can still keep and interpret such records, but for the most part, the archives of the Incas are lost to modern investigators. Where did the quipu come from? Why did the elite of the empire need such meticulously kept records?

In the end, the Incas and all their knowledge vanished, and their links to the Greys disappeared with them. The conquistadors overran Peru in the early 1530s and looted its cities. Some of the golden treasures they took from the Incas may have been relics from an early era of contact with the relatively friendly and outgoing Greys of the Iltan faction, though by this point such artifacts were surely inoperable. The Spanish conquerors destroyed many of the Incan Empire's sacred writings in the invasion and took others back to the monasteries and priories of Spain. A select few, however, may have been spirited away.

Unfortunately for later generations of researchers and scholars, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory arrived not far behind the conquerors. Appearing on the scene in 1567, its members collected as many of the remaining documents as possible from the ashes of the empire and took them to the order's headquarters in Russia, where they presumably remain to this day.

The Fall and Rise of Europe

Despite its dislike by historians, many people use the term "Dark Ages" to describe the period of European history from A.D. 476 to about 1000. Though the name refers to the general decline of Western civilization, there was also a slow but steady rise in the level of dark matter throughout this period.

Led by the Pope, the Catholic Church spent these years shoring up its power, much of which it still wields today. Even under the looming, omnipresent influence of the Church, however, secret groups branded as heresies operated at the fringe of society. Chief among these was the Cathari Heresy. The Cathars were Gnostic Christians heavily influenced by Manicheism (a Persian religion founded in the third century A.D.). Their organization existed only in secret, but they managed to establish a fortresslike community in southern France.

Although occultism and black magic appeared to gain footholds during this period, these had been popular practices long before Christianity arose. The Church, however, brought these arcane activities to light and branded them forms of Satanism. Ironically, this epithet changed the focus of some occult groups, which added Christian lore to their own beliefs to strengthen them and gain new followers. In short, they became Satanists because the Church labeled them as such. Others, however, rejected that tactic and continued their own unique occult practices. Primary among these were the Kabbalists, and to a lesser extent the Druids and other, hidden cults. Still other groups did just the opposite, incorporating their own pagan or occult beliefs into Christianity. This gave rise to the followers of the Black Madonna (Isis as the Virgin Mary), the Green Man cults, hidden occult shrines within Christian churches, and other strange secrets. Reports of possession and demonic visitation became common in the Dark Ages. Sometimes these accounts were accurate, but more often they described alien and paranormal events for which no other explanations existed at the time.

1815 Formation of secret societies that eventually become the Decembrist Movement in Russian Masonic lodges.

1817 Suppression of the Lodge of Jupiter the Thunderer begins. Irish immigrants force entry into Tammany society, changing its direction.

1819 American Independent Order of Odd Fellows established. Founding of National Freemasonry, the most important of several Polish secret societies devoted to ousting the Russians from Poland.

1825 Decembrist movement suppressed in Russia after brief uprising. Founding of Vienna bank by Solomon Rothschild and Naples bank by Carl Rothschild.

1829 Anti-Masonic Party founded, first occurrence of a third party in America.

1830 Illuminati decide to unite atheists and nihilists into Communist movement at an alleged meeting in New York.

1830 Anti-Masonic conventions in Massachusetts and Vermont find evidence linking Masonry with Illuminism. Adam Weishaupt dies.

1831 Anti-Masonic Party runs William Wirt for president, assuring the reelection of Mason Andrew Jackson.

1834 Spanish Inquisition officially suppressed.

1844 A luminous body descends on a field near Koblenz, Germany, leaving behind a strange gray gelatinous mass.

1848 Fall of monarchy in France. Marx and Engels publish the *Communist Manifesto* (allegedly commissioned by the Illuminati) and travel in France and Germany, encouraging discontent with the Establishment. Spiritualism born in Wayne County, New York, when the teenaged Fox sisters communicate with poltergeists. Forteana: Moon turns "bloodred" during total eclipse; a great comet fails to return at the time predicted; visions and "phantom soldiers" seen in the skies of France and Scotland; Captain M'Quahae of H.M.S. *Daedalus* reports seeing a "huge, unknown creature" in the ocean.

1849–1850 Life of Sir Basil Zaharoff, "mystery man of Europe," who made a fortune as an armaments dealer and financier by selling weapons to both sides in World War I and other conflicts.

1850 Lightning strikes the ground in Kensington, New Hampshire, creating a 30-foot-deep well that fills with fresh water.

1868 The sun is blotted out in Brazil at noon, making the day so dark that stars can be seen in the sky.

1861 Confederate states secede and elect Jefferson Davis president; Judah Benjamin appointed Confederate Attorney General, later Secretary of War. American Civil War begins. Emancipation of serfs in Russia. Jacolliot writes about the Nine Unknown in Calcutta.

1865 Assassination of Lincoln; Andrew Johnson becomes president. "Booth" killed; coded message found among his effects; the code key later found in possession of Benjamin, alleged Rothschild agent. Civil War ends. Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery.

1866 Ku Klux Klan founded as a social club in Pulaski, Tennessee.

1867 Ku Klux Klan reorganized along political and racial lines near Nashville, Tennessee. A shower of sulfur and fire falls upon Thames Ditton, England.

1869 St.-Germain allegedly completes 85 years in the Himalayas after his "death."

1875 Madam Blavatsky founds Theosophy Society.

1875–1947 Life of Aleister Crowley, the Great Beast, Golden Dawn leader and occult figure.

1877 First of seven wills in which Cecil Rhodes leaves his money to establish a secret society to expand British rule throughout the world.

1878–1945 Life of Edgar Cayce, visionary and trance-channeler who spoke of reincarnation, Egyptian mysteries, and Atlantis.

1881 President James Garfield assassinated. Czar Alexander II assassinated by secret society.

1882 A huge chunk of ice falls upon Dubuque, Iowa; two frogs hop out of the ice as it melts.

1883 A giant, dinosaurlike saurian is killed in Bolivia.

1887 Golden Dawn founded in London by Mathers and others.

1888 Unsolved murders of London prostitutes by "Jack the Ripper," suspected of being a nobleman implicated in the Cleveland Street Affair, a scandal involving high-society Victorians who patronized a brothel staffed by messenger boys.

1889 Biologist Alexandre Yersin visits India, purportedly to receive plague and cholera serum from the Nine Unknown. Mannalike substance found on the ground in Turkey.

1891 Rhodes gains control of 90% of world's diamond supply; establishes Round Table Group. Rockefeller grant founds University of Chicago. Nikolai Tesla invents Tesla coil, becomes U.S. citizen. Astronomer Henry Hulbert observes a mysterious second shadow following behind Jupiter's moon Io (unexplained second shadow seen many times afterward).

1892 Rockefeller trust transferred to holding company: Standard Oil of New Jersey.

1896 Marconi's patent No. 7777 for radio. First "flap year" for UFOs: a wave of sightings of unidentified airships in the U.S.

1899 Tesla discovers terrestrial stationary waves that can produce electricity and reports receiving signals from another planet. Alleged meeting in England at which the Morgans, Rothschilds, and Warburgs become affiliated. Strange yellow worms found strewn across a glacier in Alaska. Billions of moths and flies invade Buenos Aires.

1899 Tesla suggests alien beings might be living "in the very midst of us." Approximate date that Adolf Lanz founds the Order of New Templars, a forerunner of the Nazi regime. One thousand die in a fire aboard a steamship near Manhattan.

1901 Assassination of President William McKinley. Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (Rockefeller University) founded in New York. Natives in Alaska repeatedly report the existence of a huge, skyborne city.

1903 "Protocols of Elders of Zion," alleged plan for Jewish world takeover, published in Russian newspaper; the document was later proven a forgery commissioned by the czar.

An Age of War

At the height of the medieval period, large conflicts loomed. Shortly after the Crusades, which lasted from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, came the Hundred Years War (from 1337 to 1453) and then the great wars of religion. Europe became known as a place where hundreds or even thousands could die in an afternoon of battle.

After reaching a relative high point near the turn of the millennium, dark matter levels began to drop during this period, and reports of strange occurrences decreased. The Church created a special tool for stamping out heretics such as the Cathars and Satanic occultists: the Inquisition. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX initiated the papal Inquisition in response to Cathari and other heresies. Later ecclesiastical tribunals included the Spanish Inquisition, authorized in 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV, which lasted until 1834. In 1542, Pope Paul III instituted the Office of Inquisition (also known as the Roman Inquisition or the Holy Office) in response to the rise of Protestantism.

The Black Death

After decimating India and China in the 1330s, the plague known as the Black Death began its sweep through Europe in 1347. Most scholars trace the spread of the contagion to Italian trading vessels returning from China. In fact, the disease may not have been of terrestrial origin at all.

In 1347, prelates of the Catholic Church found, opened, and walked through a doorway in the hinterland of the Black Sea. The monks quickly returned, discomfited by the strange greenish-yellow sky and the foul air of the abandoned world they found on the other side. Within weeks of this incident, Europe was caught in the relentless grip of the plague. Had the monks unwittingly opened a pathway for God's wrath? And if so, did some similar activity bring the plague to Asia? The resulting epidemic reduced Europe's population by a third, but any attempt Strangers might have made to capitalize on the chaos clearly failed.

The Black Death may also have alerted the Greys to the possibility that they themselves were vulnerable to contagion from alternate worlds. Perhaps with the aid of Grey intervention, medicine advanced by leaps and bounds after this time. Within a few hundred years, physicians developed the germ theory of disease, and medical science began winning more battles than it lost.

Enlightenment and Industrialization

The Age of Enlightenment led to a rise in philosophy and advanced thinking. European civilization no longer regarded every paranormal event with suspicion. Some Enlightenment-era humanists and scholars sought knowledge from classical sources, other traditions of learning, and several strains of mysticism. Their rational inquiries led them in some unorthodox directions and yielded a number of surprising finds. Later occult groups combined these discoveries with secrets taken from Masonry (and thus the Templars). Spearheaded by orders including the Theosophists, the Golden Dawn, and the Ordo Templi Orientis, occultism rose to a crescendo in the modern era.

In fact, many of the political and philosophical thinkers of the time were Masonic agents, put in place to create a Masonic state by swaying public opinion and manipulating events. This clearly figured into the origin of a new nation: the United States. Influenced by these Masonic agents, the British colonists in America revolted against the King of England, declaring their independence. The men who rose to lead the



rebels in the ensuing conflict—Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, Hancock, and many others—were all high-ranking Masons. After independence had been won, Freemasons designed the U.S. Capitol building and filled it with secret symbolism. The new nation's leaders adopted Masonry's eye-and-pyramid symbol as the Great Seal of the United States. (There are even rumors that George Washington was replaced by a striking lookalike—Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Masonic Illuminati—or that Washington had been an alternate identity of his in the first place.) Although Masonry's influence over American politics appeared to diminish in the years afterward, the infrastructure set in place early on has granted the organization a degree of control that remains even into the present day.

Soon after the American Revolution, Masonic manipulation spurred another uprising in France. However, it appears that the Rosicrucians (a more modern version of the Companions of Horus, an organization that dates back to ancient Egypt) were also involved in inciting that revolt. Some evidence exists that these "enlightened" organizations have been waging a clandestine war with monarchist groups that have existed since the time of the Merovingian Kings (a Frankish dynasty in power from the fifth century A.D. to A.D. 751), and that secret societies such as the Priory of Zion support the monarchists in that ongoing struggle. This covert war began before the revolutions in America and France, and it has continued ever since. However, this theory contradicts evidence indicating completely different interactions between these secret societies—for example, the Priory of Zion supporting the Templars, who in turn aided the Masons. For more information on these and other secret societies, see Chapter 6.

1904 Inexplicable darkness descends upon Wimbledon, England, for ten minutes on April 17.

1907 Financial panic and depression, allegedly caused by J. P. Morgan to gain support for the central bank concept.

1908 FBI established. Founding of the Armanen Initiates, another proto-Nazi secret society. Gigantic explosion over Tunguska.

1909 New Zealand man reports seeing a torpedolike UFO with visible occupants who shouted at him in an unknown tongue.

1911 Exploding hailstones fall in Columbia, Missouri.

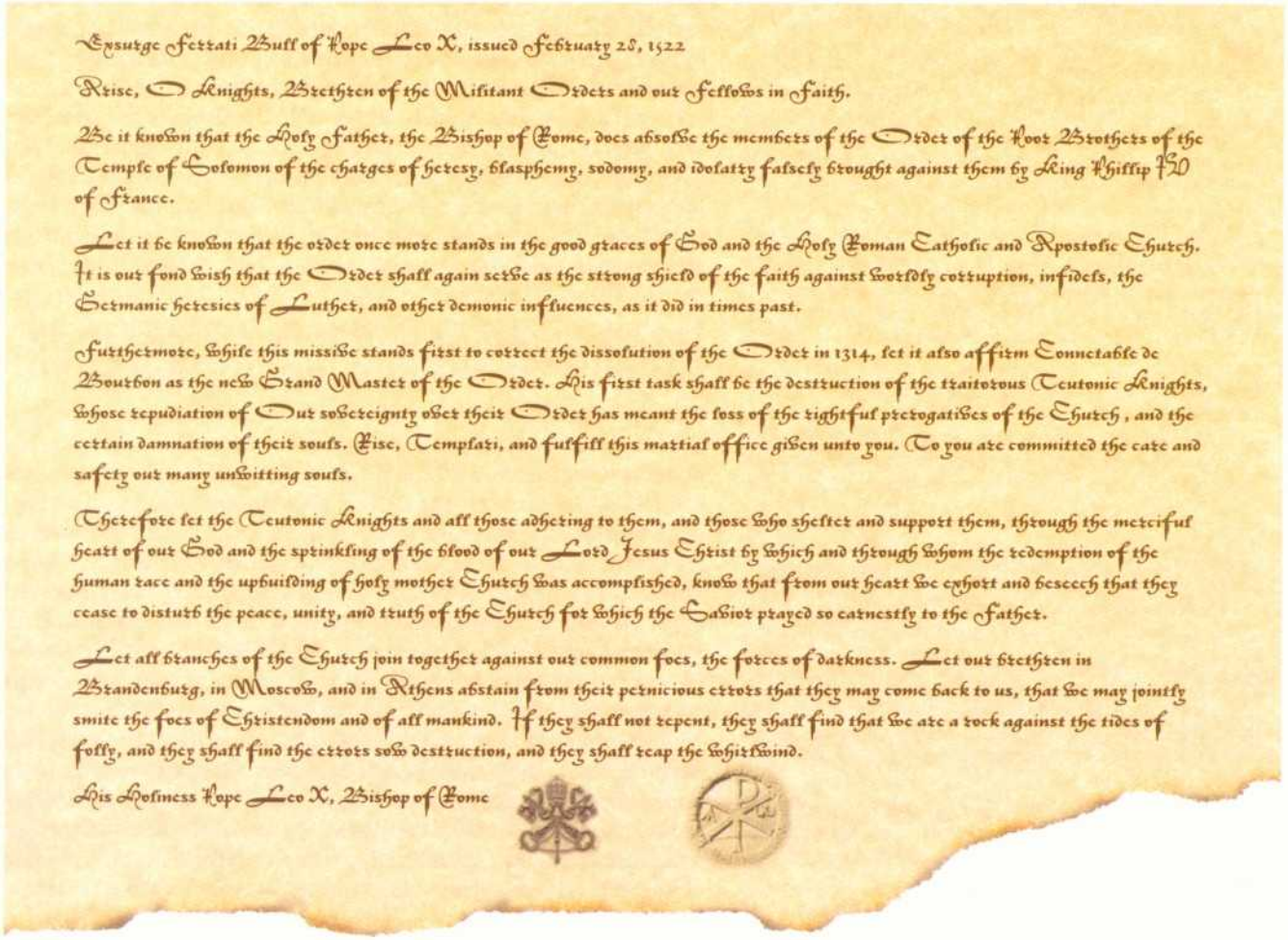
1913 An intensely black object, estimated to be 400 kilometers long and 80 kilometers wide, is seen upon the moon.

1913 Rockefeller Foundation founded.

1914 Attempted assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria by Masonic agents, followed an hour later by successful assassination; in Russia, Rasputin stabbed the same day but survives. World War I begins.

1915 Sinking of the *Lusitania* (allegedly carrying secret munitions for the Allies) by a German submarine; ship was supposedly sacrificed by British and American authorities to drum up war hysteria in U.S. Ku Klux Klan revived.

1916 Assassination of Rasputin.


Exsurge Ferrati Bull of Pope Leo X, issued February 28, 1522

Rise, O Knights, Brethren of the Militant Orders and our Fellows in Faith.

Be it known that the Holy Father, the Bishop of Rome, does absolve the members of the Order of the Poor Brothers of the Temple of Solomon of the charges of heresy, blasphemy, sodomy, and idolatry falsely brought against them by King Philip IV of France.

Let it be known that the order once more stands in the good graces of God and the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. It is our fond wish that the Order shall again serve as the strong shield of the faith against worldly corruption, infidels, the Germanic heresies of Luther, and other demonic influences, as it did in times past.

Furthermore, while this missive stands first to correct the dissolution of the Order in 1314, let it also affirm Connetable de Bourbon as the new Grand Master of the Order. His first task shall be the destruction of the traitorous Teutonic Knights, whose repudiation of Our sovereignty over their Order has meant the loss of the rightful prerogatives of the Church, and the certain damnation of their souls. Rise, Templari, and fulfill this martial office given unto you. To you are committed the care and safety our many unwitting souls.

Therefore let the Teutonic Knights and all those adhering to them, and those who shelter and support them, through the merciful heart of our God and the sprinkling of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ by which and through whom the redemption of the human race and the upbuilding of holy mother Church was accomplished, know that from our heart we exhort and beseech that they cease to disturb the peace, unity, and truth of the Church for which the Savior prayed so earnestly to the Father.

Let all branches of the Church join together against our common foes, the forces of darkness. Let our brethren in Brandenburg, in Moscow, and in Athens abstain from their pernicious errors that they may come back to us, that we may jointly smite the foes of Christendom and of all mankind. If they shall not repent, they shall find that we are a rock against the tides of folly, and they shall find the errors sow destruction, and they shall reap the whirlwind.

His Holiness Pope Leo X, Bishop of Rome

1917 United States enters World War I. Russian Revolution begins; Cheka, secret police of Bolsheviks, founded. The "Miracle of Fatima" occurs in Portugal, as the Virgin Mary appears and gives three prophesies (one of which is kept secret by the Vatican even today). Hoffmann Institute founded. Spanish Flu epidemic begins.

1918 Assassination of Russian Czar Nicholas II and his family. Attempted assassination of Lenin.

1919 Founding of Thule Society in Germany; Hitler recruited. League of Nations founded at Paris Peace Conference. Meeting at the Majestic Hotel, Paris, between Wilsonian intellectuals (Colonel House, John and Allen Dulles, etc.) and "like-minded Englishmen" to discuss forming an organization "for the study of international affairs." Royal Institute of International Affairs founded. Freud draws attention to Austrian neurologist Poetzl's experiments with the tachistroscope, an early device for studying subliminal perception. Charles Fort's *The Book of the Damned* published. Hitler joins the German Workers' Party.

1920 Development of modern advertising techniques emphasizing manipulation rather than information.

1921 Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) incorporated, founded by House, Dulles, and company with the help of the Round Table Group. Marconi states he believes mysterious V code on pre-WWI radio came from space. Tesla recalls seeing lights and vivid images when he was a boy. Hitler takes over the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Millions of tiny frogs suddenly appear in London.

1922 Mussolini, alleged British Intelligence agent, comes to power in Italy and begins an attempt to eliminate the Mafia in Sicily. King Tutankhamen's tomb opened in Egypt, thus invoking "King Tut's Curse"; fourteen violent deaths in as many years thereafter linked to the curse. Rocks fall from the sky for weeks in Chico, California.

1923 Founding of Hitler's National Socialist (Nazi) Party in Germany. International Police (Interpol) founded in Vienna. In the face of the Teapot Dome and other scandals, President Harding visits Alaska and receives a "long ciphered message" that visibly upsets him, causing him to ask what a president could do when friends betrayed him; he dies soon after among conflicting rumors about the cause of his death.

1924 J. Edgar Hoover takes over FBI. During the closest approach of Mars to Earth, radios around the world go off the air to allow interception of any possible messages from space; when translated onto photographic tape, signals received produced crudely drawn faces. Albert Ostman supposedly captured and held prisoner by four sasquatch in British Columbia.

1925 Lionel Curtis organizes the Institutes of Pacific Relations in at least ten countries for the Round Table Group. Edale, Derbyshire, England, terrorized by a werewolf.

1926 Percy Expedition disappears without a trace in Brazil. Lightning starts a tremendous and deadly fire in a U.S. naval ammunition dump in New Jersey.

1927 Rise of the CFR due to Rockefeller and other foundation funding. Crystal skull discovered in ruins of Lubaantun on Yucatan Peninsula.

1928 Nomination of Catholic Al Smith sparks last spurt of growth for the KKK. Soviet-produced film shows conditioned reflex experiments on humans.

1929 CFR moves to Harold Pratt Building on 68th Street. Great Depression begins.

A Rising Tide

With the growth of industry, individuals and small groups became powerful based on nothing more than the fortunes they earned. Industrialists wielded their new power like a weapon, forging their own secret societies and powerful dynasties (the Rothschilds, the Rhodeses, the Rockefellers, and others).

As communication improved and advanced, news of paranormal events begin to spread. Unusual astronomical and meteorological events, "airship" sightings, and ghost stories became more and more prevalent. People turned to religion and the occult looking for answers.

The truth was simple. Beginning around 1800 and continuing to the present day, the physical fabric of our solar system—indeed, of our arm of the galaxy—has been changing in a profound but subtle way. As the universe expanded along its normal pattern, our galaxy entered a region with a rich concentration of dark matter.

At first, the changes were barely detectable. Powers once consigned to legend manifested themselves, but only sporadically, and only for a few special people. Convincing anyone of their authenticity at the height of an age of reason and progress was a difficult task at best. Groups dedicated to fringe beliefs—such as the Spiritualists (who advised President Lincoln in the 1860s) and the Theosophists (occultists who revived theories of ancient Atlantis and the so-called Ascended Masters, foretelling great changes for humanity)—were among the first to figure out that something had changed. Some people who realized this, such as former Golden Dawn member Aleister Crowley and his followers, used their newfound power to influence events, both socially and politically, well into the early twentieth century. But these changes were small compared with what was to come.

The Strangers returned sporadically at first, as the dark matter doorways flickered back into life. Unable to reach through these portals with any frequency or reliability since the Dark Tide began to ebb nearly a thousand years earlier, the Strangers found their access growing easier as dark matter suffused the galaxy. The slow but continuous rise in dark matter over the past two centuries has resulted in a higher concentration of it today than ever before in recorded history. Now, no longer constrained by low background levels of dark matter, the Strangers can (and often do) pop through the doorways and rebuild their old territories almost at will.

Resembling aliens, monsters remembered from mythology, and creatures from humanity's darkest nightmares, the Strangers are an odd mix of the commonplace and the horrific. Few in number and cautious about attracting attention to themselves, they nevertheless have ambitious plans, ranging from the corruption of humanity to the establishment (or reestablishment) of a presence on Earth.

Their reappearance has not gone unnoticed. The crop circles they have made, the vessels a few of them have brought from their worlds, their bases in the desolate corners of the Earth, and their kidnapping and murdering of humans have attracted attention—both from those who explore the paranormal out of a sense of wonder and discovery and from those who seek to control it.

Tesla's Advanced Tech

In 1856, Nikolai Tesla—the eccentric genius who gave humanity the alternating current motor, logic gates, and many seminal works on electrical power—was born in the small village of Smildjan in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He attended Graz Polytechnic Institute and worked for a telegraph office to put himself through school. Upon graduation, he obtained employment with the Continental Edison Company in Paris. In 1882, he moved to the United States, settling on the East Coast and



Templars and Masons

During the Crusades, a secret society called the Priory of Zion created the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple, also known as the Templars. This monastic military order came forward at the end of the First Crusade, ostensibly to protect pilgrims traveling the route from Europe to the recently captured city of Jerusalem. Its members also guarded the secrets held within the Holy City and temple.

Within two centuries, the Templars had become powerful enough to defy all but the papal throne. Feared as warriors and respected for their piety and position, the Knights Templar were undeniably key players in Europe at the time. As a result of their vast wealth, the Templars essentially invented banking as we know it. Although the Church forbade usury, the Templars were able to skirt the issue and finance anyone they wished—even kings.

The clandestine meetings and rituals of the Templars would eventually cause their downfall, however. Philip the Fair, King of France, used the secrecy of the order to destroy it. (Perhaps he felt threatened by the knights' power and immunity, but no one can speak with certainty about his motivations.) On October 13, 1307, King Philip had all the Templars arrested on the grounds of heresy, since this was the only charge that would allow him to seize their money and assets. Under torture, the knights eventually confessed to acts such as trampling and spitting on the cross, homosexuality, and worshiping a diabolical entity known as Baphomet.

Once Philip had successfully stripped the Templars of their power and wealth, he urged his fellow Christian leaders to do the same. The last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake on March 19, 1314. As the fire claimed him, de Molay is said to have cursed King Philip and Pope Clement by asking both men to join him within a year. Clement died only one month later, and Philip IV seven months after that.

As a secret society, however, the greatest legacy of the Knights Templar may have been their influence on others and the lore that they passed on. While in the Middle East, the Templars came into contact with both Arabic learning and secret societies (such as the Assassins). This knowledge changed them, and the knights carried these secrets with them when they returned home to Europe. In southern France they intermingled with the Cathars, exchanging information and possibly occult secrets. After they were decimated in France, the surviving knights took shelter elsewhere. The Montesa, for instance, was a new order of knights created as a refuge for ex-Templars in Spain. In Portugal they became the Knights of Christ, an exploring maritime order that lasted until the sixteenth century and included such luminaries as Vasco da Gama and Prince Henry the Navigator; indeed, Columbus himself sailed under the red Templar cross of the Knights of Christ. Those in Scotland communicated their secrets to the Freemasons there, imparting their own legacies and agendas before they supposedly died out in the late 1600s or early 1700s. The Templar secrets made the Scottish Masonic Lodge one of the most powerful and influential of the time.

What were the Templar secrets? Reports vary, but it seems likely that they included powerful magical rituals, alien artifacts, knowledge regarding the nature of Christ, the secrets of God, the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, the secret locations of vast treasure hoards, obscure ancient histories, and fundamental knowledge regarding the nature of humanity. Whatever the truth, the knowledge led to an increase in the power of the Freemasons as a whole, and especially to the growth of a small secret society within the order dedicated to the Inner Doctrine (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

1929 Pavlov applies knowledge of conditioned reflex to human psychosis. Hoffmann Institute destroys kinori nest under Manhattan. Pluto discovered.

1930s Mafia becomes integral part of U.S. organized crime. Continuing political assassinations accompany Nazi rise to power. Dozens die and hundreds are stricken by a poisonous fog in Belgium.

1931 Series of haunting events in a remote farmhouse in Cashen's Gap on the Isle of Man includes ghostly singing, moving objects, and—most important—a talking mongoose. Foundation of the Fortean Society in New York.

1932 Fort dies after publishing his last book, *Wild Talents*.

1933 FDR orders use of the Great Seal of the U.S. on the reverse side of the dollar bill.

1934 Beginning of Hitler's Black Order. Unexplained "ghostflier" broadcasts in Sweden.

1935 Assassination of Senator Huey Long. First lobotomy performed by Egas Moniz in Lisbon.

1936 Beginning of Moscow Purge trials; numerous Communist leaders brainwashed into false confessions and then executed.

1937 Spanish Civil War begins. First of forty-eight "Lost Colony" stones found in North Carolina; stones supposedly tell the story of lost Roanoke Island colony. Aviator Amelia Earhart Putnam disappears.

1938 Assassination of Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son; first assassination attempt against Trotsky. Nazi invasion of Austria. Interpol exiled—or taken over by Nazis. German expedition to Antarctica stakes out 600,000 square kilometers, lands near the South Pole. Electroshock treatment discovered. Orson Welles's dramatization of H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* scares American radio listeners.

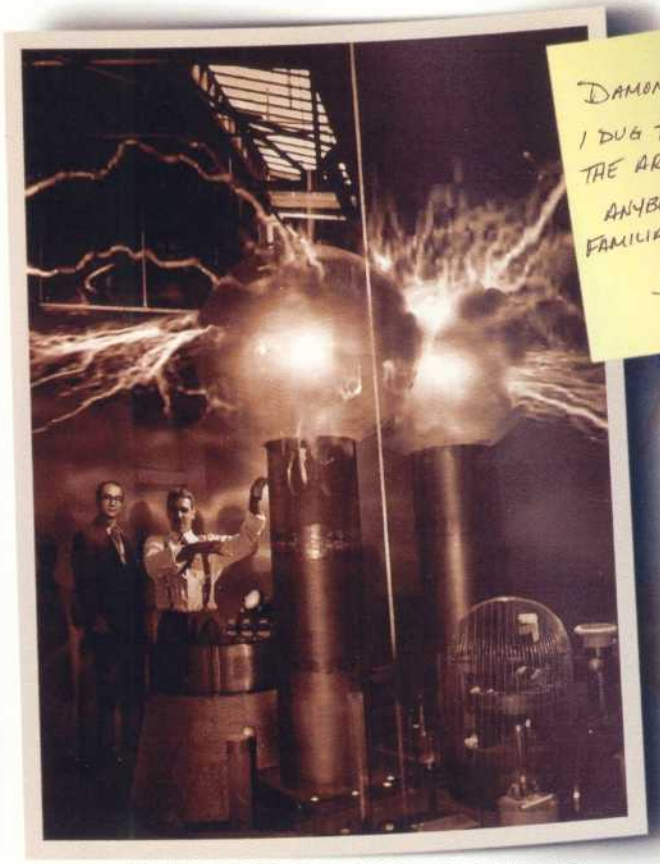
1939 Attorney Leon Cooke, friend of Jack Ruby and financial secretary of Ruby's union, killed by union president Jack Martin; union subsequently taken over by Mafia. League of Nations suspended. Germany invades Poland; World War II begins. CFR offers its services to U.S. State Department. Interpol grouped with Gestapo. Amateur radio astronomer Grote Reber receives dot-dash signal from space. Attempted assassination of Hitler.

1940 Nazis allegedly begin building Hitler's secret hideout in Antarctica. Roosevelt sends Gen. "Wild Bill" Donovan on info-gathering mission to Europe; Donovan recommends a central intelligence organization. U.S. State Department creates Division of Special Research headed by CFR member Pasbolsky.

1941 Japan attacks U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, allegedly through the maneuvering of Roosevelt and his advisers to provide an excuse to enter the war. Donovan made head of new Office of Coordinator of Information.

1942 Donovan's OCI evolves into the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

1943 LSD-25 discovered by Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann. Nazi Admiral Karl Doenitz boasts the German submarine fleet built "in another part of the world, a Shangri-La on land, an impregnable fortress." Juan Peron and other pro-Nazi leaders take power in Argentina. Pilots on both sides of the war report seeing "foo fighters," unexplained flying objects, while flying war missions. "Philadelphia Experiment" renders *USS Eldridge* invisible for 20 minutes.



NIKOLAI TESLA AND ASSISTANT

working for a number of firms, primarily the Westinghouse Company. Able to move in the circles of the wealthy and always seeking money for his inventions, he established many important connections, even befriending Mark Twain at one point. Tesla worked for years at a lab on Houston Street in New York (where Twain often visited) and later in Colorado Springs. He eventually received more than seven hundred patents.

Though his work on wireless power transfer and electric charge weapons has largely been disregarded, Tesla's patents and other inventions include the X-ray machine, the radio, the fluorescent bulb, the vacuum-tube amplifier, and the AC motor. Some of his lesser-known inventions may have included weapons capable of mass destruction and devices that could reshape the Earth itself using the planet's magnetic field. Some researchers believe (incorrectly) that the Tunguska explosion of 1908 in Siberia resulted from an accident while testing one such device (see "Tunguska" in *Chapter 7: Places of Interest* for the truth behind this event).

Tesla claimed that much of his knowledge came from entities not of this world, who occasionally contacted him through dreams. A believer in extraterrestrials, he probably received visits from Strangers at more than one point in his career. Some doubtless gave him information; others may have come to learn from him—or at least to find out how he was developing such advanced technology. Some historians believe that Tesla was a time traveler from the future, or was in league with one. In truth, Tesla did receive substantial assistance from a Grey named Nakami (see below).

As Tesla became increasingly erratic in his later years, he lost his backers and funding. His career came to an end at last when he saw his Wardenclyffe laboratory dynamited. Tesla died at the age of eighty-seven, alone and penniless, in a New York hotel room.

After his death in 1943, the Office of Alien Property seized his papers and possessions at the FBI's instigation. Since Tesla had been a U.S. citizen since 1891, this action was entirely illegal. Today, more than half of Tesla's patents remain classified by the U.S. government. Apparently he had gained a working knowledge of gravitics and electrogravitic motors, and the government wished to keep these secrets to itself.

Nakami and The Great War

Throughout the summer of 1916, citizens of the United States heard news about the Battle of the Somme. The battle itself lasted 142 days, from July 1 to November 18, with almost no concrete result; the English offensive advanced the trenches just 13 kilometers. When the death toll—more than 200,000 French, 420,000 from the British Empire, and 500,000 Germans—was reported to the War Department at the end of November, America was not yet involved in the conflict, but the figures gave pause to a Grey named Nakami. A member of the Iltan faction, Nakami had been moving about in American society disguised as a human for some time. He had worked as one of Tesla's lab assistants for a while, but although he telepathically "pushed" Tesla to develop several innovations, he never revealed his secret to the inventor.

"Doctor" Nakami had been on an extended trip to Crater Lake in Oregon that July, and he avoided the depressing war news for some time afterward. He began following the story a few months after returning to the East Coast, but it seemed so improbable that he consulted friends of

1944 Attempted assassination of Hitler. Nazis begin sending millions of dollars worth of jewels, paintings, and cash to Argentina for safekeeping. Donovan prepares plan for Roosevelt to establish a central intelligence agency, which is pigeonholed and later reconsidered by Truman. American bandleader Glenn Miller disappears on unarmed flight over the English Channel.

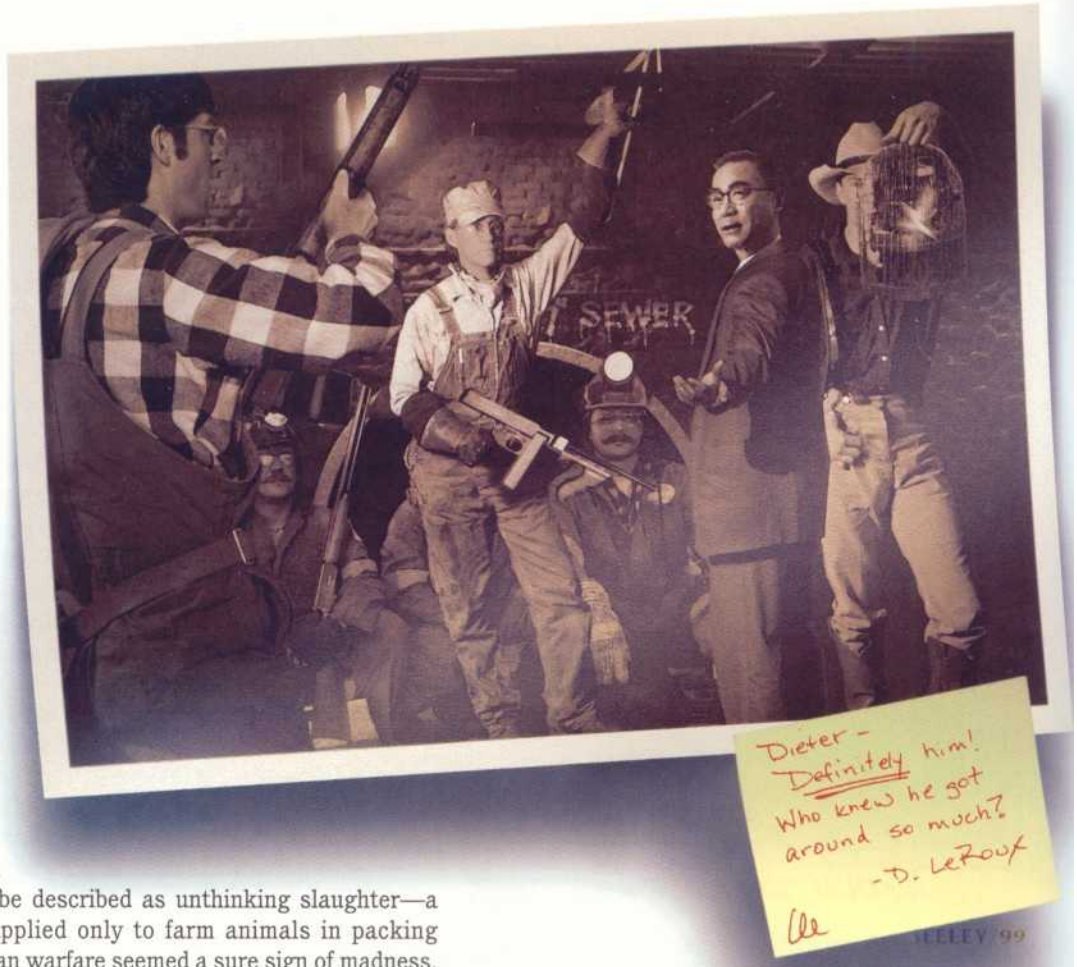
1945 Alleged assassination (suicide) of James Forrestal at Bethesda Hospital Neurological Ward, after his attempt to warn Roosevelt of Illuminati plot. Roosevelt dies, Truman becomes president. Mussolini killed. Hitler allegedly escapes from Berlin after arranging for a fake suicide cover story; Nazi leader Martin Bormann escapes Berlin without a trace after supervising Hitler's "suicide." First atomic bombs dropped. World War II ends. General Reinhard Gehlen, Head of Nazi Intelligence, captured by U.S. Army. Interpol dissolved—or reorganized with headquarters in Paris. OSS disbanded, agents move to military intelligence agencies and the State Department. CFR allegedly takes over State Department. United Nations founded. Flight 19, made up of five naval bombers, disappears off the coast of Florida in the Bermuda Triangle; another plane sent to investigate also disappears—a total of six planes and twenty-seven men vanished. An Air Force plane's engines fail over Iwo Jima as foo fighters maneuver around it.

1946 Truman's executive order creates the National Intelligence Authority and Central Intelligence Group. Gehlen returns to Germany to continue intelligence work for the U.S. Army. Admiral Byrd allegedly leads naval "research" expedition to Antarctica to attack Hitler's secret hideout; attempt supposedly fails and Hitler and his "UFO scientists" continue their activities. Waves of unexplained "ghost rockets" seen in Europe, especially Scandinavia.

1947 National Security Act establishes Department of Defense, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency. Second UFO flap year. "Flying disk" reportedly found near Roswell, New Mexico. Kenneth Arnold reports flying

his in the War Department about it. When they confirmed the loss figures, Nakami began to wonder if he had misjudged humanity on the basis of its science. Perhaps the vestiges of older days spent fighting over hunting grounds had not yet faded entirely into the past.

The men fighting in France were supposedly the most enlightened of a generation of rational, elevated spirits. Yet they had just completed a summer of slaughter, killing thousands of their own kind. The British had unveiled a new "secret weapon"—the tank—and it had failed them, bogging down in the muddy French fields. Despite this, the troops had fought on for months. They had learned nothing, gained nothing, and continued with an activity that could only be described as unthinking slaughter—a form of butchery usually applied only to farm animals in packing houses. Such senseless human warfare seemed a sure sign of madness. Nakami decided that something had to be done before his people's adopted planet destroyed itself in an orgy of mustard gas and machine guns.



In essence, Dr. Nakami believed that human aggression needed to be tempered by Grey wisdom. If the aliens could not reduce the intensity of human violence, they might find themselves crowded out of the solar system entirely. If human warfare spread into space, the Greys would have to find another planet, and that seemed too great a decision to make lightly. The doctor gathered a few confederates from among the younger aliens, and they all went out to live secretly among humankind and bring about what changes they could.

The Institute

In 1917, the Institute for the Advancement of Man was established on Third Avenue in the Lower East Side of New York City. It was an inauspicious beginning—tenement buildings surrounded the organization's run-down, single-room office. The Greys who founded the Institute began full of optimism and high ideals, but immediately ran into real trouble, for they had a very difficult time obtaining the mundane requirement known as money. Having a putatively "Japanese" director for a charitable institute didn't help much in petitioning funds from the white Anglo-Saxon upper crust of New York. Within six months, the Institute was behind on its rent, salaries, and utility bills.

The whole enterprise was on the verge of bankruptcy when it gained an important patron: Tomas Friedrich Hoffmann. Mr. Hoffmann had heard of Tesla's work and knew that Nakami was his protégé. Hoping to hire some of Tesla's genius without having to deal with the notoriously eccentric inventor, Hoffmann offered to buy the Institute out of debt in exchange for expansion of its portfolio to include scientific research as well as political lobbying and charitable works. He named a series of

saucers near Yakima, Washington; other reports soon follow. Aleister Crowley dies.

1948 Beginning of CIA interest in UFOs as a "security" problem. Martin Bormann reported living in Argentina. New nation of Israel creates Central Institute for Intelligence and Security. World Council of Churches founded in Amsterdam.

1949 Report critical of CIA filed and forgotten, unread by Truman; Central Intelligence Act exempts CIA from disclosure laws. E. Howard Hunt becomes CIA agent; Clay Shaw becomes agent for CIA's Domestic Contact Service. The Gehlen Organization transferred to CIA control. U.S. Army begins twenty years of simulated germ warfare attacks against American cities, conducting at least 239 open-air tests. Interpol granted consultative status by UN. Trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary following his brainwashing and confession of conspiracy. Falling toads accompany a heavy hail near Gallup, New Mexico.

1950 Attempted assassination of Truman by Puerto Rican nationalists. Korean War begins. Congress passes the Internal Security Act, instituting a program for detention of subversives. U.S. Army engages in "simulated" germ warfare in San Francisco and the Pentagon. National Council of Churches founded in U.S. CIA organizes Pacific Corporation, a large holding company that was the first of many CIA "private" enterprises. CIA plot to introduce UFO contact ideas with "little green men" stories and radio contact "from space." Malcolm X receives a visit from an MIB while in prison. Approximate starting date for construction of Mount Weather, a secret American government fortress.

1951 Army germ warfare project in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Approximate date CBS begins active cooperation with CIA. North Korean brainwashing of American prisoners begins. *Time* magazine popularizes the term "brainwashing."

Mysterious "Lubbock lights" increase in activity in Lubbock, Texas.

1958 Army germ warfare project in Key West, Florida, and Ft. McClellan, Alabama. CIA agents Downey and Fecteau captured while on a spy mission in China. Third UFO flap year. Numerous UFOs swarm over Washington, D.C. First UFO "contact" case: George Adamski meets "Venusians" in California desert; alleged CIA plot to start UFO scare. The "Flatwoods Monster" terrorizes West Virginia.

1958–1960 Numerous reports across the world of a strange mist that carries away people and cars, transporting them hundreds or thousands of kilometers away.

1953 Dr. Frank Olsen commits suicide after the CIA administers a secret dose of LSD to him, under the direction of the mysterious Dr. Sidney Gottlieb. CIA contemplates developing drugs to cause amnesia in retired agents. CIA's Robertson Panel views UFO reports as a national security threat. Army germ warfare project in Panama City, Florida. Return of Korean War prisoners, including some who underwent brainwashing. Twenty-one POWs defect. Mau Mau (Hidden Ones) formed in Kenya to overthrow white rule. UFOlogist Albert Bender closes down his International Flying Saucer Bureau after a visit from three Men In Black. Project MK-ULTRA created by the CIA. Watson, Crick, Wilkins, and Franklin identify deoxyribonucleic acid as the primary genetic material.

1954 Puerto Rican nationalists attempt assassinations of several U.S. Congressmen. First Bilderberger meeting takes place at the Bilderberg Hotel, Oosterbeek, Holland. Army germ warfare project in Point Mugu and Fort Hueneme, California. Russian KGB created to replace earlier secret police. Broadcaster Frank Edwards fired for discussing UFOs on the air. Strange voice "from space" speaks from turned-off radios in midwestern U.S. and London, warning against preparations for war. First hydrogen bomb detonated at Bikini.

1955 Office of Naval Research allegedly receives a copy of Morris Jessup's "The Case for the UFOs" with marginal notes in three different hands, supposedly written by Roma (Gypsies) knowledgeable in UFOlogy; ONR reprints several hundred copies for internal use; MIB called "Carlos Allende" implicated in the affair.

1956 Assassination of Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua. Clay Shaw's CIA contact allegedly stopped. Lee Harvey Oswald joins Marines. UFOlogist Gray Barker publishes "They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers," a treatise that details numerous MIB incidents.

1957 Alleged assassination of Joseph McCarthy at Bethesda Hospital Neurological Ward, after warning of Illuminati plot. CIA helps Iran form SAVAK, a secret police organization later accused of assassinating Iranian dissidents. Experiments in behavior modification by sleep-teaching take place at California penal institution called Woodland Road Camp. Fourth UFO flap year. Antiatomic bomb propaganda disseminated by saucer clubs—CIA plot? Unexplained short-wave radio signals received worldwide. *Sputnik* launched into orbit.

1958 America launches its first space satellites. John Birch Society organized by Robert Welch. Nelson Rockefeller elected governor of New York. Ham radio operators pick up a male voice claiming to be Nacoma of Jupiter and warning of atomic bomb disaster in English, German, Norwegian, and his own unknown language.

1959 Apparent suicide of UFO researcher Morris Jessup, who had received communications from MIB "Carlos Allende." Oswald released from Marines, defects to Russia. UFO sighting at CIA headquarters after naval officer contacts

The Manhattan Sewer War

In 1930, the Institute found itself caught up in a life-and-death struggle in the understories of Manhattan, hidden from the eyes of the public. The so-called "Sewer War" began when an Institute engineer examining the proliferation of electrical and gas lines heard from the local utility companies that power and gas were unaccountably going missing. Having narrowed the source of the problem to some deeper-placed sections of pipe and wire, they had sent workmen to investigate, but the men had not returned. While the local police were inclined to attribute the situation to a prank, they investigated as well, with no tangible result. The engineer, Roland Edelstein, mentioned the matter in his weekly report to the Institute. Shortly thereafter, he found himself drafted to lead a team consisting of scientists, explorers, and former Marine Corps captain Paul Amis (hired just for the occasion) into the catacombs underneath Manhattan.

The research expedition was well armed and prepared for all contingencies; shotguns and lanterns were just the beginning. The team members also brought nets, a tranquilizer gun, a canary, a set of chemical sampling vials, a dissecting kit, twenty sticks of dynamite, and a handful of blasting caps. It was barely enough.

According to the Institute records of the time, the Hoffmann team first encountered resistance in a section of the sewers south of Houston Street. Fortunately, Mr. Amis, a veteran of the Great War, saw a disturbance in the water moments before the ambush unfolded, and warned the others. By the time the quick and bloody conflict ended, shotgun blasts had scarred the old sewer brickwork in a half dozen places and the "gator-men" (as the Institute researchers first dubbed the kinori) had wounded three investigators with their claws. The albino saurians fled as quickly as they had arrived, despite a few wounds from shotgun pellets. The researchers' brief glimpses of their scaly bodies were horrifying, but the team pressed on, following its retreating, bleeding foes. Not 200 meters farther on, they found an enormous nest piled with thousands of eggs. The remaining gator-men turned to fight, but the now-prepared sewer raiders quickly cut them down.

The kinori died defending a nest that (according to the Institute scientists) might have hatched into a terrible invasion force. Besides eggs, it contained a wide selection of items stolen from the human world above: an electrical generator, several sets of knives and crockery, and even scraps of cloth and books. Clearly, these creatures were intelligent and potentially hostile to human life. Rather than allow the eggs to flourish, the Hoffmann group decided to collect a few samples and dynamite the nest. The resulting explosion was reported to the papers as a "natural gas leak that resulted in no loss of human life"—a statement that at least had the virtue of being half true. In the end, the clash between the Institute and the kinori under Manhattan was explained away as a case of "sewer alligators," and the officials in charge reassured the public that the City of New York Pest Control Department had eradicated the problem.

The fight against the kinori ended with the defeat of the reptilians, but it was the beginning of a new mission for the Institute. Thereafter, paramilitary operations consumed its attention as never before. The conflict in Manhattan also led Dr. Nakami to forsake his electrical engineering interests and investigate biology seriously for the first time.

No kinori have been seen there since; it seems they either moved on or learned to be more subtle about advertising their presence. The Institute receives occasional reports of sightings in Manhattan, but investigators rarely find anything more than an abandoned outpost.



technical topics—most of them dealing with astrophysics, particular electrical phenomena, Egyptology, and the pseudoscience of spiritualism—that the Institute would readily investigate in exchange for his patronage.

Nakami was only too happy to oblige; Hoffmann's connections to the German diplomatic corps were of no interest to him. The Institute changed its name and added a second director to its board. Soon thereafter, its researchers began a series of experiments building on Tesla's work. At least for the time being, political causes took a back seat to activities that would pay the bills. But the political causes near to Nakami's heart would later clash with the agenda of his new sponsor, for the Institute and Hoffmann had very different views on how the results of that research should be applied.

World War II

Even as the nineteenth-century occult organizations fell apart or disbanded, new, more sinister occult groups formed in mainland Europe. These secret societies combined lore from lost Atlantis with racist philosophies and Teutonic warrior ethics. Chief among these groups was the Thule Society, from which arose individuals who would become important political figures in the coming years: the Nazis.

The Nazis gained power in the 1930s, transforming an impoverished and downtrodden Germany into a motivated military juggernaut. At the heart of the Nazi regime was the Schutzstaffel (the SS). A special inner circle of the SS—the Order of the Death's Head—was an occult group based on the Teutonic knightly orders before them.

As soon as they gained power, the Nazis banned other influential secret societies. The Thule Society and the Order of the Death's Head—two groups with close ties—knew they must beware their true enemies, the Illuminati of Adam Weishaupt.

It is rumored that through the mystical rites and incantations of the Thule Society, high-ranking Nazis learned that in order to attain true power they would have to perform the largest and most bloody ritual ever conducted. These rumors further speculate that the millions murdered in death camps throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s may have been sacrificed as part of a rite of black magic.

During World War II, the scientists and engineers involved in the Nazi war effort invented dozens of new weapons and tools of war, from the jet engine to the V-2 ballistic rocket to VTOL aircraft. The U.S. government seized many of these weapons, as well as more shadowy and arcane knowledge, in the immediate postwar period. The top-secret effort to recruit and forcibly relocate the scientists and adepts responsible for these advances was called Operation Paperclip. As a direct result of this project, the U.S. gained hundreds of technical and scientific treasures. These included medical reports from concentration camp doctors, engineering data on jet propulsion and vertical-takeoff aircraft from the brothers Walter and Reimar Horten, intelligence on Soviet military strength from Hitler's spymaster Reinhard Gehlen, and the prototypes that eventually—in the hands of former SS major Wernher von Braun—became the Saturn V rocket that took men to the moon.

What price did the U.S. pay for incorporating so many Nazis into the upper ranks of the CIA, NASA, the Army, and other branches of the government? What contacts did these men have with others who shared their beliefs? How did they guide postwar policy?

Former Nazis helped to create both the Central Intelligence Agency and NASA. Since its beginnings in 1947, the CIA has played a major role in driving U.S. foreign policy. It has also exerted greater and greater control over the executive branch of the government—even to the extent, some say, of engineering the murder of a president who opposed it in 1963.

"space people" while in CIA-observed trance. Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* published. *Lunik 1* reaches moon; *Lunik 3* photographs it.

1960 Nixon, CIA agent Bissell, and others plan Bay of Pigs invasion, obtain permission to use Guatemala as launching point. Bernard Barker serves as conduit for Bay of Pigs funding. CIA buys Southern Air Transport, contemplates development of "recruitment pills" and other drugs, studies mysterious amnesia of Korean war prisoners moved through Manchuria, and contemplates giving truth serum to brainwashed American POWs. USAF pilot Francis Gary Powers shot down in U-2 over Russia; summit conference canceled. Project Ozma, searching for sign of intelligent life from another part of the universe, receives unexplained signals from space.

1961 CIA invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs fails due to poor planning and cancellation of support by Kennedy; the CIA, the Mob, Cuban exiles, right-wingers, and Nixonites supposedly vow revenge. Kennedy develops extracurricular relationship with Judith Campbell, Sam Giancana's girlfriend; Giancana and John Roselli enlisted by CIA to attempt Castro assassination. Unexplained transmissions from space monitored by ham radio operators worldwide; Bob Renaud, ham operator, allegedly makes contact with aliens. First known sighting of the mothmen in West Virginia. Betty and Barney Hill kidnapped by a UFO in the first recorded abduction case. Yuri Gagarin becomes first man in space.

1962 Suicide of Marilyn Monroe under questionable circumstances. Oswald returns to America with his Russian wife, an alleged KGB agent. Dr. Edgar Schein outlines behavior modification programs for U.S. prisons, based on Korean brainwashing techniques. Cuban missile crisis. UFOlogist Williamson disappears in South America.

1963 Assassination of President John F. Kennedy. CIA begins weather modification project over Hue, Vietnam. Unexplained radio transmission in unidentified language interrupts astronaut Gordon Cooper during final orbit of *Mercury 9* mission. Numerous MIBs spotted in Dealey Plaza. Merchant vessel near Gibraltar notes a strange patch of calm sea, about 1.5 kilometers wide and several kilometers long, surrounded on all sides by normal turbulent water.

1964 Numerous deaths associated with Kennedy assassination. Report of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy released; Commission finds that Oswald, acting alone, killed JFK.

1965 Assassination of Malcolm X. U.S. Army explores sites in the Middle East as potential locations for nuclear devices intended to set off earthquakes. Early prison behavior modification program, CASE, begins in Washington, D.C., boys' school. Fifth UFO flap year. Three Russian scientists receive unexplained signals from space. California highway inspector Rex Heflin takes pictures of UFOs, then receives a visit from MIBs supposedly from NORAD who take the original photographs and depart; NORAD denies involvement. Another ham radio operator, Sidney Padrick, makes contact with UFO aliens.

1966 CIA begins weather modification experiments over Cuba; technology is later used in an attempt to ruin Castro's sugar cane crop. Army conducts simulated germ warfare project in New York City. Numerous mothman sightings in West Virginia accompanied by UFOs, animal mutilations, poltergeist activity, crop circles, and Men In Black. Ancient bacteria (500 million years old) revived in a German laboratory.

1967 Rex Heflin again visited by MIBs in connection with his photos of UFOs; similar MIB incidents occur in New York and elsewhere. Another MIB, Mr. Dixsun, allegedly visits Colorado University UFO researcher Edward Condon and offers to help him contact the space people. China explodes its first hydrogen bomb. Tramp named Bailey found in an

abandoned building in London, victim of spontaneous human combustion.

1968 Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis and Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles. Sirhan Sirhan, Robert Kennedy's brainwashed "assassin," is proven to have shot Kennedy in the shoulder, but Kennedy had also been shot in the back of the head at close range—a woman who earlier had been seen with Sirhan leaves the scene saying, "We've shot him!" Approximate founding date of a group called The Kaisers—sixty German-Americans allegedly planning to make Nixon a dictator. FBI begins secret Cointelpro campaign against New Left and black radicals. CIA penetrates the Students for a Democratic Society at Columbia College; National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) formed within the SDS. Mystery ship *Scheersberg* disappears between Antwerp and Genoa with 200 tons of uranium believed to have been taken to Israel. Astronauts circling the moon interrupted by unexplained voices. Radio stations receive mysterious distress signals from the mid-Pacific; no ships found during ensuing search. U.S. detonates hydrogen bomb 150 kilometers northwest of Las Vegas in underground test.

1969 Nixon issues Executive Order No. 11490, establishing plans for dictatorial control in the event of a "national emergency." Pentagon and Department of Interior researchers study methods of inducing earthquakes by injecting fluids into deep wells. Cuban government arrests alleged CIA spy Humberto Carrillo Colon, seizing his very low frequency transceiver and coded messages describing strange lights, a minisubmarine, and other unexplained items. MIB "Carlos Allende" visits UFOlogists Jim and Coral Lorenzen in Tucson, giving them a copy of the ONR reprint of Jessup's "Case for the UFOs." Men first visit the moon. Reportedly, *Apollo* astronauts see a number of UFOs (which they identify as huge spaceships) across a lunar crater, apparently watching them. Followers of Charles Manson ritually slaughter Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring.

1970 U.S. Army experts complete "mock assassination" project against the president and Congress, demonstrating that determined terrorists could wipe out U.S. leaders through use of chemical or germ warfare. Nixon staffers develop the Huston Plan and "Plumbers Unit" in a plot to use police and intelligence agencies at all levels for political purposes. Attorneys Lefcourt in New York and Gary in San Francisco are victims of the first of over one hundred unsolved break-ins that take place over the next five years; valuables untouched but sensitive political information taken. Personality-altering Prolexin administered to 1,093 inmates at Vacaville; Special Programs Unit behavior modification program begins at Joliet, Illinois, under Dr. Martin Groder; Bureau of Prisons requests funds for Federal Center for Correctional Research in Butner, North Carolina. Approximate date of the "Koreagate" scandal: Korean CIA undertakes massive influence-peddling campaign, fifty congressmen accept bribes, links made with Nixon Administration and the Unification Church, which has long been known to have ties with the intelligence community.

1971 FBI begins (or continues) illegal break-ins, mail-openings, and wiretaps, conducted by Squad 47 of the internal security division in search of Weather Underground fugitives. Cointelpro supposedly disbanded. U.S. Atomic Energy Commission detonates hydrogen bomb beneath Amchitka Island, Alaska. Faces of people buried in a cemetery appear on the floor of a house built over them in Belmez, Spain. Apparent suicide of James E. McDonald, well-known UFO researcher.

1972 Attempted assassination of George Wallace in Maryland by "loner" Art Bremer, who had more money than he should have, plus alleged connections with CIA types. Warren Commission dissident Hale Boggs disappears on flight to Alaska. Watergate break-in occurs; FBI official Charles Bates placed in charge of investigation. Numerous UFOs spotted over Puerto Rico.

The Nazis Today

Martin Bormann, Hitler's right-hand man, had arranged a postwar contingency plan called Odessa. The details of that operation were seized in Berlin, and only its participants know exactly what remained. In theory, the plan would transfer Nazi funds abroad, keep part of the Nazi wartime spy network intact, and shelter high-ranking Nazi officers in Indonesia, Mexico, the Middle East, and South America.

Perhaps nothing came of Odessa beyond the escape of a few war criminals, but that seems unlikely. The U.S. government's involvement in Operation Paperclip aside, evidence suggests that Nazis and neo-Nazis remain in hidden positions of power, particularly in South America, even today. The mystical Thule Society still works in secret, attempting to retrieve ancient artifacts of importance and power, such as the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Spear of Destiny.

Conspiracy investigators should not rule out the possibility of old Nazis operating a secret military base in South America, dealing in guns and drugs to gather finances and power. Some claim that when the Allies took Berlin, they found plans detailing a plot to use a secret fleet of U-boats to take fleeing Nazis from Germany to a place of complete safety: Antarctica. In fact, two months after Germany surrendered in 1945, the submarines U-530 and U-977 (led by Admiral Karl Doenitz) gave themselves up in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Allegedly, these two vessels had become separated from the submarine convoy taking Hitler and others to their hideout in Antarctica. Those who finished the voyage continued their research into rocketry and antigravity. (Many UFO sightings, some say, were actually pieces of Nazi technology undergoing field tests.) Eventually, the stories claim, the remaining Nazis left Earth altogether, establishing a base on the moon and possibly even Mars.

One thing is certain: The Nazis were too powerful, too fanatical, and too devious to be completely gone.

Roswell: The Greys Return

In 1947, a pilot flying near Mt. Rainier in western Washington state saw a number of flying crescents skipping like saucers across water. The name "flying saucer" stuck, and thus began the modern era of UFO sightings. Later that same year, an even more significant event in the history of UFOlogy occurred, although there are many versions of what actually happened. One story indicates that an alien spaceship developed a systems failure and crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, on July 2, 1947. Another version claims that the U.S. government shot the craft down with an antiaircraft battery, but immediately realized its terrible blunder. In either case, the government has kept the ship secret ever since. The craft and its dead occupants were taken to Groom Lake Air Force Base in Nevada, also known as Area 51 and commonly called Dreamland.

A second ship—perhaps sent to rescue survivors from the first crash—met with equipment failure itself and fell to earth not far away. Investigators discovered this vessel at San Augustine Flats near Magdalena, New Mexico, on July 3, 1947.

This incident spurred the first organized contact between humans and Greys in modern times. Alien technology and physiology were now available for human scientists to study. Whether humanity was alone in the universe was no longer even a valid question, at least to those in the know. In response, the Greys contacted certain government officials and worked out a treaty. The humans who formed the committee that communicated with the aliens called themselves Majestic-12. Later, some members of M12 would join with agents of the Office of Naval Intelligence

to form a secret group called COM-12, which exists to combat a covert (possibly alien-backed) organization within the government. This conspiracy, which goes by the code name Aquarius, may be working with forces in the United Nations to establish a one-world government—the New World Order (see Chapter 6 for more information).

Within six months of the UFO crashes, high-ups in Washington, D.C., ordered numerous government agency reorganizations and many personnel reassignments. The intense security and the smokescreen around the incident provided an opportunity for government scientists to analyze the ships and attempt to duplicate the saucer technologies. The world would never be the same.



The Secret War

The U.S. isn't the only nation to find Strangers in its backyard. Just after taking power in the early 1950s, the Chinese government was fortunate enough to capture an alien craft during the invasion of Tibet. Indeed, some believe that the Chinese had received information about an alien ship anchored in a mountainside near Shambhala, and that they invaded Tibet primarily to grab as much alien technology as possible—plus a few hostages. It was too good an opportunity to miss.

Despite the active and persistent resistance of many native Tibetans, the Red Army triumphed easily over the poorly trained troops of the mountain kingdom. Within days, members of Chairman Mao's inner circle oversaw the recovery and seclusion of a Grey ship near the remote mountain village of Lungdo, as well as the capture and interrogation of one of its crew. Now the Communist world could also claim (in covert circles, at least) a victory for the march of world socialism on a par with America's retrieval of the saucers at Roswell. Both governments have kept their finds under wraps for decades as they dealt with their newfound treasures. For the Chinese, keeping the lid on the story was relatively easy—they simply eliminated anyone who knew too much.

Chinese dominance of Tibet is a great loss for yet another reason: It is now much more difficult for the rest of the world to collaborate with or even contact the Ascended Masters—the leaders of the group known as the Rosicrucians (see Chapter 6)—whose primary base of operations lies hidden in the high mountains of that region.

The Lunar Landings

Carried to the moon by technology originating from Nazi scientists and reverse-engineered Grey saucers, Neil Armstrong stepped out of the *Apollo 11* lunar lander on July 21, 1969. The *Apollo 12, 14, 15, 16,* and *17* lunar missions followed between 1969 and 1972, but after that, interest quickly tapered off. The government destroyed the plans for the Saturn V after the inception of the space shuttle program in the 1970s, obliterating an enormous engineering legacy ostensibly so that NASA

1970 Trilateral Commission (TLC) founded under the direction of David Rockefeller; Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale are among the founding members. Sidney Gottlieb, head of CIA's LSD and other drug programs, destroys records to hide details of program. Experiments with implanting electrodes in the brain carried out at Vacaville and elsewhere. Behavior mod unit started at El Reno, Oklahoma, prison; START-type program introduced to Maryland public schools by Behavior Research Institute. Sixth UFO flap year. MK-ULTRA mind-control experiments "concluded." Numerous Bigfoot sightings.

1974 Jack Angel of Savannah, Georgia, taken to the hospital, where doctors diagnose a number of solely internal burn injuries caused by spontaneous human combustion. Numerous sightings of large unknown animals, mysterious explosions, apparitions of the Virgin Mary, religious icons that wept or bled, and mysterious disappearances plague Puerto Rico. (These continue until 1975.)

1975 Pilot Carlos de los Santos nearly collides with three UFOs over Mexico City; MIBs menace him on two different occasions afterward. Travis Walton's UFO abduction witnessed by numerous coworkers; he reappears five days later with vivid descriptions of the humanoids aboard the craft.

1976 Jimmy Carter (CFR) elected. Six high-level members of President's staff are all members of CFR/TLC. Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) formed. A gigantic UFO that distorts electrical systems of surrounding aircraft appears over Tehran, Iran. Son of Sam killings begin in New York (and continue through 1977). *Viking* mission to Mars sends back pictures of pyramidlike and face-shaped structures on the Cydonia plateau.

1977 Carter signs UN charter removing U.S. sovereignty under UN military command. Space shuttle *Enterprise* makes its first manned test flight. SETI reports a strong extraterrestrial transmission called the "WOW" signal, apparently not repeated. A Japanese fishing ship discovers the corpse of a 32-foot-long sea monster but tosses it overboard because of the stench. Radio Moscow reports a 50-foot-long lake monster in Kazakhstan.

1978 Seventh UFO flap year. UFOs swarm over Honduras during power blackout, generating numerous sightings across U.S. and Australia. Australian pilot Frederick Valentich reports that a mysterious craft is "playing some sort of game" with him; thereafter a metallic scraping sound (and then nothing else) comes over his radio; the pilot and plane are never recovered. Scientists in Albania warn residents not to drink stream water, as small humanlike creatures have been found there; the creatures spoke, but direct communication was never established and they eventually disappeared.

1980 John Lennon assassinated. Scientists report the growth of a virus as a crystalline structure. UFO steals 40,000 liters of water from an open tank near Rosedale in Australia while a farmer watches. Ronald Reagan wins the presidential race, based at least in part on the fact that George Bush works out a secret deal with the Iranians to wait until after the election to free embassy hostages.

1981 Congressman Larry McDonald calls for comprehensive congressional investigation of the CFR and Trilateral Commission. McDonald dies along with 268 other passengers on Korean Air Lines Flight 007, shot down over Sakhalin Island in the Sea of Japan; all bodies recovered except those of the pilot and copilot.

1982 Giant snakelike creature seen swimming in Chesapeake Bay near Love Point, Maryland. Almost all the planets in the solar system align themselves on one side of the sun.

1983 An expedition in Africa spots the dinosaurlike mokele-mbembe.

1984 Hundreds of fish fall from the sky in Santa Monica, California.

1985 Gorbachev introduces *glasnost* and *perestroika* to USSR. A strange flash of light on the moon, like a huge explosion, is photographed. Scientists in China report the discovery of 30-foot-long reddish fish that eat even large mammals near the water's edge. Industrial-entertainment complex conspires to ensure successful sports franchise in New York City by fixing NBA draft.

1986 Chernobyl (Wormwood) nuclear disaster. Space shuttle *Challenger* explodes after liftoff. Iran-Contra trials begin. First element of Space Station *Mir* launched.

1987 Pink frogs fall from the sky in Gloucestershire, England. Well-documented Gulf Breeze sightings—UFOs and aliens encountered by Edward Walters—begin. Snowflakes 9 centimeters across fall on Chepston, England.

1988 George Bush (affiliated with CIA, CFR, Trilateral Commission, Freemasons, and Skull & Bones Society) elected president. High-atmosphere explosion occurs over Indonesia, believed to be meteor or asteroid fragment impacting with atmosphere. Moonbase Plato established by United Nations.

1989 Berlin Wall falls. Robert Lazar comes forward publicly with testimony regarding reverse engineering of captured alien spacecraft at Area 51. Mars probe *Phobos II* disappears after an encounter with a UFO.

1990 Iraq invades Kuwait, beginning "Gulf War." President Bush verbally announces a "new world order" on TV. The space shuttle recovers the LDEF orbiting platform, on which a strange brown growth is discovered. Hubble Space Telescope put into orbit.

1991 Sony Corporation establishes ESPER lab where scientists study psychic phenomena, UFOs, and the paranormal. Eighth UFO flap year. UFOs gather over Mexico City. End of the Fifth Sun, according to the Mayan Dresde Codex. Strange underwater lights seen surrounding a ship in the Straits of Hormuz. Soviet news agency TASS reports nu-

would embrace the new technology wholeheartedly. After all, there was no turning back.

In reality, it appears that the destruction of the Saturn V rocket plans and the adoption of the space shuttle technology were carefully engineered by those who wanted to ensure that humans did not return to the Moon or plan a trip to Mars. Whether this effort was spearheaded by M12 as part of the negotiated settlement with the Greys (who had relocated their city-ship from the Moon to Mars just before this time), by the U.S. government out of fear of what astronauts had found on the Moon, or by alien agents who wanted to see the human drive to settle the solar system crippled for their own reasons, is unknown. Regardless of its origin, this scheme has for the most part kept human space research in Earth orbit. The only exceptions are robot explorers sent to visit, view, and examine other planets, and many of those have suffered mechanical failures. The lunar landings of 1969 to 1972 remain the high-water mark in the commonly accepted history of human space exploration. Everything else relies on the video footage sent back by robotic proxies.

New World Order

In the 1960s, a number of key social and political figures—President John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.—were assassinated. Evidence in all these cases points to the involvement of a government conspiracy. Reports have implicated both the CIA and the Mafia not only in the assassinations, but in the murders (often in the form of "suicides") of dozens, if not hundreds, of others to cover up the truth. Of course, these murders may just be a small portion of a much larger conspiracy involving the Freemasons, the Nazis, or even aliens. (For example, some evidence suggests that JFK and his lover Marilyn Monroe were killed because he planned to reveal the existence of a government collusion with aliens after the Roswell crash.)

After World War II, the newly formed United Nations established real power throughout much of the world. UN troops moved into war-torn areas to enforce peace on their terms. Black helicopters equipped with surprisingly high technology allowed UN agents to move undetected and advance their agenda of global dominion even into the United States. Working with allies inside world governments, the UN and other groups (the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Bilderberg Society) continue to gather more and more influence, so that one day all countries of the world will willingly welcome its control.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has paved the way in the United States for the creation of a New World Order through what amounts to an indefinite state of martial law. This agency has constructed vast underground bases and shelters and trained military forces in techniques to combat "dissidents" and "radical extremists" among the nation's populace. Although its exact motives are unknown, FEMA has constructed a number of containment camps throughout the midwestern United States.

Another completely different form of control in the hands of the New World Order is the High-Altitude Atmospheric Research Project (HAARP). Although the project supposedly studies various conditions in the upper atmosphere, it seems that the signals it sends up into these high levels come back down. In fact, they may be a way to control the weather, or the mental impulses of the human brain, or both. Employing devices and processes patented by Tesla, the New World Order uses HAARP (based in Alaska) to test its ability to control the world.

Also in the twentieth century, the UN founded the World Health Organization, and the United States established the Centers for Disease Control. Despite their earlier efforts to quash dangerous plagues (see "The Black Death," above), the Greys seem to have had no hand in these developments. Did humanity suddenly discover evidence of a new plague? The sandmen (nanite-infected servants of the alien species

Men In Black

Throughout history, enigmatic figures dressed in black clothing have appeared whenever something strange or paranormal occurred. This curious phenomenon and the individuals themselves are known today as Men In Black, or MIBs. Most modern reports recount their appearance during or after UFO encounters, although well-documented cases also place them in West Virginia at the site of the mothmen visitations in the late 1960s. Tales from the Middle Ages, however—long before the modern UFO era—equate strangers dressed in black with servitors of Satan.

In all accounts, these mysterious figures appear and observe strange phenomena, ask questions, and often attempt to silence other witnesses who might talk about what they have seen. Paranormalists have three prevailing (and contradictory) theories about their nature.

The first theory holds that they are simply government agents. Many modern-day MIBs certainly claim that they work for various government agencies, ranging from the military—usually the Air Force—to the FBI to government agencies that don't exist, at least publicly. These MIBs try to cover up paranormal occurrences (particularly UFO sightings), ostensibly to keep the facts from the public. They threaten witnesses and their families to keep them silent. They typically utilize strange devices and travel in black sedans or black helicopters.

The second theory states that the Men In Black are aliens themselves. While many MIBs claim to work for the government, some don't seem to know much about government procedure. In fact, many of them seem not to possess understanding about some of the most basic topics (what a ballpoint pen is, what substances are edible to humans, and similar pieces of common knowledge). Some use out-of-date slang, modes of dress, and vehicles, although their clothes and cars always look brand-new. Sometimes what they say makes no sense, and they often repeat themselves as if they were stuck in a mechanical loop. Proponents of this theory point out that many witnesses say MIBs do not look entirely human—their skin is sallow, their features are gaunt, and their eyes (when not hidden by dark sunglasses) are either strangely bulbous or eerily narrow. If these strange traits suggest that the Men In Black are aliens (perhaps even Greys), then their insistence that UFO witnesses keep quiet must be a part of their own cover-up agenda. (If the Gamemaster chooses to utilize this type of MIB, *Chapter 8: Xenoforms* provides an example.)

The third theory claims that the MIBs are something else entirely. Neither aliens or government agents, these inexplicable figures are drawn toward paranormal events and the people who witness them. Those who believe this explanation point out that sometimes the Men In Black don't want to silence witnesses at all—instead, they encourage people to talk about what they've seen. By this logic, the threats made against witnesses are some sort of reverse-psychology mind game meant to ensure that they *will* talk. Even the proponents of this theory, however, can't guess at the true nature of these beings or their motives for wanting to spread awareness of paranormal evidence.

Of course, it's altogether possible that two or even all three of the above explanations are correct. Some MIBs are government agents, some are aliens impersonating such agents (sometimes not very well) to accomplish their own goals, and others pose as agents to encourage the spread of rumor and hearsay regarding paranormal events.

merous sightings of a giant snakelike monster in the Siberian town of Sharipovo.

1992 William Clinton (CFR/TLC) elected president. Government proposes "Clipper" chip on computers to allow data tracking. UFO reportedly shot down over Long Island. Los Angeles riots: many buildings professionally torched in a very logical, military-style action; National Guard called out. Citizens introduced to FEMA organization as a friend and ally to the public. Gang leaders claim no responsibility for building torchings—a fact the media chooses not to publicize.

1993 Russian and Nepalese Ghurkha combat troops begin military maneuvers and training exercises on U.S. soil. Clinton proposes National Health Care, including national ID card requirement. Congress passes H.R. 666, allowing illegal search and seizure. Branch Davidian cult compound raided by ATF and FBI agents. After mysterious glitches, Hubble Space Telescope repaired and operational. Contact lost with the Mars *Observer* probe.

1994 Various right-wing militia groups formed in U.S. Militia of Montana distributes tapes and literature regarding New World Order movement. "American Justice Federation" distributes literature and videos showing Russian military equipment on U.S. soil and UN-controlled "concentration camps," complete with gas chambers, under construction in Indiana. NASA lunar probe *Clementine* lost. The presence of secret, unopened chambers within the Great Pyramid and under the Sphinx confirmed.

1995 UN black helicopters spotted in many states and all over California. InfoPet injectable transponder introduced as a way to monitor pets. Federal building in Oklahoma City bombed: government suggests possible link to patriot militia groups, while militia groups claim government conspiracy relating to bombing. Media assault begins on patriot organizations and militia groups. Unabomber strikes two days after the Oklahoma City bombing. President Clinton and Senator Bob Dole sign bills enabling an additional one thousand federal antiterrorist agents and implementing tough new "antiterrorist" legislation. Some patriot groups claim both bombings were engineered by the New World Order movement to scare the U.S. public into accepting greater antigun control and greater "antiterrorist" federal control. First sightings of El Chupacabra in Puerto Rico; reportedly, two captured by the U.S. military and brought to the states. Members of the Solar Temple cult in Switzerland commit mass suicide. CIA officially closes Project Stargate, which used psychic remote viewers as spies. The Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo cult releases poison gas into Tokyo's subways, killing twelve and sickening thousands.

1996 Brazilian military captures aliens in Varginha. Scientists announce the possibility of bacterial life in a Martian rock found in Antarctica. Heaven's Gate cult commits mass suicide to join spiritual kin aboard a spaceship following the appearance of comet Hale-Bopp. Frogs all across North America found inexplicably mutated. TWA Flight 800 crashes off Long Island; various reports claim UFO or even military involvement.

1997 Princess Diana killed (assassinated?) in Paris. Using powerful magnetic fields, scientists levitate a living frog. Two teams of scientists teleport sets of photons up to 1 meter in laboratories. Numerous Bigfoot sightings along the East Coast of the U.S. China takes over Hong Kong from Great Britain. HAARP initialization completed and under way in Alaska.

1998 Pakistan and India demonstrate nuclear capability. Hailstones 7+ centimeters wide fall in China, killing twelve and injuring one thousand. Numerous UFOs spotted over Mexico City and Phoenix, Arizona. Mars *Global Surveyor* specifically revisits "Cydonian Face" for additional imagery. Discovery of an ancient (4,000–10,000-year-old) sunken structure the size of the Great Pyramid off the coast of Japan. First ele-

ment of International Space Station launched. William Jefferson Clinton becomes second U.S. president to be impeached by the House of Representatives, though the Senate does not remove him from office. First human embryo cloned in Korea.

1999 European Union issues its own currency. U.S. government admits it planted spies in U.N. arms inspection team in Iraq. Vatican issues first new exorcism guidelines since 1614. NASA launches X-ray telescope. NATO forces engage in limited warfare in Yugoslavia. Partial planetary alignment occurs on August 19. Suicide rate rises dramatically in United States as end of millennium approaches. Mars *Climate Orbiter* and *Polar Lander* reach Mars. Several dozen gray whales beach themselves along northern California coast. Construction of new Library of Alexandria completed.

2000 Riots ensue as Jerusalem is caught in millennial fever. Dramatic planetary alignment occurs on May 5. Genetic "conditioning" of human embryos widely tested in third-world countries. Russian Space Station Mir crashes to Earth. Incidence of animal attacks on humans up 64% over previous ten-year average. Catholic Church reports third consecutive year of profits.

2001 Catholic cardinal found ritually murdered in Vatican library. Bigfoot sightings in North America increase. Seven simultaneous incidents of spontaneous human combustion in Atlanta. DARK•MATTER campaign begins.

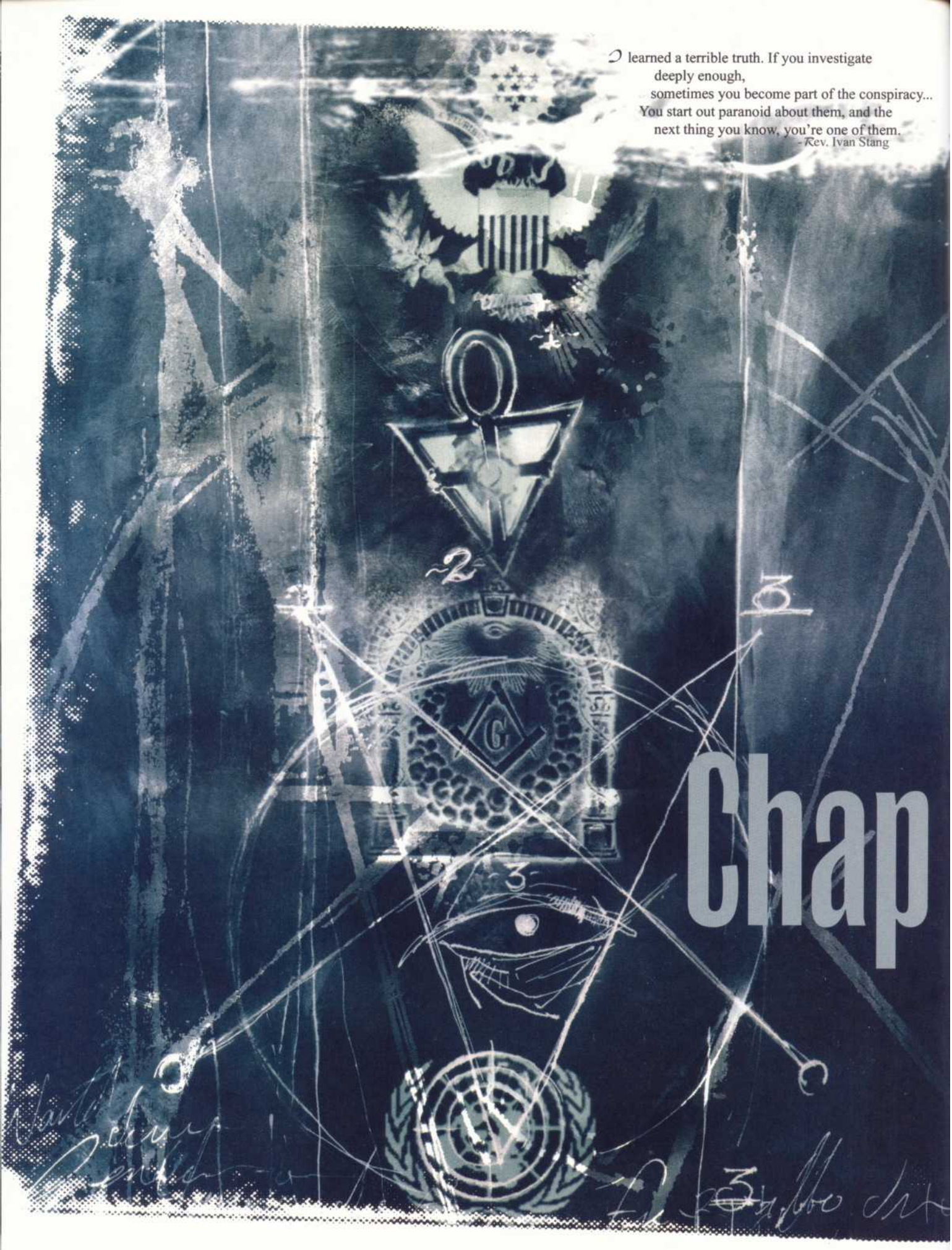
known as the etoile) seem likely suspects, with their mastery of biotechnological weapons and close links to human biology, but so far captured sandmen have yielded nothing to interrogation. Most simply dissolve into dust when questioned, and those who don't destroy themselves deny all knowledge of such a biowarfare agent. Surely another species of Strangers capable of making such a disease might exist, but with humanity's defenses strengthened by the CDC and the World Health Organization, the odds of another global pandemic seem remote.

Today

As the DARK•MATTER campaign dawns, the world is a complicated place indeed. Various agencies, covert and otherwise, vie for power within the government. Secret societies, some with knowledge or lineages that date back thousands of years, exercise control over segments of the population. Strangely familiar alien beings walk the planet, with objectives ranging from the bizarre to the mundane. And sitting above (or behind) it all are the Greys, hiding deep in a Martian valley in their city-ship, where they continue to weave intricate plots for the future of humanity.

It is through this delicate maze that the heroes must walk, gaining knowledge and even allies along the way. Many legends foretell what may come to pass, but it is the Gamemaster and players of the campaign who will ultimately decide the future.





I learned a terrible truth. If you investigate
deeply enough,
sometimes you become part of the conspiracy...
You start out paranoid about them, and the
next thing you know, you're one of them.
- Rev. Ivan Stang

Chap

Chapter 6 the illuminati

In 1776, Adam Weishaupt formed a group of high-ranking Freemasons in Ingolstadt, Germany, called the Illuminati. The name comes from the idea that those who become enlightened are illuminated. Thus, the Illuminated Ones were people who saw more clearly and had reached some higher level, superior to that of normal men. Weishaupt's group is shrouded in mystery, but many believe that this secret cabal was interested in controlling the world through economic and political manipulation. Some even claim that the group was much older than Weishaupt, stretching back into the misty reaches of time. Whatever the truth, the paranoia arising from the idea of the Illuminati—a secret society that might be altering and controlling our lives from the shadows—still carries a great deal of weight today. Although the Illuminati supposedly disbanded a dozen or so years after its creation, many researchers either believe that it still exists in secret or use the term to refer to any such group or conspiracy seeking to fulfill an agenda by covert means.

In the Dark•Matter setting, the term *illuminati* applies as a general label for secret societies. That's not to say that in an individual campaign, Weishaupt's Illuminati might not still be a viable and powerful group. It might be, for example, that this elite group secretly took over the Masons from the inside. Or, using occult powers often attributed to them, they infiltrated the Final Church. Perhaps the Illuminati control all the organizations mentioned here—the secret masters' secret masters.

In any case, the illuminati of the Dark•Matter setting all believe themselves to be enlightened on some level. Possessing secret knowledge unknown to most people, these illuminated ones seek to control or manipulate events. Sometimes their machinations operate on a grand scale. A group the size of the Masons, for example, might not stop at anything short of world domination. The frightening thing about conspiracies, of course, is that these illuminati might have already achieved the control that they seek—and the rest of the world would never even know.

Hidden Agendas

Perhaps the most important aspect of a conspiracy or secret organization is its agenda. Each group (or alien species, or whatever) described below has at least one noted agenda, and in most cases optional, alternative (or additional) agendas and goals as well. The Gamemaster always has the right to change the agenda of these organizations. If a change conflicts with what's printed here, don't worry. Even if future published adventures reveal goals for these organizations other than the one the Gamemaster has been using, the Gamemaster always has the final say. For instance, the Gamemaster may decree that the other source reflects a lower-order goal of the conspiracy, or the goals of a splinter group of the larger organization. Remember that illuminati groups are often separated into different cells, degrees, or orders, and these subgroups may have different goals—and they might not even be aware of the other goals within their own secret society!

In general, there is no such thing as a "typical" hidden goal or doctrine, but a few are given here as examples to inspire the Gamemaster. Some possibilities include such political goals as the restoration of a dethroned dynasty, revenge against another conspiracy, establishment of a theocratic state, seizing control of an existing country, or the violent overthrow of a nation. The hidden agenda may be biological, such as the genetic perfection of a species (and the corresponding destruction of impure members of the species), the eradication of a species or race (either human or alien), or the creation of a new form of life. Occult goals could involve releasing a trapped demon or spirit, gathering together important artifacts of power, or completing a ritual of destruction or immortality. Finally, mercenary goals such as the acquisition of wealth, secret knowledge, or other status symbols might make the conspiracy a way of keeping score among privileged dilettantes.

Many secret societies see mastery of the world as their ultimate agenda. This is, of course, a high goal for any organization, even a global conspiracy. Keep in mind that while this may indeed be the final goal, few if any of the secret societies detailed here believe that, like some hackneyed villain's plot from a pulp novel, it can be achieved in one fell swoop. In fact, most members of such organizations probably never even consider the possibility of global domination on a day-to-day level (although the most visionary or fanatic might). Much more frequently, these illuminati groups have far smaller, shorter-term goals and activities that may *one day* lead to world control.

Some groups, of course, are closer to this ultimate goal than others. Some may be closer than anyone actually realizes. . . .

Overview

Each entry on the illuminati groups described in this chapter includes notes on its origins, activities, and enemies, as well as a general description of how the conspiracy functions. In addition, entries for the following topics are included for each group.

Headquarters and Branches: The home of each group as well as its areas of operation, when known.

Power and Resources: Each conspiracy's power base gives it access to certain tools, which are listed here.

Followers: The total number of followers and the most prominent among them.

Secret Knowledge: Any secret technology, arcana, or mind-walking powers possessed by members of the conspiracy.

Primary Goal: A brief summary of the group's main objective(s).

Common Missions: Each group's areas of interest determine where and how it chooses to deploy its agents. This entry lists a few of the tasks that members commonly attempt.

The exclusion of any conspiracy from these listings doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, but merely that it does not rest at the heart of the setting's darkest plots. Any Gamemaster should feel free to add the Thuggee, the Nine Unknown, the Assassins, or the Club of Rome to his or her own campaign—there are more conspiracies active at any given time than anyone can perceive.

Thirty-Three Degrees: Freemasonry

The largest of the world's secret societies is the Free and Accepted Order of Masons, a group with enigmatic origins that first came to public attention in the 1600s and 1700s. At that time Masons were recognized publicly, though the order had been founded many years earlier—some claim thousands of years earlier.

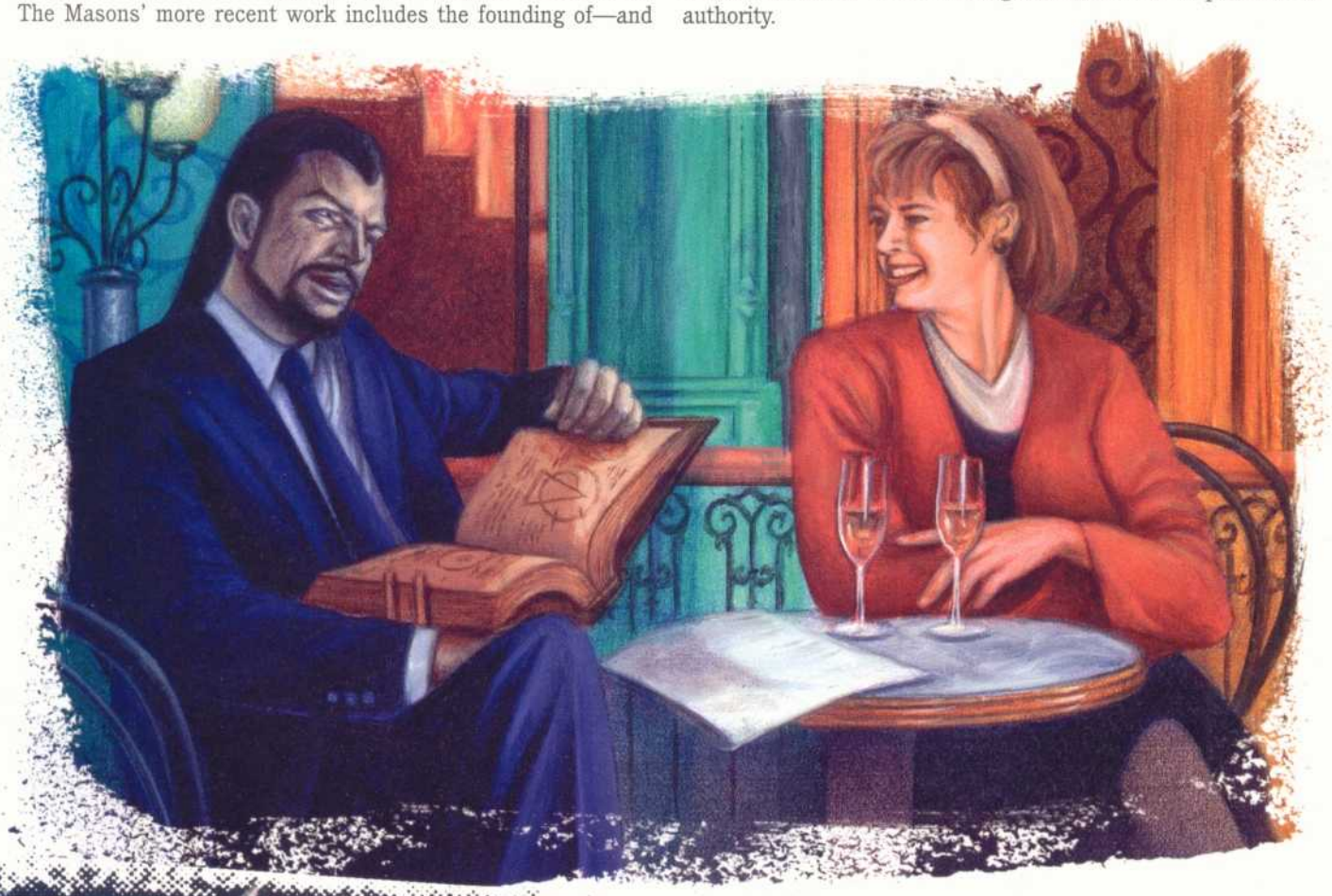


Tradition has it that the Masons began as the group of builders commissioned by King Nimrod of Babylon to build the Tower of Babel, designed to reach the Kingdom of God. Thereafter they constructed the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, a building often thought to be a repository of occult knowledge and symbolism. Influenced by Egyptian occultism, Masonic ideals are based on the ancient teachings that the Templars learned from the Ismaili Muslims during the Crusades, and that the Ismaili Assassins learned from the Egyptians before them. This legacy of secret societies suggests that the secrets of Freemasonry may be as old as humanity itself.

The Masons have always been a politically savvy and motivated group, able to influence events on a grand scale. One of the earliest examples is the Peasants' Rebellion of 1381, when the people throughout England rose up against the king and demanded freedom—and also sought out and destroyed leaders, strongholds, and temples of the Order of the Knights of St. John (the Hospitallers, the Templars' ancient foes). The Masons' more recent work includes the founding of—and some would say the virtual control of—the government of the United States. There and elsewhere they continue to work to promote a Utopian vision of human progress and achievement—but their goals reflect *their* vision, overseen by *them.*

During the American Revolution, a high-water mark of Masonic scheming, most of the figures involved on both sides were Masons. Several clues (such as Howe's failure to support Burgoyne's march down the Hudson River Valley) indicate that Masonic agendas may have affected the outcome of the war, as well as the shape of the United States that rose in its wake. (Thirteen signers of the Constitution and fifteen presidents were Masons.) Masons hold high positions throughout the government, particularly in NASA. Even Washington, D.C., itself is filled with Masonic symbols and architecture. The most striking of these Masonic symbols include the Washington Monument and the Pentagon, as the obelisk and the pentagon are both important Masonic occult symbols. Even the eye-and-pyramid symbol found on every American $1 bill is a potent Masonic symbol, demonstrating the pervasiveness of the group's influence on the government and society of the United States.

The first strength of Masonry is in its numbers. With millions of lodge members, a Mason can be assured of a friendly reception anywhere in the world—and often of preferential treatment by fellow Masons at work, in the government, and in positions of authority.



Masonry's shell-like structure provides its second source of power; only a few of its millions of members know the true origins of the group or its true goals. The vast majority of Masons are slowly initiated into the higher degrees but never told the organization's actual intent. Instead, they are told to respect the bonds of Masonic fellowship and support their fellow Masons, then foisted off on charitable works and back-room politicking. Most do know of the Masonic signal of distress—a secret hand sign that compels any member to help one in need. This commitment extends beyond the bounds of friendship, religion, and law. A Mason, particularly a high-ranking Mason, will do anything to help a fellow Mason.

A tiny minority of Masons knows what the group is truly looking for, objectives that its rituals and declared goals only hint at. Important and influential lodges such as the Italians of P2, members of the Grand Lodge of the Potomac, the Scottish 33rd Degree Master Masons of the Ancient Rite, and certain members of the French Lodge known as the Grand Orient are instrumental in pursuing the group's original goals.

The Grand Lodge of the Potomac, for example, heads up a conspiracy to control American society through religious and quasi-religious groups ranging from small, seemingly innocuous cults to various right-wing fundamentalist organizations and certain evangelical cable television networks. Religion—specifically Christianity—has always been an element of the Masonic tradition. Or, at the least, part of the facade put forth to disguise the order's true roots and goals.

In fact, at the heart of Masonry lies a deep-seated occult tradition. Throughout the ages, important occult societies such as the Theosophists and the Golden Dawn drew their membership entirely from the Freemasons (at least to begin with). Modern magical societies such as the Ordo Templi Orientis claim ties to the Masonic Order. Stemming from an ancient occult tradition, the ultimate goal of the Masons is the "perfection of creation," which after the manner of builders means crafting a perfect universe from the current imperfect one. This has involved ritual sacrifice (evidence suggests that the Jack the Ripper murders may have been related to Masonic traditions) eerily reminiscent of the rituals of the Final Church.

According to ancient traditions, three goals must be accomplished for the "perfection of creation" to be complete. These three important requirements include the creation and destruction of primordial matter; the sacrificial killing of the divine king; and the joining of *prima materia* and *prima terra*.

How these can be accomplished is open to speculation, but some scholars believe they have already been achieved by the following three events: detonation of the first atomic bomb, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the bringing of moon rocks (*prima materia*) to Earth (*prima terra*). Both the bomb blast and the assassination occurred at locations very close to 33 degrees North latitude, 33 degrees being significant to the Masons. DARK•MATTER Gamemasters may want to devise alternate methods of accomplishing these goals, creating an ongoing campaign in which the heroes attempt to stop the order before it completes its mystical agenda and gains complete control.

Masonry's most bitter rivals include the Rosicrucians (aka the Companions of Horus), a much smaller but still potent group of influential men and women of learning. According to the doctrines of the Rosicrucians, the earliest Masons shared secrets given to them in confidence (and this, the Rosicrucians claim, explains their own compulsive secrecy). The Rosicrucians have never forgiven the betrayals, but the sheer size of the Masonic organization prevents them from doing much against the majority

Comte Claude-Louis de Saint-Germain
Immortal Occultist

Level 36 Ekimmu (Human) Diplomat (Tech Op)

STR	10	[0]	INT	11	[+1]
DEX	11	[+1]	WIL	14	[+2]
CON	12		PER	13	

Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action Check: 16+/15/7/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Good/3 Last Resorts: 3
Perks: Hidden Identity (6), Reputation, Second Sight
Flaw: Primitive (2) [removed]
Achievements: Action Check Increase (×3), Increased Intelligence, Increased Will
FX Energy Points: 9
Psionic Energy Points: 14

Attacks

.38 revolver	16/8/4	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m	HI/0
Rapier	15/7/3	d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w	LI/0
Unarmed	5/2/1	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Defenses
+1 modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills
Athletics [10]–*climb [11];* Melee [10]–*blade [15];* Acrobatics [11]–*defensive [15], dodge [14];* Modern [11]–*pistol [16];* Primitive [11]–*flintlock [15];* Vehicle [11]–*land [14];* Movement [12]–*swim [14];* Stamina [12]–*endurance [18];* Knowledge [11]–*computer [12]; deduce [14], language (French) [16], language (Ancient Egyptian) [15]; language (English) [14], language (German) [14], language (Russian) [13], language (Latin) [13], language (Portuguese) [13], language (Italian) [12];* Law [11]; Physical [11]–*chemistry [14];* Social [11]–*history (French) [14], linguistics [12];* Animal [14]–*riding [17];* Awareness [14]–*intuition [18], perception [20];* Creativity [14]–*painting [16];* Lore [14]–*conspiracy [20], occult [19];* Resolve [14]–*mental [19], physical [16];* Culture [13]–*diplomacy [16], etiquette (high society) [17];* Deception [13]–*bluff [16], gamble [18];* Interaction [13]–*charm [19], interview [19], intimidate [16], seduce [19].*

Psionic Skills
Biokinesis [12]–*control metabolism [17], heal [14], rejuvenate [14];* Telepathy [13]–*mind shield [18], suggest [20].*

FX Skills
Hermeticism–*glamour [16], ligature [15], sleep of Morpheus [14], transmutation [16].*

continued on page 124

of its members. The Rosicrucians confine their efforts to undoing the work of Masonry's inner circles, those who know and pursue its secret Inner Doctrine.

Headquarters and Branches: Although certain lodges are more influential than others, Masonry has no single headquarters but rather cell-like lodges scattered all over the globe, most of which are found in the western world. If Freemasonry had a single headquarters, it would probably be the Grand Lodge Alpina in Switzerland. That speculation is the source of the at least partially true theory regarding the Gnomes of Zurich, a group of bankers who supposedly rule the world through their vast wealth.

Power and Resources: Only its own cumbersome size and the fact that most of its members are not privy to the inner secrets may limit Freemasonry's power.

Followers: Millions. Prominent members have included Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur, Joseph Smith, Oscar Wilde, Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, Henry Ford, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Hancock, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Buzz Aldrin, George Bush, and innumerable others.

Secret Knowledge: High-ranking Masons may very well be occult masters with mindwalking or arcane skills. They might also possess secret technology developed in hidden laboratories funded by the organization's near-limitless funds.

Primary Goal: Craft a perfect universe from the current imperfect one.

Common Missions: Freemasonry's overall goals lead its agents on all manner of tasks, including infiltrating organizations (such as NASA, a corporation, or the city council of a major city), stealing objects important to occult rituals (such as moon rocks), contacting aliens, and obtaining reverse-engineered technology.

Or...

Over the years, other theories regarding the secret goal of Masonry have ranged from control of world banking to the destruction of the Catholic Church to avenging the destruction of the Templars. Given the amount of noise and speculation about Masons, finding the truth is difficult at best. The theories may all be correct—or perhaps none of them are.

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The Comte Saint-Germain is one of the oldest living creatures on Earth. He claims to have been born during Egyptian times, but that is false: His human body was born in 1707, in France. Comte St.-Germain claims Russian, Polish, and Italian blood. Though he seems a quiet, scholarly man with a few traces of aristocratic affectation, underneath his immaculately tailored suits he is a tough, ruthless survivor.

While he remains human to all appearances, the count has lived so long only because of his body's possession and transformation by an ekimmu (see *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*). In a unique development, the count's strong will allowed him to maintain his identity despite the possession. In essence, St.-Germain made a deal with the ekimmu: in exchange for the mobility and resources granted by the count's body, the alien vampire granted St.-Germain great power. Thus, the creature shares memories with the count himself, and the resulting personality blends aspects of both human and ekimmu perspectives.

He was deeply involved in occult and Hermetic studies during the eighteenth century, and worked at the court of Rudolph II in Prague during the heyday of the alchemists. During his time in Europe (c. 1710 to 1789) he always had the appearance of a man in his early forties. Stories claim that he had studied Tantric sex magic in the East, and that this allowed him to preserve his youth. In 1743 he moved to London. Living there for a few years, and befriended the Prince of Wales. He was forced to flee the city when he was exposed as an agent of the French secret service, and became entangled in a Jacobite plot. In 1755 he traveled to the Far East to study under adepts in Tibet; during that trip he also spied against the British East India Company. He was deeply involved in Illuminati, Masonic, Templar, and Rosicrucian activities.

Reports of the count's death in 1784 were clearly faked. He was seen after his supposed death with Cagliostro and Mesmer at the 1785 Masonic Congress, in Paris in 1788, and then again in Paris in 1835 by the Kabbalist Oettinger. More recently, he was seen by Enrico Contardi-Rhodio in 1936 and Dr. Itohiro Nakami in Bahia, Brazil, in 1999. Though all of his postmortem appearances have quickly been discounted as the tales of unreliable eyewitnesses, impostors, or frauds, the sheer number of sightings seems to indicate that something strange is going on.

Anyone with a little grounding in occult lore is aware that the comte is associated with the Grand Masters of the Rosicrucians; most assume that he found the elixir of life and simply reappears under different names in different eras. Comte de St.-Germain and the Master Koot Hoomi were members of the Great White Brotherhood who taught Helene Blavatsky some of their occult mysteries in Tibet. Koot Hoomi—a close associate of the comte who dabbles in arcana and leads a Tibetan brotherhood—claims to be the reincarnation of Thothmes III.

Identifying the count is not difficult, though he changes his name rather often. Even during his accepted lifetime, he went by a dozen names, such as Count Welldone. Over the centuries, he has adopted and discarded dozens of names; those of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth include Monsieur de Surmont, Rakosky, Saint-Martin, and Marquis of Aglie, among many others.

In conversation, the Comte has a tendency to begin discussing events as if they were historical, but then to slowly begin referring to them in the first person. For instance, he may talk about the French Revolution of 1789 as a time long ago, but then say, "When they came to arrest Voltaire, I was fortunate enough to be in the parlor. I left for London soon thereafter, but the Comte du Valmont was unable to bribe the jailers and was executed." He often hints that he is much older than he really is, suggesting that he spoke to Roman emperors and Egyptian priests. Most of his listeners believe he is simply crazy, but he does have a remarkable knowledge of ancient lore and customs.

Saint-Germain has contacts among the Freemasons and the kinori—indeed, it is widely believed that he is responsible for convincing Napoleon to visit the Pyramids of Giza in 1798. His regular home is in Europe, currently in Venice, but he travels extensively, often visiting St. Petersburg, Brazil, Cairo, and the United States on behalf of his various projects and patrons.

Keepers of Knowledge: The Rosicrucians



According to their own legends, the Rosicrucians were founded by Thothmes III of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1587 to 1375 B.C.) as the Companions of Horus (or "Shemsu Hor"), a group of initiates who were allowed access to secret tomes of learning passed down from prior contacts with alien beings (specifically, the Greys and the kinori). Some believe that rogue Greys and even human–Grey crossbreeds walked among the Companions.

Thothmes (literally, "born of Thoth," the Egyptian god of wisdom) assumed the throne and ruled as pharaoh after his sister Hatshepsut died in 1480 B.C. While pharaoh, he led Egyptian armies on campaigns that conquered Palestine, Syria, and Nubia, and under his reign Egyptian influence reached to the Euphrates, expanding the empire and filling Egypt's coffers.

In truth, the Companions had their beginnings nearly a thousand years before the reign of Thothmes III, when rogue Greys worked alongside Egyptian scholars and (it is rumored) kinori alchemists to spread knowledge and learning throughout northern Africa and the Mediterranean. However, Thothmes III did greatly expand their activities, so the legends aren't far off.

With the destruction of the library at Alexandria, the body of Greek, Eastern, and pagan literature shrank. Since their order was founded on knowledge and learning, this was a major blow to the Companions of Horus. It's unknown how many scrolls were saved from the flames, but nontraditional historians have always assumed that any documents that survived did so in the hands of the Companions.

After this tragedy, the Companions lay low and almost disappeared as an organization until around the twelfth century, when they changed their order's name to the Rosicrucians. The name was derived from the fictitious character Christian Rosenkreuz (Rosy Cross), used by the Companions in literature to disseminate important, "subversive" information to the general public. Their books and tracts spoke of radical concepts such as free thought and enlightened thinking. In these later centuries, the documents from the library at Alexandria became the wellspring of all Rosicrucian knowledge. The society promoted the beliefs of the mystery religions and Gnostic Christianity as well as human rights and individual freedoms. Over the centuries, the Rosicrucians kept an extremely low profile, avoiding attention. Membership in the society was illegal throughout much of Europe, and the Church believed it to be a subversive, Satanic enemy.



Unlike with other secret societies, nonmembers frequently claim (privately or publicly) to be members. Charlemagne founded a Rosicrucian lodge at Toulouse in the ninth century, and in the year 1000 a group of Catholic monks founded the first Rosicrucian college, which flourished in secret until the sixteenth century (and which may have actually been linked with the real order on some level). Freemasons attempted to convince others that the Rosicrucians were subsumed into their own brotherhood. Even in modern society, the AMORC (the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis) claims to be the current incarnation of the Rosy Cross. Meanwhile, the Ascended Masters—the ancient and secret rulers of the Companions of Horus—watch quietly from Tibet.

After thousands of years, a small central core of wise men and women still comprise the true Companions of Horus. They carry on a legacy passed down after the collapse of the First Kingdom, when aliens and humans worked briefly side by side. The Companions have gone to great lengths to hide the origins of their knowledge and retain special arcane locations and rituals. At present, they seek to retain control over many paranormal sites, including Cairo, Ankara, Orenburg, and Gorakhpur. Their small numbers and scant resources make it difficult for them to survive when their holdings are discovered, and a number of their strongholds have been overrun.

A secret subgroup of the Companions known as the Great Builders is composed exclusively of human–Grey crossbreeds. These individuals seek to find doorways and other access points from which Strangers can arrive on Earth, with the ultimate goal of sealing off and isolating the Earth. By closing gates one by one, the Builders hope to preserve humanity for some special destiny. In the long run, they hope to prevent the Strangers from ever visiting Earth again. In the short run, they'll settle for preventing the current influx from growing worse.

Since the Builders' goals also include the prohibition of any spacefaring alien influence on Earth—*including* the Greys—it is likely that they seek to oppose the Greys and their agents however they can.

Headquarters: Somewhere in the Himalayas.

Branches: None known, but Geneva, Los Angeles, and New Delhi are suspected.

Followers: Unknown, but thought to number in the hundreds.

Resources: Ancient artifacts, contacts among the Greys and groups of unwitting New Age followers, an alliance with the Invisible College.

Secret Knowledge: Mindwalking powers, occult knowledge, secret documents of ancient human history.

Primary Goal: Promote enlightenment and the spread of knowledge.

Common Missions: Maintain their secrecy, find and recruit others with mindwalking abilities, seize positions of influence, and subtly promote the fall of totalitarian, oppressive regimes (almost to the point of promoting anarchism).

Or...

DARK•MATTER Gamemasters may choose to make the Rosicrucian Order a more sinister, corruptive influence. In league with evil extraterrestrials, the secretive, subversive order attempts to alter or manipulate events from the shadows in order to bring humankind to ruin, allowing the aliens to more easily control or conquer it.

Secrets of God: The Hidden Order of St. Gregory

The Order of St. Gregory is one of the oldest secret societies that still retains both its influence and its anonymity; unlike the Masons, the Rosicrucians, or the CIA, virtually no one outside its own membership has ever heard of the order, and that's the way its members prefer to keep it. Reputed to have been founded in A.D. 958 by the Patriarch of Constantinople at a time when that city was still the greatest bastion of Christendom, the order is still nominally answerable to both Orthodox and Catholic church authorities. In practice, it answers to neither.



The order's independence results from a combination of historical accidents and canny planning. The conflict between the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch on the one hand and the patriarch of Rome—the so-called *primus inter pares*—on the other began under Pope Leo I (440–461). Ultimately it led to the final schism between the Catholic and Orthodox branches of the church in 1054, when legates of the Roman patriarch Leo IX excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople. Suddenly finding itself owing loyalty to both the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the Hidden Order chose to continue on its own path, answering to the Pope in Rome and the patriarchs everywhere else while staying very quiet about its activities against demons, sorcerers, and other evils besetting the faithful. But the order was already planning a change. Its opportunity came in 1202 during the Fourth Crusade, when the Crusaders decided to plunder the Christians of Constantinople. During the ensuing chaos, the order hid all traces of its foundation and membership by destroying church records during the sack. Suddenly, the order disappeared from Orthodox records. While some few manuscripts still alluded to its existence, these were removed in the chaos caused during the many years when the papacy abandoned Rome for Avignon from 1305 to 1415, and during the years of the Roman antipopes from 1378 to 1415.

Vasily Nevsky Gregorovich
Patriarch, Order of St. Gregory

Level 16 Human Diplomat (Tech Op)

STR	8	[0]	INT	12	[+1]
DEX	9	[0]	WIL	10	[0]
CON	10		PER	13	

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 3
Perk: Faith
Flaw: Code of Honor (priestly vows)
Achievements: Increased Intelligence, Increased Personality
FX Energy Points: 7

Attacks

Unarmed*	8/4/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

* +d4 base situation die

Defenses

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

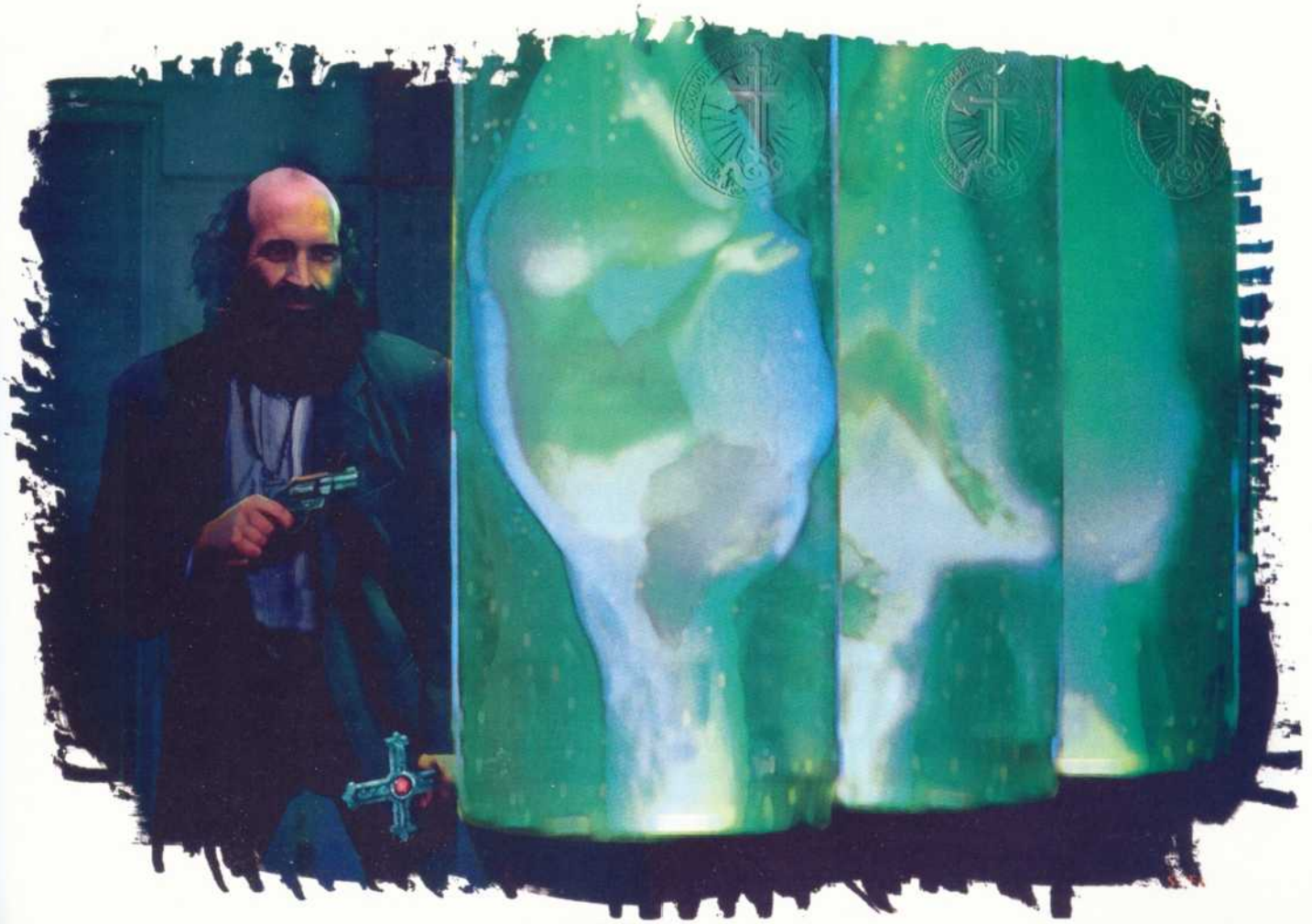
Athletics [8]; Unarmed Attack [8]; Vehicle [9]–*land [12]*, Stamina [10]; Knowledge [12]–*computer [13], language (Russian) [15], language (English) [15], language (Grey) [13]*; Social [12]–*history (Church) [18]*; Awareness [10]–*perception [13]*, Interaction [13]–*interview [15]*.

FX Skills

Monotheism–*demon ward [14], exorcism [13], guidance [16]*.

As the 61st priest to hold the post of Patriarch of the order, Father Gregorovich is in the rather unfortunate position of leading the order just as all hell has broken loose. He and his followers (primarily ordained Catholic priests from Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) desperately try to keep up with the reports of visitations, possessions, and other supernatural phenomena that are flooding into the Vatican. While the Pope has granted them additional funds, the process of training a seminarian into a full-blown and ordained priest capable of handling such dangers isn't quick. The lag time has kept the Hidden Order from being able to cope effectively with the Strangers.

Despite this, it's an exciting time to be the keepers of so much valuable information.



Many other such papers were destroyed (whether deliberately or accidentally, no one knows) during the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.

In the centuries since, the order has rarely numbered more than five hundred men (the group excludes women from its ranks), yet in every century it has been able to act to prevent paranormal disaster. None of its triumphs has made it into the history books as anything more than the achievement of individuals: The witch hunts of the fifteenth century, the Inquisition of the sixteenth century, and the gradual suppression and settlement of the Roma (Gypsies) have all been the work of the order. It has also contributed to the destruction of pagan documents and shamanistic knowledge in the New World during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the imposition of colonial authorities against the Thuggee and Chinese mystic sects during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the more subtle "diplomatic pressures" of the twentieth century that led to the invasion of Tibet and destruction of its temples. Though ultimately these acts are all the order's handiwork, nothing can be proven conclusively—it thrives on working indirectly. Since no one suspects its goals or methods, no one has bothered to try to uncover its mysteries.

The order has several key principles that keep its secrets tightly held. For one thing, the members of the order believe that they have been divinely appointed to fight against the instruments of evil. They see all aliens as minions of Satan, worthy of nothing more than annihilation. For another, certain members of the order are capable of amazing feats of mindwalking and are often highly trained in the martial arts. They have no tolerance for any forms of magic other than their own, seeing them as tools of darkness, and they have no need for personal glory: They are humble enough to fight their crusade from the shadows.

The brethren of the order are primarily European or American men with access to Faith FX (Monotheism), secret knowledge, and close contacts with the Knights of Malta.

Headquarters: St. Petersburg, Russia.

Branches: Rome, Jerusalem, Cyprus, Cairo, Alexandria, Moscow, Madras, Kiev, Lisbon, Malta, Athens, Istanbul, Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Vladivostok, Juneau, Seattle, Flagstaff, and Tijuana.

Followers: Unknown, but believed to number at least three hundred ordained priests and two hundred knights who have taken full vows.

Resources: Arcane papers, ancient relics, scholars learned in dead languages, a network of true believers.

Secret Knowledge: Sacred relics, recovered Grey mindwalking tech, Monotheism Faith FX.

Primary Goal: Rid Earth of the minions of Satan.

Common Missions: Relic recovery, doorway examination and closure, "exorcism" of Strangers, gathering sacred texts from secular locations, destruction of non-Christian or occult groups or individuals.

Or . . .

According to some intelligence analysts, the story of the Hidden Order's founding and its goals is completely bogus. By their theory, the order was founded at some point between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth century in the St. Petersburg area and has never been affiliated with a Christian denomination, Orthodox or otherwise: this is just a front. Instead, the order served the Russian czar and the Ascended Masters of Tibet, and trains its members in Orenburg and the hidden city of Shambhala. Its true goals further the agenda of the Great Builders of the Rosicrucians, finding and destroying doorways as their agents.

The Catholic Church and the Paranormal

There are indications that the Church has found, lost, and rediscovered paranormal evidence several times in its history. A doorway in Jerusalem was first unearthed by Prior Simon, a devout Parisian scholar and theologian, and reported to Pope Leo IX in A.D. 1052. In the early days of the Church's investigation into the find, the Jerusalem site was thought to be a gateway that allowed humans to travel directly to heaven. Through prayer, ritual, and sacrifice, the priests assigned to investigate found that they could open the doorway once every fifty years, and these days became high holy days in the secret calendar of the Church's feasts. Indeed, only the most fanatical priests and sometimes a particularly devout king were able to open the door. Sometimes they received a visitation in which a creature came through the doorway from beyond to spread knowledge, take others bodily with it back beyond the veil, or—in a few cases—exact a terrible vengeance for the presumption of humanity in tampering with such holy mysteries.

In a sense, those who believed that the doorway was a path to heaven were right; those who left through the gate rarely returned. All those who did come back were profoundly changed, usually visionaries prone to fits, seizures, and prophetic trances and visions. A few were simply mad; others were mad in a powerful and precognitive way. The Church made saints of the ones whose personalities were still somewhat intact, since their abilities were impossible to categorize as anything but miracles.

The Church has encountered UFOs, poltergeists and ghosts, supernatural powers, and unnatural occurrences of all types throughout its history. While it often labels such events as evil or Satanic (right-wing fundamentalist Protestants are even more likely to categorize these phenomena as demonic), it's just as likely to dismiss such incidents outright—at least publicly.

Thus far, the Church has kept its knowledge of the paranormal a secret, buried deep in its records along with lists of the hosts of Hell, rites for blessing the crops, and feudal rights and obligations. A secret library in the Vatican is rumored to be devoted entirely to such records, as well as forbidden occult tomes and similar books. Any organization that has been around for millennia and keeps its records in Latin can keep a secret rather effectively. Only a small subset of the church, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, is permitted access to these records and entrusted with seeking out and resisting efforts by dark forces to visit the Earth.

Creative Anarchism: The Invisible College

According to some, anarchy has been burdened with an unfairly bad image. Philosophers and poets created the Invisible College in the 1500s and 1600s, and throughout the last few centuries this secretive group has existed just on the periphery of society to fight against totalitarian control and destabilize centralized power in general. Through often subtle means, the group slowly spread its message of individual freedom and the evils of authority. This naturally brought it to the attention of the Rosicrucians, a vastly older organization with similar goals (at least on some level). The Rosicrucians (and their secret heart, the Ascended Masters) have been allies with the Invisible College ever since, although the anarchists have never made the relationship easy.

The Invisible College exists only in the dark, shadowy fringes of society. Operating in tiny cells of a dozen members or so (who don't always know all the others in their group, let alone those in other cells), this secret organization creates art and literature that carries their hidden message. Some of the more influential artists and writers throughout the last four centuries—including popular stars of today—have secretly belonged to the Invisible College. Members have included Galileo, Beethoven, John Keats, Pablo Picasso, William S. Burroughs, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Salvador Dali, John Lennon, Steve Biko, and Robert Anton Wilson. Most members, of course, have a much lower profile.

Though the roots of the college lie within the creative arts, a good portion of the modern organization is devoted to action. The Invisible College supports (or actually operates as) tiny terrorist organizations, revolutionaries, and even certain "lone nuts" with agendas based on the downfall of some authoritarian structure. Sometimes the network of operatives works on modest levels against authority figures as small as university student governments. At other times, the Invisible College's schemes pit it against various law enforcement agencies or branches of government. The Invisible College has been responsible for political assassinations and bomb attacks, yet has organized peace rallies and freedom marches as well. It has put events in motion that have freed political prisoners and helped end apartheid. Amnesty International was created by the Invisible College, and some say even Greenpeace has its origins in an Invisible College cell.

The organization wages secret wars against groups such as the Freemasons and the Knights of Malta that attempt to use existing government structures to build their own totalitarian regimes. The very nature of the Bilderbergers and the Trilateral Commission labels them as even greater evils than existing governments in the eyes of the Invisible College.

Each cell has its own means of operation. Some choose to work subtly, while others prefer more overt (and often violent) action. Still other cells explore the unknown frontiers, probing paranormal and mysterious phenomena looking for secrets and power. These latter activities have brought them into contact with the Hoffmann Institute. Usually their relationship with the Institute is at least somewhat friendly (if a little distant).

Because of their anarchistic and individualistic nature, the cells often have a rotating leadership position, or no leader at all. Even within a single cell, the members work as often as individuals as they do a team. Groups with looser structures consist of associates who know only one or two others in their cell. At the other extreme, no group of people in the world is as close as some of the tighter-than-family Invisible College cells.

Whether the group has a single, final goal is uncertain—even to most of its membership. Perhaps its only goal is to keep authoritarian structures from gaining a stranglehold on individuality. Perhaps its members cling to the seemingly impossible goal of instituting a completely free and anarchistic society throughout the world.

Rumor has it that Invisible College cells know a great deal more about alien activities on Earth than the general public does. Some say that a part of their agenda includes fighting against the alien Greys who hope to enslave humanity. Others claim that they work with the Greys, who support the College's goals of freedom and individuality. Whatever the truth, each cell probably knows a great many secrets beyond the ken of the rest of society—but due to the organization's nature, these secrets are often kept even from other members of the Invisible College.

Lastly, Invisible College members are actually encouraged to belong to other secret societies and illuminati organizations to gain knowledge and infiltrate power structures. They also like the idea of other organizations not being able to trust their own membership.

Headquarters: None known—each cell has its own base of operation.

Branches: Worldwide, each usually consisting of only five to fifteen members.

Followers: Unknown even to its own members, but may number in the hundreds.

Resources: Varies greatly with each cell but may include paranormal powers, great wealth, or surprisingly high technology. They are allied with the Rosicrucians on some level.

Secret Knowledge: Mindwalking powers, occult knowledge, government secrets.

Primary Goal: Promote individuality and freedom.

Common Missions: Maintain their secrecy, find and recruit others, promote the fall of all regimented societal or governmental infrastructures.

Or . . .

Bloodthirsty diabolists and mass murderers, these maniacs thrive on destruction and death. Reveling in chaos, they seek the complete downfall of civilization. They are the enemies of all other groups and of law-abiding people everywhere.

Or that's what they want you to think. Instead, they seek to undermine only the portions of human civilization that they disagree with. Their nigh-incomprehensible agenda involves carefully pruning away the factors they don't like by means of violence, manipulation, or the swaying of public opinion. For example, the Invisible College might detonate a bomb in a day-care facility to increase law enforcement's pressure on kooky right-wing militia groups so that they become more vocal about the right to bear arms, thus making legitimate gun lobbyists look bad. This in turn renders the lobbyists unable to stop legislation repealing the Second Amendment, making it easier for the Invisible College to facilitate the process of repealing amendments to the Constitution that they *really* don't like. The Invisible College's motives are as difficult to decipher as their secretive structure and their bizarre plots.

A Modern Crusade: Knights of Malta

Formerly known as the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta, the Knights of Malta was founded during the Crusades as the Order of Knights Hospitaller. Since then it has been known by many other titles, such as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, and Knights of Rhodes. Today, the members are the inheritors of centuries of tradition and are rightfully proud of their contribution to protecting human interests against the dark forces that have threatened Europe over the millennium.

As a crusading order, the knights performed admirably for about a century, until Jerusalem fell to Saladin and the Muslim armies in 1187. From that day forward they have been an order in retreat, though as might be expected of military men, they retreated in good order. They fell back from Jerusalem to Acre, then to Cyprus. In 1310, they seized the island of Rhodes from the Turks and held it for two hundred years. The island was besieged in 1480 but held firm before falling back into Turkish hands in 1522. The knights retreated and were soon granted the island of Malta by Charles V of Germany.



From 1530 to 1798, the order ruled the island of Malta, and it also held the island of Gozo and the city of Tripoli. Malta was presided over by a Grand Master who was answerable to the General Chapter, the eight leaders of each of the languages where the order was established. During those years the order was divided into eight languages, each led by a Conventual Bailiff. These dignitaries included the Grand Commander (Provençal), Grand Marshal (Auvergne), Grand Hospitaller (French), Grand Admiral (Italian), Grand Conservator (Aragonese), Grand Turcopolier (English), Grand Bailiff (German), and Grand Chancellor (Castillian). In every province were one or more Grand Priories presided over by Grand Priors, and beneath these were the Commanderies, over each of which was a Commander. At the order's height, 22 Grand Priories and 596 Commanderies were scattered throughout the countries of Europe. All members were required to show proof of noble birth before being sworn in at a simple and public ceremony.

The greatest battle of the order's career was not in the Holy Land, but in its adopted home when the knights struggled with the Turks for dominion over the Mediterranean during the sixteenth century. The Siege of Malta in 1565 ranks as one of the greatest offensives ever, and it provided a pivotal victory for the Christian realm at a time of Muslim strength. During the four-month siege, a force of four hundred knights and six thousand men-at-arms held off a Turkish army of a hundred thousand soldiers and two hundred galleys. The defenders inflicted horrible losses before the siege was lifted by the arrival of a relief force of Spaniards and Italians. The Knights of Malta put a final stop to Ottoman naval ambitions at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, when the Republic of Venice and its allies—including the Knights—sank most of the Turkish Navy.

Since that time, the Knights of Malta have maintained a vigil over the island and its secrets, a rulership that was not challenged again seriously until World War II, when the Nazi Luftwaffe contested the island. However, that attempt, like that of the Turks, failed.

Despite its successes against Islamic naval forces of the period, Henry VIII abolished the order in England, and though briefly reestablished by Mary, it was never restored to its place. By a decree of Charles IV of Spain, the languages of Aragon and Castillian were combined to become the Royal Order of St. John, and he declared himself the Grand Master. Much like with the demise of the Templars, a monarch had usurped the order, though less violently and without papal authority. Most of the order dissolved shortly thereafter, and only the languages and Grand Priories of Germany and Italy remained. The order lost its German commanderies during the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century, and they were never recovered.

A decree of the Constituent Assembly abolished the order as a relic of the ancient regime in France in 1792. A further crippling blow to the military might of the knights came in 1798, when the island of Malta was surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte by the cowardly Louis de Hompesch. Hompesch failed to prepare the island's defenses even after the French proclamations against the order in 1792 and 1797. In 1798 the armies of the Republic of France seized control of the island while on their way to Egypt. In 1800, the French lost possession of the island to the British Navy, and Great Britain held the island until 1964 despite various treaties, promises, and other schemes by the Knights to regain control.

It is a little-known fact that the Knights of Malta refused to surrender their hold on the Catholic states, even after the loss of their temporal base. Its loyalists re-formed the Spanish branch of the order in Mexico in 1813, just after the country declared independence from Spanish rule. This branch of the knights was led by a new Grand Conservator and seems to have been especially zealous in its efforts to root out the works of Satan, putting the methods of the Inquisition back into practice and rousting dozens of small-time heretics. The Mexican branch of the knights soon spread throughout Central and South America, eventually reaching as far as Argentina.

The order was reestablished in England after the Napoleonic wars by the Duke of Manchester in 1815 and was chartered in America exactly one hundred years later, in 1915. In addition, in 1907 a Brazilian branch was founded in Sao Paulo, led by a Grand Preceptor. Thus, though many people see only the ancient fading glories of the Knights of Malta in Catholic European countries, the order is just as strong, perhaps stronger, in the New World.

In modern times, the knights operate much more quietly than they did in the thirteenth century, with a much greater emphasis on charitable works and caring for the sick than during their heyday as Crusaders. Behind the public facade they remain a military order, dedicated first and foremost to the literal defense of the Church and more broadly to the "defense of Christendom" in general. Though this seems a quaint or even archaic concept to many in the twenty-first century, the knights take their duties seriously.

Of course, in doing so, they believe that the best way to protect their interests is to put themselves in control of as much of Western society as they can. The current director and Grand Master is a German of noble blood by the name of Marcus, Graf von Billengen, a middle-aged man going gray and running to fat but still capable of a malevolent swagger when called upon to act to crush his order's age-old enemies and chief rivals, the Freemasons.

The knights' remaining publicly acknowledged Grand Priories are those of Rome, Lombardy and Venice, Naples and Sicily, Bohemia, Austria, and England. Its secret Grand Priories include those of New England, Louisiana, Quebec, and Mexico. It's unclear what relationship remains between the Catholic rootstock of the order and its associated Lutheran branches in Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands; the two orders formed an association in 1961, but the exact details remain undisclosed.

The Knights of Malta remains the largest landowner in Italy, with all its properties exempted from certain Italian fiscal jurisdiction. The order's palaces in Rome on the Aventine Hill and in the Via Condotti enjoy extraterritorial status like that of the Vatican. Likewise, the order's palaces in Vienna and Prague have been restored to their former extraterritorial status, and thus are no longer subject to local law.

Currently, Grand Senator William Addington leads the New England Grand Priory. It remains closely allied with the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, as both groups seek to destroy dark "Satanic menaces." Their agenda includes attempts to prevent the further decay of modern morality, and in so doing oppose most liberal and non-Christian groups. Yet the knights display many differences that distinguish them from their allies of the Hidden Order. While the latter is a religious group, the knights are more of a moralistic organization, basing their outlook on opinion rather than doctrine. The Knights of Malta think in terms of groups rather than individual souls, opposing what they see as non-Christian forces rather than working to teach or spread the faith. Many key figures in the religious right of the United States as well as conservative politicians throughout the West are members of the Knights of Malta.

Headquarters: The island of Malta.
Branches: Worldwide.
Followers: Hundreds, with thousands of support personnel.
Resources: Practically limitless monetary resources, access to cutting-edge technology.
Secret Knowledge: Occult and religious knowledge, government secrets.
Primary Goal: Prevent the decay of society; establish control of the world.
Common Missions: Foil plans of the Freemasons, protect the Western world ("Christendom") from threats from outside and within, manipulate government officials and church leaders to establish a network of near-absolute power.

Or...

The Knights of Malta are actually an evil organization of occult masters working under the guise of Christian defenders. These dark, demonic priests seek total world domination, but they first want to eliminate their rivals, who range from the Freemasons to the Bilderbergers to many entire governments.

Occult Masters: The Final Church

Although they give it many different names, various researchers believe that the existence of numerous black magic cults, animal mutilation, and occult-related kidnappings and murders are actually evidence of a monolithic, global conspiracy—a conspiracy serving the needs of demonic masters. Unlike so many other organizations, this one seems to have no single name—which further obscures its global nature. The organization boasts members of all faiths and creeds and walks of life, all of whom have either traded their souls for temporal power, or who have been duped by the clever lies of their infernal lords. Some would argue that one is the same as the other.

In many ways, this gigantic, pervasive secret organization has its roots in prehistory, when men first began to recognize dark powers. Dark enclaves of evil priests and priestesses have kept this tradition alive—a tradition that includes black magic and human sacrifice. Much of the cult's beliefs seem to have been codified in the occult writings of Eliphas Levi, over one hundred years ago. Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn from the early 1900s also had a profound effect on modern black magic.

In other ways, however, the Final Church (for lack of a better comprehensive name) is a product of a more modern age. The followers of this cult have set their sights upon no less than complete control of the world. Using communication mediums such as music, television, movies, and the Internet, they proclaim and spread their subtle mission. Despite their desire for new members, however, theirs is not a plot to convert, but to conquer. Through power gained from bloody rituals, the members of the cult hope to master the world and its people, most of whom they think of as mere sheep to be used or slaughtered.

The ranks of the cult swell not only with depraved maniacs and serial killers but also with the rich and famous, looking for a path to greater fame and power. Some of these influential members keep their association a secret (particularly those in political power), but others make it all too clear with visible cult symbols and imagery in their art, music, writing, or just in their wardrobe. Of course, this sort of activity has promoted a thriving "satanic chic" culture. But not every heavy-metal musician sporting a pentagram belongs to this global organization. The vaudevillery and showmanship that exist in the popular view of Satanism are nothing more than attempts for publicity and attention.

To add to the confusion, the majority of people today who call themselves Satanists in fact have nothing to do with the Final Church—though the Final Church has learned that Satanism makes a convenient scapegoat for their own activities. But in point of fact, the respective religious beliefs of the Final Church's members have little bearing on their service to their demonic masters—a view learned from the demons themselves, who care not at all about such distinctions, as long as their will is served.

Like so many dark conspiracies, the Final Church has strong connections with the Nazis. Arcane occult groups such as the Thule Society fostered the growth of the Nazi Party in Germany and helped put men like Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, both occult adepts, in power. These black magicians believed in the dark power of human sacrifice and attempted to practice it on a huge, terrifying scale through the ritual murder of millions.

Himmler led a powerful magickal working conducted by the inner circle of the SS, the Order of the Death's Head, in the North Tower of Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia. In a room specially fitted to absorb and focus the harmonics of the ceremony, the order called forth a monstrous entity and discovered another means to power—the creation of a new, powerful race from a select group of humans. Although the idea of Aryan superiority was rooted in history, Himmler pioneered the idea of focusing a single, magical working to lift selected members of the human race and place them in a position of superiority over the rest. Racial superiority through magic fostered much Nazi activity from that point forward. (The Order of the Death's Head was also known as Novo Ordi Templi, the New Templars, some of whose members remain part of the Final Church even now.)



Today, members of the Final Church revere the dark memories of men like Hitler, and seek to continue his work by fueling the black magic fires with more and more sacrifice. They refer to the political and social works of the Nazis as a different sort of magic. This political black sorcery takes the idea of the occult ritual beyond the individual level—it encourages a way of life that is, in fact, a singular, constant ritual itself. While not necessarily interested in Nazi racism, they follow the ideal that black magic will create a place for them as masters of the world.

Thrill-kill death squads roam North America—and probably the world—looking for sacrificial victims. Controlled by the Final Church, these small bands roam in vans and without discernable pattern, sometimes setting up short-term isolated bases of operation. Their activities start with animals, usually dogs or cats but sometimes (in more rural areas) with cattle, which are sacrificed and mutilated, often exsanguinated. Eventually, the killers move on to human targets, preying mostly upon loners or homeless drifters that are difficult to trace. Sometimes, however, they fall upon more public targets. Most of these killers are never caught, their victims never found. When victims are discovered, the blame shifts easily elsewhere, while the death squads have already moved on.

Over recent years, a few Final Church-inspired killings have gained a great amount of attention. Charles Manson led a small group calling itself the Family, which followed the beliefs of the Final Church. The Family also had links to various music industry professionals and Hollywood celebrities. Although they committed a number of heinous acts undetected, in 1969 they conducted a brutal mass murder in California accompanied by an occult ritual that drew a great deal of public attention. One member of the Family, years later, attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford (a Freemason who was a part of the Warren Commission that investigated the death of JFK, and who would have been succeeded by Vice President Rockefeller—who has many links to many different Illuminati groups).

In the mid to late 1970s, New York was terrorized by a serial killer known only as the Son of Sam. Black magic symbols often accompanied the murders and notes sent to the police from the killer. Although David Berkowitz was eventually arrested for the crimes, he claimed that he did not commit all of the murders. Instead, some evidence shows that a Final Church death squad had preyed upon New York City for many months. With Berkowitz as the patsy, the cultists simply moved on.

About ten years later, Richard Ramirez, dubbed the Nightstalker, committed a number of ritualistic occult murders, leaving behind evidence and proclaiming himself a devotee of dark powers. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, he most likely worked for the Final Church.

The Final Church uses some of the same techniques practiced by the CIA in their MK-ULTRA program (drugs, sensory deprivation, hypnosis, harmonics and low-band frequencies, and subliminal communications) to control others. While many cultists follow eagerly, others are brainwashed and mind-controlled, their own wills beaten into submission until they become easily used tools of the Final Church. Some of this starts at a very early age, as new members are "recruited" through kidnapping and abduction.

Some of the leaders of Final Church, it is said, are not even human. While stories claim that they are vampires or other supernatural creatures, still others (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive) state that nonhuman, saurian creatures adept at

The Grimoire of Sebastian of Tyre

This book purports to be a compilation of drawings, rituals, invocations, and rules for safe operation of a number of artifacts of "fey" manufacture, as well as maps that are said to show the locations of the "burrows of the Fair Folk" throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and southern Europe. In addition, it claims to contain a lexicon of "faerie speech" and a discussion of faerie habits, customs, and manners. Most of the secret societies aware of the presence of the Greys on Earth interpret this as a clear sign that the author of the *Grimoire* somehow gained the trust and confidence of a group of Greys stationed near Tyre. According to legend, all extant copies of the *Grimoire* were stolen away by the Fair Folk after the author's death.

Anyone reading the *Grimoire* (written in Latin and an odd pidgin form of transliterated Grey) may gain up to two ranks of the Culture–*etiquette* (Grey) skill and one rank of Knowledge–*language* (Grey), though the hero must still spend the requisite number of achievement points to buy the skill. Whether any of the rumored Grey base sites still exist as shown on the maps or whether they have long since been stripped and abandoned is up to the Gamemaster. Certainly any group of heroes acquiring the *Grimoire* or a copy of it can expect attention from the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, the Knights of Malta, and possibly the Greys themselves.

black magic—known to some as kinori—actually lead or help direct the Final Church.

In short, while many conspiratorial groups demonstrate evil and ruthless qualities, the Final Church is probably the most merciless, despicable, and malevolent group of humans ever to walk the Earth's surface.

Headquarters: The Bohemian Grove, California (near San Francisco).

Branches: London, New York, Berlin, Paris, Hong Kong, Kiev, Johannesburg, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City. Small groups are scattered throughout the world.

Followers: Hundreds of thousands.

Resources: Vast monetary resources, occult power, followers brainwashed to die for their beliefs.

Secret Knowledge: The occult (particularly Arcane Magic FX [Diabolism]).

Primary Goal: Control the world.

Common Missions: Abduction and murder of humans and animals for sacrifice, spying upon the powerful and wealthy for blackmail purposes, drug trafficking, maintaining secrecy and control through intimidation and terror tactics.

Or...

These occult adepts actually work for aliens. A malevolent alien presence has descended upon the Earth and seeks to subvert its people while feeding upon their fear, hatred, and other negative emotions. The Final Church worships and serves these dark alien gods, hoping not only to be spared from the final destruction of humanity brought about by the alien presence, but also to be exalted as faithful servants and rewarded with vast power.

Or there simply is no global demonic conspiracy. Small, localized black magic cults exist, but they have no organized structure. In DARK•MATTER campaigns, this option allows the Final Church conspiracy to be used as a red herring for occult happenings or a network of allegedly evil organizations.

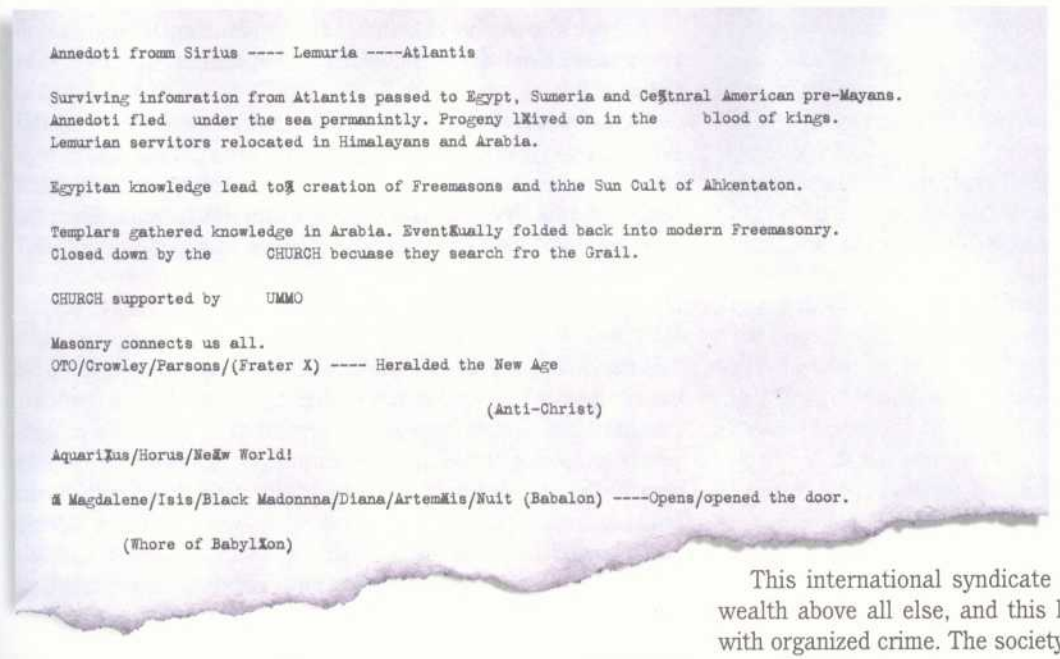
Wealth of Nations: The Bilderbergers

Each February, the members of the Bilderberg Society convene a business summit of the rich and powerful to set a course for humanity for the coming year. At this meeting, prime ministers, finance ministers, leaders of political parties, heads of great banks, economists, CEOs, academics, influential media figures, and permanent members of the group all gather to listen to financial and political briefings, set the group's economic agenda for the year, and determine a course with respect to other issues of policy and global development.

These meetings, perhaps better called "summits," are held at alternating locations each year with absolutely no publicity. After all, many of the participants are owners or leading members of the corporate media. The hotel or private estate where the meeting takes place is always ringed by security guards, so that uninvited journalists (which means all of them) are kept kilometers away. The members of the society always pledge not to repeat publicly any of the discussions. Every participant, from the great foreign ministers and heads of industrial companies down to lowly professors and financiers, is stripped of office as he or she enters the meetings. This allows people to say what they really think without fear of repercussions—and without fear of being called to answer for it as an officeholder. Every group member attends strictly as a private citizen for everyone's security, especially that of the group itself. Without public accountability, they need never elaborate on what goes on behind closed doors and can easily deflect close investigation. Indeed, such measures elevate the Bilderberg Society entirely above public scrutiny.

The Bilderbergers (who gained their name from the Bilderberg Hotel where they held their first meeting in Oosterbeek, Holland, from May 29 to May 31, 1954) are really just the latest in a succession of international conclaves of the wealthy and powerful who attempt to manipulate global events. The idea stretches back at least as far as the Round Table groups created by Cecil Rhodes in 1891. The Bilderbergers work with the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations—in fact, they're really all a part of the same conspiracy. Each group shares members and manipulates world events in different ways. For the purposes of the discussion here, the name Bilderberg Society actually encompasses all of the world's elite who belong to these supragovernmental organizations.

This international syndicate devotes itself to the pursuit of wealth above all else, and this leads to occasional involvement with organized crime. The society's Financial Committee has con-



tacts among the American Mafia and the Russian mob alike, as well as the Colombian cocaine kingpins and the Southeast Asian heroin warlords of the Golden Triangle. More important, the Bilderberg Society has ties to several species of aliens and already does business with two of them. The sandmen send agents to buy and sell weaponry with the Russian *organizatsiya* and trade certain drugs and chemicals with the Camorra, the Naples mob. The Bilderbergers also work with certain rogue members of the Greys, whom they have—in several documented cases—employed as agents against both humans and Greys alike.

The Bilderberg Society hasn't just been using the aliens, though; the aliens have been using the syndicate as well, and a few of the group's members have been compromised or bought off. Both the group and other organizations that observe the Bilderbergers consider this a matter of the greatest concern. After all, the society has positioned itself into an enormously powerful player in human affairs. If group members no longer represented the interest of humanity—or even *their* version of humanity—how much damage could they do? And who could stop them?

The Bilderbergers see themselves as a supragovernmental agency. Indeed, one of the Bilderberg Society's founders once said, "Our duties are greater than those borne by any single nation." The Society coercively manipulates global finances to its own advantage and the benefit of its most important members. Junior members establish rigid and binding monetary rates around the world (often to their own nation's detriment) in the hope of someday rising in the ranks and being able to turn the Society's resources to their own ends.

Most of all, the Bilderberg Society retains power by selecting politicians whom the members determine should become heads of state, and targeting those whom it wants removed from power. It has the resources—financial, media, and otherwise—to ensure that it usually gets its way in public elections and even in palace coups. Rather than pursue an agenda that would work to all humanity's benefit—perhaps by solving global health, energy, environmental, and agricultural problems—the group instead guarantees the propagation of its power and the enrichment of its members at the expense of human rights and ecosystem degradation worldwide.

As Director Nakami of the Hoffmann Institute wrote, "One cannot help but be suspicious of those who set priorities for the future of humanity in total secrecy."

Headquarters: New York (Manhattan) and Amsterdam.

Branches: None, but the meeting place of the yearly gathering changes each year.

Followers: About three hundred living members, plus approximately one thousand full-time agents, employees, and bodyguards.

Resources: Vast monetary and technological assets.

Secret Knowledge: Financial and governmental secrets.

Primary Goal: Increase wealth; maintain the status quo; own the world.

Common Missions: Manipulation of stocks, currencies, corporations, and governments, obtaining military, technological, or financial secrets, contact with aliens, manipulation of entire societies to prepare them for group-engineered events (financial collapse, famines, and other large-scale crises).

Or...

The Bilderberg Society knows that the world will soon end. Global catastrophe in the form of a new Ice Age looms before the Earth like the *Titanic* heading inevitably toward an iceberg. The group is secretly clearing the Brazilian rain forests, since within the next decade the only habitable portion of the planet will be near the equator. Even now, the society spends its vast resources to build shelters and whole cities for itself while using its considerable media control and influence to keep its master plan a secret.

The Carrying Capacity Working Group

The Bilderberg Society is divided into dozens of special interest groups that communicate with one another about selected topics such as currency rates, international trade, and even "population management" (controlling riots and rebellions). The members of these committees work together informally throughout the year, preparing for the Bilderbergers' annual meeting. These subgroups have dull, everyday titles such as the Currency Group, the Media Committee, the Financial Committee, and the Free Trade Policy Group—and their decisions can change the world. One of these groups has become a particular topic of concern in the last twenty years: the Carrying Capacity Working Group.

The term "carrying capacity" simply refers to the ability of an ecosystem (such as the Earth) to support life. A small but powerful segment of the highest levels of the Bilderberg Society has determined that the Earth has already exceeded its carrying capacity, and that a crash of foodstocks, economies, and populations is inevitable. Indeed, the greatest accelerator of the oncoming crash results from the actions of the rich, industrialized countries. To reduce the severity of the environmental and resource collapse, the members of the CCWG concluded that they must destroy the economic order that they profit from. This has not proven to be a popular opinion among the group members, to put it mildly.

The majority of the Bilderbergers obviously wish to maintain the current order and delay this economic meltdown for as long as possible, because they profit so mightily from the present system. Furthermore, acknowledging that a resource collapse might be imminent would give others time to prepare for it and perhaps profit from the turmoil. Instead, the group's members have set their own contingencies in place, whether this involves investing in new forms of energy production or simply buying up a large tract of arable land and peasant farmers in a remote but stable region of the world.

Despite the opposition within the group, the CCWG's council of radical leaders formed a small cabal-within-a-cabal dedicated to bringing about the destruction of current economic systems. Through careful positioning in the world's commodities and stock markets, they are entirely capable of engineering a panic. To prevent automatic safety measures from kicking in, they've hired mercenary sandmen who can prevent the markets from closing by nullifying all the safety overrides. The gears will jam and the markets will crash, and crash hard. Indeed, if it must, the CCWG intends to hold the world leaders hostage at the annual meeting of the Bilderberg Society—and by holding the people at the fulcrum of power, it hopes to change the world.

Search for Truth: The Hoffmann Institute

Established in 1917, the Hoffmann Institute is a fixture in the ranks of human politics and history, created as a response to changes on Earth and especially to alterations resulting from dark matter tides. However, it remains a relatively independent force, not advancing any particular national agenda. Instead, it derives funding from a series of crucial patents and by farming out its technical expertise to certain well-placed government agencies. The Institute strives for peaceful coexistence between humans and for the steady advancement of scientific knowledge about the shadow world of the paranormal.

Founded by Dr. Itohiro Nakami, a rogue Grey disguised as a Japanese man, the Institute was created to investigate the rising Dark Tide and help humanity survive alien infiltration and paranormal occurrences. Although the Institute was originally funded by Tomas Hoffmann (hence its name), Hoffmann's view of what the Institute should be doing and Dr. Nakami's more idealistic goals finally collided in the 1970s. Hoffmann was interested in deploying the Institute's resources to exploit technologies that might turn a profit or provide leverage in global power politics. Nakami was more interested in providing alternative energy sources, parapsychology and psychic research, and a deeper understanding of how pollution affected human health and agricultural fertility.



Hoffmann died before the split became irreparable, but the Institute had come to the attention of Hoffmann's friends and political associates in the Bilderberg Society. The Institute's funds didn't disappear, as about half of the Hoffmann fortune was set up as a trust for the Institute's operating expenses, but suddenly the eyes of the Bilderbergers were focused on the Institute's activities. Ever since, the two organizations have been rivals and often outright enemies, fighting for access to a limited supply of alien artifacts and information.

The Institute's first and most important goal is the suppression and control of alien organisms, and the discovery of alien technology, arcana, and mindwalking abilities before this information reaches the public. On one hand, this strategy allows the Institute to broaden its own knowledge of the threats humanity faces. On the other, it permits the Institute to keep one step ahead of other groups that might use such information for less benign purposes.

If necessary, Institute researchers are expected to destroy such evidence to prevent it from falling into the hands of rival organizations. Under no circumstances may the materials be released to public groups (even to UFO-watching societies, for example); they must always be turned over to the Archives.

The Institute has no wish to draw attention to itself, as its sometimes-fringe researches could easily become a scapegoat for human fears, government investigation, and public outcry. As a result, it keeps its activities quiet. In cases where Institute operatives are captured by hostile governments, conspiracies, or secret societies, they are trained to deflect suspicion from themselves onto other groups, supported by surprising knowledge of other groups and false credentials. An Institute field agent may claim to be a member of the CIA, a right-wing paramilitary group, or even a secretive group such as the Bilderbergers rather than admit his true allegiance. In many cases, this deception successfully confuses the trail of suspicion and prevents others from tracing an operation back to the Institute.

From time to time, agents become liabilities to the Institute. Whether this occurrence stems from repeated failures, security breaches, or general incompetence, the ultimate expression of this failure is the "permanent debriefing." This procedure, invariably carried out by the Director himself, can last as long as eight hours, after which the agent is cast out of the Director's office with only jumbled memories of his or her time at the Institute and the work done there. Any further contact between the former agent and enemies of the Institute results in immediate arrest and deportation. Rumor has it that the agent is simply "disappeared," gangland-style, perhaps buried in wet concrete somewhere in the foundation of some new construction. Even wilder rumors claim that the agent is taken off-planet, turned over to the Greys, or imprisoned on a secret lunar base, but since none of these agents has ever returned, no one is really sure where they wind up.

At the forefront of the Institute's scientific efforts are laboratory studies on the nature of dark matter, specifically its interaction with other forms of matter and with the basic forces of the universe. The Institute knows that this medium is somehow responsible for a wide range of paranormal phenomena, but no one really knows how it operates. The Hoffmann researchers try to weave together a sort of Unified Theory of the Paranormal. Most of the theoretical work on the exact particles and formulae involved in dark matter itself is left to physicists, but Hoffmann researchers take those results into the field to fine-tune new materials, methods, and approaches to paranormal investigations. All this research occurs under the impetus of one simple, if terrifying, theory: *A species that can control dark matter can control one of the great forces of the universe. A species that fails to master dark matter can be overrun by those species that do control it.*

Special Division

As mentioned in *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*, the Special Division's existence and activities are kept secret from the bulk of the Institute's membership. Special Division agents generally carry out the most sensitive operations. Four sections of the Special Division exist (Blue, Green, Red, and White); these are described below.

The supervisor of the Special Division is Barbara Donizetto, a young woman who has done very well in a male-dominated branch of the Institute. While some suggest she may possess psionic abilities, rumors among jealous coworkers claim instead that she has seduced Dr. Nakami himself. Those "in the know" have difficulty keeping a straight face when hearing such accusations.

Heroes may encounter Special Division operatives from time to time (sometimes without realizing it), but shouldn't become members of the division until they've impressed someone in a position of authority.

Blue Section. Blue Section is responsible for all black ops carried out on the Institute's behalf: breaking and entering, surveillance, extractions from hostile territory, and even "arrests" to bring wanted figures back to an Institute safe house for interrogation or for hand off to Red Section. Blue Section often cooperates with the Intelligence Division. Its members are sometimes recruited from among white-collar criminals recently released from jail, and sometimes from the ranks of disaffected NSA or CIA agents.

Green Section. Green Section contains a large number of linguists, engineers, and medical specialists. While some rumors claim that Green is the section responsible for making and maintaining contact with the various species of Strangers, others claim that its work is more in the line of dissection than discussion. Since all their work is classified as Top Secret, only Green Section members know for sure.

Red Section. Red Section is only discussed quietly, and its existence is not acknowledged by the Institute Directorate or the Administrative Division. Its work is quite simple: eliminate threats to the Institute, or threats to humanity. All Red Section members are experienced killers, with Special Forces or CIA experience in wetwork (assassinations). Though they occasionally pull dull assignments (such as helping out with security concerns), for the most part they are seen as the Institute's most glamorous cutthroats, leading lives of action and mayhem.

White Section. Based in a compound known as Temple Cascadia set in the remote Cascade Mountains of Washington, members of White Section are rarely seen in the offices and research parks of the Institute's more conventional facilities. Here, the Institute trains its own paramilitary force. The compound is run by Branch Director Kundal Marrizhon, the sasquatch leader of the New Templar Order. Over 120 troops (called equerries) live here, including more than 30 sasquatch. They are commanded by sergeants, a marshal, and a preceptor (Marrizhon). Members of White Section are often assigned as bodyguards to an Institute executive or as muscle on a dangerous mission. See "Temple Cascadia" in *Chapter 7: Places of Interest* for more information.



All forms of occult and paranormal activity fall under the province of the Institute's investigation of the changes wrought by dark matter, and all of its researchers are expected to apply their results. Such experiments are kept on a need-to-know basis even within the Institute. Nevertheless, a few members of the Institute clearly have greater and more focused powers than the vast majority of the independent paranormalists on Earth.

In this time of avalanching technology and changing physical laws, mysterious new abilities manifest themselves among humanity every year. The expression of these abilities—psychic, miraculous, and otherwise—is still erratic and poorly understood by scientists. Skeptics discredit and mock most attempts to study the phenomena, and government agencies discredit the rest.

Institute research fellows are expected to remain much more open to these phenomena. Indeed, many of the most successful experimental and curious researchers now tackle exactly those problems and phenomena with renewed seriousness. After all, if something lies beyond our accepted beliefs and explanations, it is more likely to yield rich rewards of new knowledge if it can be captured, analyzed, or explained.

The result of over eighty years of dogged research has been a deep understanding of several types of psychic ability, as well as at least a surface knowledge of the principles, forms, and materials of Arcane Magic. While the category of "operative religion" remains beyond the Institute's ability to explain, a large body of eyewitness accounts and other evidence clearly indicates that miracles are real and have been occurring more frequently every year since 1860 (with the notable exception of a brief, unexplained period in the 1950s).

While the Institute has powerful enemies, it also has alliances—some more tenuous than others. Among human organizations, the Institute sees the United Nations as a friendly group, sharing the vision of a united humanity defending Earth against a global threat; while the methods the two groups use differ markedly, both feel that they are better served by actively engaging their opposite number and working to change it from the inside. In addition, the Agency for Foreign Technology has shared information with the Institute, though the Institute currently suspects that group's infiltration by the sandmen and therefore limits their access to sensitive data.

The Institute has ties to certain alien groups as well. Many of the Iltan faction of the Greys sympathize with Nakami's efforts, and some rogues occasionally provide resources, equipment, and other assistance (quietly, of course). The Institute has

Dr. Itohiro Nakami
Director, Hoffmann Institute

Level 24 Grey Diplomat (Mindwalker)

STR	7	[0]	INT	12	[+1]
DEX	10	[0]	WIL	14	[+2]
CON	8		PER	12	

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2
Perk: Good Luck
Flaw: Infamy (Greys; 2)
Achievements: Increased Intelligence, Increased Will, Increased Personality
Psionic Energy Points: 21

Attacks

Laser pistol	12/6/3	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m	En/0
Unarmed	3/1/0	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Defenses

Bulletproof business suit: d4–1 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d6–3 (En)
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Modern [10]–*pistol [12];* Vehicle [10]–*land [12];* Stamina [8]; Knowledge [12]–*computer [14], deduce [18], language (Grey) [16], language (Japanese) [16], language (English) [15], language (Spanish) [14], language (Latin) [13];* Medical [12]–*forensics [14], surgery [18], xenomedicine [15];* Social [12]–*history (Grey settlements) [15];* Admin [14]–*bureaucracy [16], management [17];* Awareness [14]–*intuition [15], perception [16];* Lore [14]–*conspiracy [17], occult [16], psychic [17], UFO [16];* Resolve [14]–*mental [17];* Deception [12]–*bluff [16];* Interaction [12]–*interview [16];* Leadership [12].

Psionic Skills

Telepathy [12]–*contact [13], datalink [13], illusion [18], mind shield [17], obscure [16], suggest [16].*

Equipment

Psionic illusion stabilizer (allows Nakami to maintain Telepathy–*illusion* for only 1 psionic energy point per hour)

Dr. Nakami has been building the personal and financial network that supports the Hoffmann Institute for most of his life. His early attempts to recruit from among the academic and intellectual elite of the late nineteenth century were disappointing; most preferred to work alone or at major universities. During the twentieth century he met with greater success, especially as the Flying Saucer scare of the 1950s made the presence of extraterrestrials seem a more immediate possibility and paranormal research grew to greater prominence. The decline of government funding for universities and the collapse of defense budgets at the end of the Cold War also made it easier to attract first-rate talent from the Ph.D. set.

Nakami has actually had three separate identities during his reign of control. The first Nakami (the founder of the Institute) "died" in 1940 at the apparent age of 70, and his "son" was chosen to take his place. This second Nakami "died" in 1977 and once again was replaced by a younger "son." Currently, Dr. Nakami appears as a 54-year-old Japanese man. He expects to "retire" this identity in about ten years.

Dr. Nakami is extremely fond of classical music, a trait that earns him some amused stares from those few Institute staffers (primarily division supervisors) who know he is an alien. Whenever he is in his office, symphonies, concertos, or operas echo from the speakers he has installed there.

an on-again, off-again route of contact with the sandmen through its researchers at the University of Illinois. While the sandmen distrust the Greys, they are unaware of the Institute's ties to that ancient species. The diplomatic ties are very delicate, but are the closest to a positive contact that the Institute has had with any species other than the Greys. Still, it's not exactly a warm and fuzzy friendship: All communications pass through Hugo, the university's AI, to preserve the anonymity of both sides. The Institute has also made unsuccessful attempts at contact with several other alien species, including the elohim and luciferans. Due to their perhaps unfortunate first meeting (see "The Manhattan Sewer War" in *Chapter 5: History of the World*), the Institute has always had poor relations with the kinori.

Headquarters: New York.

Major Branches: Barcelona, Chicago, El Paso, Portland, Philadelphia, Tampa.

Minor Branches: Aspen, Baltimore, Lima, New Orleans, Mexico City, Minneapolis, Paris, Phoenix, Jakarta.

Followers: Over three thousand full-time employees.

Resources: Sophisticated lab analysis, code breaking, transportation budget, small firearms, and a single alien ship (currently stored in rural Colorado).

Secret Knowledge: Paranormal phenomena, the occult, mindwalking, ancient history, detailed knowledge of aliens of all types.

Primary Goal: Understand the Dark Tide.

Common Missions: Investigation of paranormal events and alien encounters.

Or . . .

The Institute has come a long way since its founding; it now frequently serves as a conduit for the alien Greys to learn about humans, and for humans to prepare to meet the Strangers. To those ends, its goals serve the aliens as much as they do the humans, and many aliens are actually members of the Institute. The Institute also strives to foster global human cooperation with an eye toward world government, thus making humanity as a whole easier for the Greys to deal with. No one really knows the exact motives of the Greys or the Institute. At best, they work toward contact and cooperation between humans and aliens. At worst, they prepare to infiltrate, conquer, or exploit humankind. Whichever (if either) is the truth, the Hoffmann Institute serves as the Greys' chief means of direct interaction with humanity. All "investigation of the paranormal" and other activities are mostly a front, designed to study the reactions of the investigators as much as the subject being examined.

New World Order: The United Nations

The founding of the United Nations on October 24, 1945, was more than an attempt to streamline international diplomacy; it also established a forum for global concerns best kept out of the public eye. As a result, the UN chartered several organizations with international reach, including the Davos Commission, the World Health Organization, and a Quick Response Force that could be deployed via helicopter to trouble spots around the globe. On the surface, the UN seems like nothing more than an idealistic but relatively naive effort at internationalism. In truth, the everyday bureaucracy, bungling, petty infighting, and nepotism that characterizes the United Nations provides a perfect cover for much deeper plans. Underneath the facade of wasted funds and policy wrangles, a few conferences have helped shape the human response to the rising tide of dark matter paranormalism. More significant, however, is the fact that the UN intends to position itself as a true global governmental body for the new millennium—the New World Order.

Hugh Fletcher
UN Minister of Information

Level 8 Human Diplomat (Free Agent)

STR	7	[0]	INT	11	[+1]
DEX	8	[0]	WIL	11	[+1]
CON	9		PER	14	

Durability: 9/9/5/5 — Action Check: 11+/10/5/2
Move: sprint 14, run 10, walk 4 — #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 — Last Resorts: 3
Perk: Powerful Ally (Greys; 2)
Flaw: Obsessed (politics; 2)

Attacks

Unarmed*	3/1/0	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

* +d4 base situation die

Defenses

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Bulletproof suit: d4–1 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d6–3 (En)

Skills

Athletics [7]; Vehicle Operation [8]; Stamina [9]; Knowledge [13]–*computer [14], deduce [14], language (English) [14], language (Italian) [14], language (French) [13];* Law [11]; Admin [11]–*bureaucracy [15], management [13];* Awareness [11]–*perception [12];* Culture [14]–*diplomacy [17];* Deception [14]–*bribe [16];* Interaction [14]–*charm [15], interview [15].*

The prime mover behind Project Glacier, Fletcher secretly dreams of joining the lunar colonists himself. He's is a little bitter about the fact that he can't go, though his rational side acknowledges that he is far too deeply involved in the conspiracy of silence to ever really just walk away from it.

Fletcher is a swarthy, balding man in his fifties with a thick, black beard and pale, freckled skin. He stands about 190 cm tall, weighs about 100 kilos, and has more fat than muscle. He is an astute observer of human behavior and knows how to motivate others to do his dirty work. His contacts include high-ranking officials within the United Nations, the U.S. Congress, the CIA, and NASA, and even the alien Greys. He isn't afraid to call in big favors in order to deal with a problem, whether that problem is a leak, a threat, or a vote turning against him in the European Parliament.

Two bodyguards accompany Fletcher everywhere he goes. During public appearances he always wears a suit made of bulletproof cloth.

The phrase "New World Order" comes from the works of H. G. Wells, who published *The New World Order* nonfiction volume and *The Open Conspiracy*. Following in his footsteps decades later, in 1991 the Brandt Commission—including President Bush, Robert McNamara, and many others—met in Germany to outline the New World Order. They defined the NWO as "a supranational authority to regulate world commerce and industry; an international organization that would control the production and consumption of oil; an international currency that would replace the dollar; a world development fund that would make funds available to free and Communist nations alike; an international police force to enforce the edicts of the New World Order."



This effort hasn't gone entirely unnoticed. Though they are often dismissed as crackpots, a few people have kept careful records of strange black helicopters moving through the skies of United States, Canada, and Europe. A few journalists and politicos have seen the dim outlines of the New World Order, the world government that many regard as a crucial step toward opposing the encroachment of dictators, military rulership, and alien infestation. Indeed, in the new millennium, it seems that the world population will finally see the end of polynationalism and the beginning of mononationalism, just as polytheism was replaced by monotheism. Entrenched power groups each seek to put the entire world under their control. But how do they intend to shape a response to the Greys, the ever-increasing number of paranormal events, and the rising population of psionically gifted humans?

Part of the answer is clearly military. The UN's standing army numbers more than half a million, in addition to a rapid response force of 100,000 crack troops and scattered peacekeeping forces totaling 275,000. These regiments have been deployed on the orders of the Secretary General to suppress the kinori in Africa, the sasquatch in the U.S., and the alien invaders just about everywhere. They answer to the Office of External Affairs, a small bureau of the UN that occasionally cooperates with the Hoffmann Institute in investigating alien activities.

Project Glacier

Kept hidden by layer after layer of financial minutiae, this UN-funded operation has a far-reaching, even audacious goal: to settle the Moon. It's a one-way ticket; those who go are not allowed to return. Within the upper echelons of the UN, those who take the trip to the Moon are euphemistically said to have "gone up onto the glacier." No one ever comes off the glacier—or at least, if they do, they keep very, very quiet about it. From the moonbase, it is hoped, humanity will have a launch pad to explore the solar system and perhaps the stars.

Although it is officially named Hammarskjöld Base after the second Secretary General of the UN, the site has been nicknamed Moonbase Plato for its location. The base is a fairly extensive site built in the shadow of the Plato crater wall near the lunar north pole. Work on the site was begun in 1988 under the authority of UN Security Council Directive AR771-1988, issued by Secretary Gen-

Black Helicopter Troops

The United Nations Minister of Information, Hugh Fletcher, has in the last few years maneuvered to gain control of a strike force that was founded sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s. This force consists of an air cavalry brigade of highly trained, highly mobile soldiers capable of dealing with police actions, alien interceptions, and guerrilla suppression. These soldiers, known as the UN Elite Security Force, are answerable only to the highest levels of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces and operate from the old UN headquarters building in Geneva, Switzerland. The brigade's name is the International Interdiction Force (or IIF, pronounced "If"). If sources inside the UN can be trusted, the force numbers more than 15,000 men and 2,000 unmarked helicopters of various makes and eras. The units are all male, perhaps out of deference to those member nations whose standing armies remain all male.

Although stationed at a series of U.S., European Union, and Russian bases, the IIF trains in the desert southwest of the U.S. as well as in the Siberian tundra. It has bases within 20 minutes of 90% of the populated centers of the industrialized world. Each helicopter is equipped with air-to-air missile protection against jets (or alien ships), and each squad of sixteen men is equipped with a dozen rifles, a heavy machine gun or antitank weapon, chem-rad-biowarfare suits, night vision goggles, and a scrambled burst-signal radio transmitter. A first lieutenant leads each platoon, though the entire company answers to the helicopter pilot during the aerial portion of any operation. Specialists in each platoon include a demolitions expert, a heavy weapons operator, an antitank gunner, a biochem warfare expert, a medic, and a signals operator. In many cases, a Quarantine Liaison Officer (QLO) will be assigned to a company; this officer is always a captain and commands up to four platoons. The QLO can always overrule his lieutenants and his pilots as necessary.

Despite its relatively heavy firepower, the IIF is not meant to wage a conventional war, but rather to infiltrate a region that may be under hostile or alien occupation, disarm or destroy the threat, and possibly occupy a small region for a limited period of time. The men train in small-group tactics, not large-scale maneuvers. If the day ever comes that the UN needs a huge standing army to enforce a peace or occupy a hostile nation, it will use more conventional means. Until then, the IIF continues to fight whenever and wherever it is called upon to do so—and it answers only to Hugh Fletcher, the UN Secretary General, and senior members of the UN Security Council staff, in that order.

eral Boutros Boutros-Ghali on February 28 of that year. It is believed to be the direct result of diplomacy carried out by Minister Hugh Fletcher in his earliest days with the UN, when he was a Special Envoy representing the Security Council. Reconstructing the paper trail or eyewitness accounts of the original treaty, agreement, or goals of the base is virtually impossible; all diplomats who were present at the meeting—other than Fletcher—have since retired, died of natural causes, or met with serious accidents.

Ultimately, the UN sees Project Glacier as a way to provide firsthand training in space exploration and colonization, perhaps eventually leading to the launch of a human generation ship. The base's existence also provides a convenient bolt-hole for the UN's leaders if the state of affairs on Earth ever deteriorates into something as horrible as a nuclear winter, a plague resulting from a manmade or natural biological meltdown, or even just a collapse of social norms and worldwide infrastructure in the wake of a public first contact. More information on Moonbase Plato is given in *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*.

Headquarters: New York.

Branches: Small bases throughout the world.

Followers: Well over 100,000 troops, agents, and employees.

Resources: Vast monetary and technological resources, tenuous alliance with the Bilderberg Society and aspects of the U.S. government open to the idea of the New World Order.

Secret Knowledge: Governmental and alien secrets.

Primary Goal: Establish a single world government (New World Order).

Common Missions: Investigating and concealing any alien presence or appearance, manipulating governments and societies to gain power over them, secretly building bases within national borders, and creating events to further bolster the apparent need for a single governmental body. UN forces also work to maintain, supply, and staff Moonbase Plato while keeping its existence a secret.

Or . . .

The UN exists to unite humanity against a common foe: the alien threat. Although it operates in secret and sometimes illegally, the organization has the best of intentions. Working with the Hoffmann Institute, UN scientists study the rise of dark matter and attempt to investigate and conceal the aliens and their presence on Earth. Project Glacier is one additional way that the UN can monitor and study alien activity while attempting to bring about a peaceful united global government, allied for the protection of Earth.

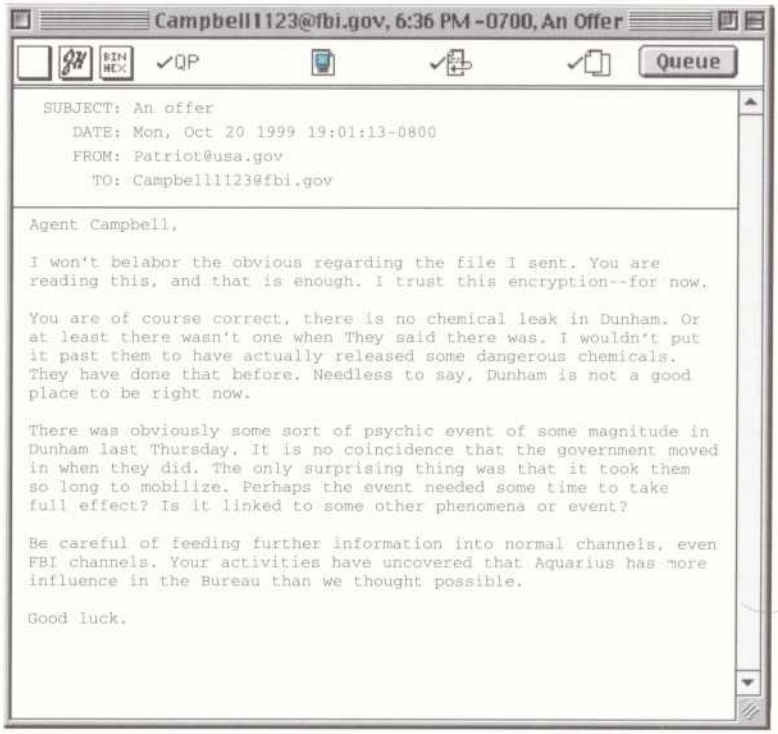
Land of the Free: The U.S. Government

Engineered by the Freemasons (perhaps manipulated by the Rosicrucians), the United States of America was born in conspiracy. Today, that heritage has evolved into a conspiratorial monster—one in which the various departments and branches of the same government struggle against one another in secret. Saying anything general about "the government" expresses a sort of ignorance about the way things truly work. The U.S. government comprises not a single conspiratorial group, but many. Investigators peering into the dark realms of black agencies and secret agendas among government organizations use this to their advantage. If the bureaucracy's varying branches worked in perfect concert, they could most likely keep anything a secret.

Not surprisingly, Freemasons fill many ranks and positions within the government. Other illuminati groups are present as well, including Bilderbergers, Knights of Malta, and members of smaller groups such as the Skull and Bones Society. Even the Mafia and other organized crime syndicates have a grip on some facet of the government.

The United Nations' affiliated architects of the New World Order within the U.S. government secretly refer to themselves as Aquarius (some call the anticipated new age the Age of Aquarius). This secret, intra-agency organization dedicates itself to bringing about a one-world government—and, its opponents fear, a totalitarian regime. Particularly powerful members of Aquarius within the CIA orchestrated Operation Paperclip, in which Nazi scientists and spies were given protection after World War II in exchange for valuable information.

The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) is the oldest intelligence organization in the U.S. government. Within its ranks lurks a secret group of conspirators known as COM-12. These conspirators consider themselves American patriots and present the Aquarius conspiracy with its greatest obstacle. Using psychic remote viewers as spies, COM-12 struggles to uphold the constitutional government. They strike in secret, doing what they can to keep illuminati groups from gaining power in the government or from keeping compromised agencies (such as the CIA) from proceeding with their nefarious deeds unhindered. While some romantics might consider them near-mystical "knights," it should be remembered that the agents of COM-12 display utter ruthlessness in carrying out their goals.



But What Are They Doing?

More than other groups, the governments of the world are interested in keeping the presence of aliens a secret. Their existence is a threat to national power and human authority; worse, the people of those nations might demand that the government do something about the aliens rather than simply standing idly by (or worse, cooperating with them). Nowhere is that more true than in the United States.

Plots entangle in other plots as humans try to manipulate aliens and vice versa, and in the end, it's not always clear who is winning the fight. To many human leaders, lying low and letting the aliens fight among themselves is more than just cowardice—it's a smart move to buy time. Time for humans to overcome prejudice, advance our technological level to be on a par with that of the aliens, overcome our innate prejudices, and learn about our mindwalking and arcane potential. That way, when the governments do confess to what's really going on, they'll be able to speak with power and authority and negotiate with the aliens from a position of strength rather than weakness.



Given all that, what is the U.S. government doing to even the odds? First of all, it has one ace in the hole: a captured alien spaceship that landed near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. Officials have repeatedly denied having this ship, but anyone looking at the larger pattern of government activity quickly notices that in 1948 the government formed the first panel to undertake a serious investigation into the UFO phenomenon, a group called Project Sign. This project was quickly followed by Project Grudge and Project Blue Book, both of which claimed to find little or nothing about the nature of UFO activity and dismissed 99% of all accounts as the results of eyewitness error.

By the early 1950s, DNA had been identified as the human genetic material, and serious efforts were being made to categorize and even engineer that material. Geneticists and eugenics specialists brought over from occupied Germany by the CIA, NSA, and other branches of government began working on vaccines, directed mutation, and other schemes to improve human potential and strengthen human ability.

In 1966, the Greys and the U.S. government had their first meeting, as the aliens attempted to recover their lost ship by diplomatic means. The meeting failed spectacularly when understandably suspicious Pentagon officials made demands of the Greys that the aliens were unwilling to meet. The Greys memory-wiped most of the human participants. In 1969 the government published the Condon Report, asserting that there was no credible evidence of UFOs and that no further study was required. Project Blue Book was shut down.

Years later, Chinese biowarfare labs isolated a strain of bacteria lethal to the Greys and seemed to be making progress in psi research, though at an enormous cost in human lives. Rumors of forced breeding programs cannot be confirmed, but the U.S. made several efforts to gain access to a genetic line called the *jin niao,* or "Golden Bird," said to be the most powerful set of human psychic abilities ever documented. Combined with U.S. cloning techniques of the 1980s, this genetic line is becoming a first line of defense against alien infiltration into the upper echelons of government.

Finally, the secret UN moonbase (see "Project Glacier," above) was established in 1988 with U.S. assistance; to this day, the UN manipulates the U.S.'s space program by offering to serve as a new channel of contact to the aliens.

Black Agencies

Within the government thrive agencies and departments that do not officially exist. These secret operations gain funding through circuitous (and often illegal) routes. Until fairly recently, the NRO (National Reconnaissance Office—a department specializing in the use of spy satellites) was just such an agency. Some conspiracy theorists speculate that an "assassination bureau" black agency exists. Others claim that a special agency dedicated to the cover-up of the paranormal (particularly aliens and UFOs) works in secret with agents traveling in black sedans who coerce witnesses to forget what they've seen (see the "Men In Black" sidebar in *Chapter 5: History of the World*).

AFT (Agency for Foreign Technology)

The Agency for Foreign Technology (AFT) is the leading bureaucratic element in the government's efforts to understand and contain the growing alien presence on Earth. At the agency's direction, U.S. military, paramilitary, and intelligence groups capture and fabricate items of alien technology, seize and interrogate aliens, and attempt to discern alien strengths and weaknesses. But the organization's efforts to protect U.S. interests have backfired: The agency has been infiltrated and compromised by the sandmen, and now operates as a paramilitary effort to suppress all other groups with any knowledge of the true extent of the sandman incursion in America and throughout the world.

The AFT's infiltration began with a single incident in 1967, when an etoile found an open doorway in the city of Houston. The sandman infection started there (and was later classified as the Houston Virus by epidemiologists at the CDC) but quickly spread to smaller towns in the Houston area, especially those near refineries and chemical processing plants. The town of Sandy Point disappeared from Houston-area maps entirely after 1996, presumably as a direct result of U.S. government action against the problem. The public story claimed that the town had been the site of a terrible toxic gas leak; however, most of the people who supposedly died in that leak "just happened" to be U.S. government employees.

Somehow, the AFT has continued to operate as a conduit between the U.S. government and alien species (primarily the Greys), but since all communications pass through its staff and

Sophia Mantikas
AFT Agent

Level 14 Human Free Agent

STR	10	[0]	INT	9	[0]
DEX	13	[+2]	WIL	11	[+1]
CON	9		PER	9	

Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action Check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1
Perks: Heightened Dexterity, Reflexes

Attacks

9mm pistol	16/8/4	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m	HI/O
9mm SMG	15/7/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI/O
Unarmed	17/8/4	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O

Defenses

Battle vest: d6–3 (LI), d6–2 (HI), d4–2 (En)
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [10]; Acrobatics [13]–*daredevil [15], defensive [17];* Modern [13]–*pistol [16], SMG [15];* Vehicle [13]–*land [15];* Stamina [9]–*endurance [10];* Demolitions [9]–*set [11];* Knowledge [9]–*computer [10], deduce [10], language (English) [12];* Security [9]–*devices [11];* Technical Science [9]; Awareness [11]–*perception [13];* Investigate [11]; Resolve [11], Deception [9]; Interaction [9]–*intimidate [12].*

Equipment

Motorcycle (beat-up dirt bike with carrier), black helmet, red leather jacket with bulletproof lining, 9mm pistol, 9mm SMG, four ammo clips, AFT badge, laptop computer.

Sophia has been working against the sandman infiltration of the Agency for Foreign Technology for the last eight months and has gotten exactly nowhere. She was on the verge of resigning her job and seeking employment elsewhere; however, when she approached the Hoffmann Institute two months ago, she was asked to remain within the AFT as long as possible, gathering information on sandman activities until she was forced to leave.

Sophia isn't exactly thrilled by this suggestion: She is justifiably cautious about putting herself on the line when the price of a mistake is transformation into what she refers to as "one of the pod people." She's still not sure what is changing some of her AFT coworkers and making many of them suddenly disappear on extended leaves of absence or reassignment to distant posts. The fact that she feels she is just being used as a pawn by the Institute means that she may soon take action into her own hands and try to strike out on her own.

are stored in its records, it has become clear that the agency is hopelessly compromised. Outside observers are uncertain if any new agency has yet been created to take over the AFT's tasks. It appears that the higher echelons of the U.S. administration are either using the AFT as a source of information on the etoile, looking for weaknesses and studying them as they operate, or that those officials have somehow been co-opted by the etoile and are willfully ignoring the infiltration.

The Greys seem unaware of the sandman infiltration into the AFT, and even those members of the human government who know about it think that the problem is much less severe than it actually is. With little opposition, the sandmen's hold on Fillmore Metals, Lone Star Precision Machine Works, and the Westmark Petrochemical Co. grows stronger. What they are doing with those firms is still a mystery, and all attempts to investigate have resulted in the death or infection of the investigators.

Project Anaconda

Launched in 1991 as a project to use important advances in bioengineering to create superior soldiers for the U.S. Army, Anaconda has evolved into a project with a bewildering array of tasks and resources. After a decade of work, it has produced techniques to induce cellular changes in human tissue that increase oxygen absorption, modify the retina of the human eye, vary the production of certain hormones, and alter muscle function. Because these cellular changes can be made using gene therapy advances, the genetic changes need not be introduced at conception—instead, a test subject can be altered after reaching adulthood and choosing a career in the armed forces (see Medical Science–*genetics* in *Chapter 3: Heroes of Dark•Matter* for more information on this topic).

In game terms, Anaconda can grant a subject the Adrenal Control, Biorhythm Control, Improved Strength, or Night Vision mutation—but only one of these four. Combining genetic changes invariably leads to complications, including Light Sensitivity, Reduced Constitution, and Toxin Intolerance. (See *Chapter 13: Mutants* in the *Player's Handbook* for details.)

Accusations that Project Anaconda is also used to track human genetic responses to stress under combat conditions appear to be baseless. The sandmen are more interested in utilizing human resources than in defeating conventional armies.

Project Chapel

While the government doesn't want to acknowledge the existence of aliens, neither does it want to let them pass among humanity unobserved. To satisfy both demands, the AFT established a few territories (with no roads leading in) that are quietly left alone. Some are deep within U.S. national parks. Others lie in naturally remote areas, such as Alaska and the Rocky Mountains. A few enclaves rest within midwestern agricultural zones. Project Chapel, controlled by the Foreign Development Division of the AFT, oversees these areas, keeping them free of curious humans and aliens. Other government agencies involved with the alien problem (such as the CDC and the CIA) visit these sites from time to time, though whether this is to collect samples, negotiate treaties, or bargain for goods is unknown.

Project Iota

Project Iota is a scientific research think tank and materials-analysis group created as an integral part of the AFT shortly after its founding in 1998. However, to say that details are sketchy is a

Fightin' the Man

Although DARK•MATTER is about being paranoid, and paranoia means that you think everyone's out to get you, if *everyone* is *really* out to get the heroes, they don't have much of a chance and it won't make for a very fun game. If the entire government is a single powerful entity with evil (or at least amoral) intentions and no concern for laws or rights, and it conspires against the heroes, the heroes lose, case closed. Thus, it is best that within a DARK•MATTER campaign, the government is something less than a monolithic entity—yet something more, as well. The government itself isn't a conspiracy, it's a medium for conspiracy. The government becomes a lumbering behemoth for conspiracies to manipulate and even infiltrate, but always remain hidden from and never completely control.

It's important for a DARK•MATTER Gamemaster to realize that "the government" isn't the president, or Congress, or the CIA. It's not a singular entity at all. The president, congressmen, and the CIA can be controlled. They can also be opposed. The government is a vast network of departments and agencies that purport to work together but really only sometimes do. Agency duties overlap and create redundancies while other tasks slip through the cracks (because the system is too big to see all the cracks). Even setting any malicious intentions aside, the government doesn't work cohesively in any manner resembling perfection. Now, if one assumes that the various departments within the government often work in secret, keeping information from other agencies or even actively working against other portions of the government, it becomes obvious how a hero can have enemies in the government and still make it out okay.

It's fine for people to say "the government is covering up alien abductions," or "the government's black helicopters are spraying experimental chemicals on the livestock," but Gamemasters should always keep one detail in mind. Forces within the government may take such actions—and such forces, being limited, can be combated—but the government as a whole does not.

colossal understatement. The project is wrapped in layers of security so tight and so seemingly redundant that it attracts attention and suspicion. For example, in papers and electronic files obtained by the Hoffmann Institute, the things *not* said about Iota are just as interesting as the vaguely futuristic cliches that pepper the project's "Public Documentation." Public and media figures who show too much interest in the topic seem to have a curious habit of dying in plane or automobile crashes.

Curiously absent from the AFT's description of this top-secret project is any explanation of its goals, facilities, schedules, and chain of command and oversight—only its budget and staff are discussed, while all other related materials remain highly classified. Outside observers believe that the project is a thin cover for the AFT's collaboration with sandmen, or at least of quid pro quo cooperation with the etoile. The truth may be just the opposite: The "project" may be a front to hide the AFT's complete subjugation from outside interests, in which case Project Iota serves to advance the sandman agenda rather than any human goal.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Branches: Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Nashville, New York, Portland, San Francisco.

Followers: About 1,200 agents working throughout the U.S.

Resources: Diplomatic papers, advanced weapons, customs bypass, access to FBI dossiers and files on most U.S. citizens, computing resources, and lab and technical staff.

Secret Knowledge: Detailed anatomical and linguistic information on all major alien species.

Primary Goal: Understand alien presence on Earth; suppress knowledge of sandman activities.

Common Missions: Soft kill, disinformation, technology recovery, extraction.

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the only government organization that understands the true possibility of a major, humanity-threatening epidemic. It is also one of the few groups that knows about the alien origin of the Houston virus, the CDC's name for the disease vector that turns humans into sandmen. While most CDC employees are in the dark about the real reason for its army of more than 10,000 public-health watchdogs, the directors at the top know that the CDC is one of the front-line agencies in the fight against extraterrestrial invasion.

The sense of urgency at the agency has led to some ethically shaky research in the last few years. In theory, the government and the private sector alike erect tight safeguards to ensure ethical and sane conduct surrounding the investigations funded in their labs. In practice, doctors and scientists are often able to fund side projects that may be anything but conventional. These include testing bioweapons on unsuspecting human populations, validating critical vaccines in the field rather than in the lab, and even sterilizing entire villages in certain parts of the world to prevent larger outbreaks of Ebola virus, Hanta virus, Houston virus, and worse.

Epidemics and Quarantines

Among the greatest dangers to Earth is the threat of an alien microorganism that can inhabit a human host. Cases of disease caused by extraterrestrial viruses, bacteria, or other microscopic organisms are difficult to verify, but experts suspect that the Spanish influenza viral outbreak of 1918 and 1919—an epidemic that killed 20 million people—may have been caused by an alien organism. Going back much farther, researchers believe that the Black Death, a bacterial plague that reduced the population of Europe by a third in the 1300s, did not originate on Earth. The idea of a mutant or hybrid organism entering the biosphere—or worse, full-blown bacterial warfare through deliberately engineered pathogens—is even more horrifying. Humans have no immunity to such organisms, since they come from a completely different ecosystem.

Given the level of threat posed to human health by any alien interaction with native populations, the governments of the world

have undertaken strong measures to prevent the possibility of an outbreak. Two primary organizations lead the charge to reduce the risks: the CDC, which monitors epidemics, and the World Health Organization, which provides public health enforcement for nations unable or unwilling to undertake the arduous work of creating and enforcing quarantines on their own people.

This threat runs in both directions, of course. Just as alien diseases could wipe out millions of humans, human diseases may slow down, cripple, or wipe out an alien colony. Some human pathogens can infect yeti, sandman, and kinori hosts. Just as smallpox took advantage of the lack of the natives' resistance in the Americas, local disease could be extremely deadly to a visiting species unprepared for it.

Finally, although the CDC and WHO usually deal with bacterial or viral threats, larger organisms pose just as much of a potential hazard. A plant species that displaced corn, rice, or wheat fields and was immune to ordinary herbicides would be devastating to world food supplies. A weed that clogged beaches and harbors could hinder shipping. And any insect able to eat and digest plastics could destroy our society, devouring power lines, auto parts, phones, and computers with equal abandon.

All because a doorway allowed a few extra seeds, germs, or eggs through.

Genotype ID Centers

Genetic knowledge has advanced considerably over the past few decades, due in no small part to the Human Genome Project begun in 1988. The project—led by the Dutch anthropogenic specialist Dr. Gerrit Jan van Ommen—will finish sequencing the entire set of 80,000 human genes in 2005. Once the genes on all forty-six chromosomes are mapped, a complete genetic map of the human genome can be constructed. With this information, tailor-made viruses developed to wipe out "unwanted" portions of the population become entirely possible. (In fact, the intradepartmental conspiracy known as Aquarius may be using the Human Genome Project as part of its plan to usher in its new order.)

Physicians can already identify a limited set of genetic abnormalities and diseases, though there's relatively little they can do to correct them directly. Soon, genetic screening of infants will be both relatively inexpensive and commonplace. Some say that such examinations already take place without the general public's knowledge. With or without consent, a person's genetic imprint could be compressed and stored in a regional or national database for future use by medical doctors—or anyone else with access to the information. These genetic fingerprints could also, of course, be used as identification in criminal cases.

DNA Fingerprint Center

The use of DNA fingerprinting is becoming more and more routine among the police and in the courts. Criminals are often caught because of the hair, blood, or semen they leave at the scene of a crime—and the FBI and National Institutes of Health both maintain databases of DNA fingerprints, just as the FBI keeps regular fingerprint files. When police leads in a case run cold, likely suspects, checkpoint travelers, or even residents of entire neighborhoods are sometimes asked to provide DNA samples in the form of saliva. Though a case handled this way may involve tens of thousands of samples and just as many hours of lab work, the resulting DNA fingerprint is unmistakable, and the culprit can be traced with an extremely high degree of confidence. Once DNA establishes the culprit, supporting evidence or a confession usually seals the case before the courts ever hear it.

Over time, these techniques have been used more extensively. Though prints are kept on file primarily for convicted criminals, security personnel, and government employees, many other citizens may be represented in the DNA fingerprint archives. Naturally, in a few cases someone has been framed through the simple method of obtaining hair or skin cells and then leaving the materials behind at a crime scene, but these incidents are by far the exception.

The Gynarchy

A small group of extremist CDC researchers believe that men are obsolete, and women would do a better job of ruling the earth. The modern-day Amazons of the Gynarchy are dedicated to using recent breakthroughs in medical technology to create female superchildren through the fusion of human eggs and without the necessity for sperm. They are slowly reaching out to fellow researchers, medical assistants, doctors, and others who are both sympathetic to their project and in a position to do something about it.

The Ghost Train

The National Institutes of Health work with the CDC on a special project known only at the highest levels and generally referred to as the Ghost Train. The exact nature of the operation isn't clear, but the hypotheses include a careful eugenics program using government employees as volunteers; a system of code words, alien sympathizers, and safe havens for an unidentified species of aliens, much like the Underground Railroad of the days before the Civil War; or an operation that keeps a psychic research facility aboard a moving train, using people who travel the route as guinea pigs. That last seems the most likely, though the project may include aspects of the other two theories. The entire program maintains heavy security, and agents who attempt to obtain additional information about it variously disappear, are warned off, or come up empty.

In any case, at least one self-proclaimed psychic, a man named Glen Collier, has argued forcefully on the Usenet and elsewhere that he is a product of that program. According to Collier, he escaped from the program in 1999 and has been on the run ever since, but his testimony cannot be traced through the Internet, much less corroborated.

As Collier describes it, the Ghost Train uses a coercive system of observation and experimentation to optimize extrasensory ability in humans. Test subjects wear radio anklets or are implanted with transmitters, and their homes and workplaces are outfitted with surveillance cameras to observe and record people's reactions to various forms of preternatural stimuli. A few experiments have even been conducted in public places to measure general reactions to the extreme abilities of Ghost Train psychics. In most cases, tabloid or other reports that discredit witnesses and obscure the facts follow these experiments.

Headquarters: Atlanta.

Branches: Every U.S. city with a population greater than 400,000 (plus Puerto Rico) and branches in about thirty other

Glen Collier
Ghost Train Fugitive

Level 9 Human Free Agent

STR	6	[–1]	INT	9	[0]
DEX	11	[+1]	WIL	13	[+2]
CON	8		PER	13	

Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 3
Perk: Superior Talent (6)
Flaws: Infamy (Vegas; 2), Rebellious
Psionic Strength Points: 6

Attacks

Unarmed	3/1/—	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0
9mm Pistol	12/6/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI/0

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills
Athletics [6]; Modern [11]–*pistol [12];* Vehicle [11]; Stamina [8]; Knowledge [9]–*computer [10], first aid [10], language (English) [12];* Awareness [13]–*perception [15];* Lore [13]–*conspiracy [16];* Deception [13]–*bluff [15];* Interaction [13]–*interview [15].*

Psionic Skills
ESP [9]–*empathy [11], mind reading [11], precognition [10], psycholocation [10].*

Glen Collier is a homeless psychic on the run. He was trained in precognition, dowsing, and mind reading by the U.S. government scientists in a Ghost Train lab over a period of years. He uses those abilities to win bar bets and to stay one step ahead of the CDC agents who would like to return him to the Ghost Train doctors for further study.

Collier occasionally helps the Hoffmann Institute, more out of a desire to screw over the government than out of any real sense of heroism or altruism. Most of the time he either lives on the streets or stays in a cheap residency hotel, making a few bucks at the local bars by picking lucky numbers, making silly bets, and telling bad jokes. Currently, Collier is believed to be operating in Las Vegas, where he has already been banned from several casinos.

countries including Barbados, Botswana, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad, Uganda, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Followers: Eight thousand researchers, about two thousand of them overseas.

Resources: Samples of all known pathogens, labs for genetic and medical analysis, field agents able to collect and process blood and tissue samples, facilities for vaccine production, connections to U.S. Army biowarfare laboratories.

Secret Knowledge: Familiar with most of the bioweapons tested on U.S. citizens. Aware of the existence of new disease strains brought to Earth by doorways (though many believe these are merely new terrestrial diseases).

Primary Goal: Control the spread of diseases.

Common Missions: Track public health risks, monitor disease outbreaks, identify new strains of bacteria and viruses, counter threats to water supply, enforce public vaccination programs.

CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was founded after World War II to provide data on foreign powers to the U.S. government. Originally, it employed many members of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), the U.S. secret agency active during the war. Ironically, its ranks quickly swelled with ex-Nazis (brought to the U.S. via Operation Paperclip), the very foes that the OSS had fought against. Allen Dulles, a Nazi sympathizer, worked hand in hand with Nazi spy Reinhard Gehlen (also a Knight of Malta) to create the CIA and the European based Org. The Org was composed of hidden Nazis throughout Europe who agreed to spy on the Soviets for the U.S. Dulles and Gehlen used their positions to create and fuel the Cold War, thereby adding power to the military-industrial complex. They also allowed thousands of Nazis to escape justice, including mass murderer Klaus Barbie, who went on to train fascist death squads in South America.

Though the CIA's charter has always been simply to conduct U.S. espionage and covert operations overseas, political pressures in the wake of the decline of the Cold War in the late twentieth century made it more and more desirable for the agency to operate against U.S. citizens on U.S. soil. Its tests of mind-control techniques (see below) were performed not only to perfect the ultimate agent, but also to explore methods of pacifying the populace. The Jonestown massacre in 1978 was a CIA test of mind control taken to its ultimate limits.

By the mid-1960s, with Vietnam in full swing, the CIA was training hundreds of "cowboys"—an agency euphemism for paramilitary specialists. These cowboys operated essentially at will overseas, flying guns and drugs in planes registered to Air America, an airline that existed only as a thin cover for CIA operations. In fact, Air America spent much of the 1960s and 1970s flying guns to the Laotian Meo in Long Tien, then bringing heroin back to the United States. By the 1980s, some of these aircraft were operating in Nicaragua, supplying weapons to right-wing guerrillas. When one crashed with U.S. "advisers" aboard, it hardly made a ripple in the news. The CIA operates today as it always has, and in many ways is more effective than ever before at gathering information, playing dirty tricks against foreign and domestic enemies, and covering up its own tracks.

How can the CIA remain so immune to public accountability? In part, its work has always been tightly involved with matters of "national security," a nebulous term used to cover up many crimes against the nation the agency supposedly serves. As long as those magic words prevent further scrutiny, the CIA continues to remain beyond investigation. It can operate ice cream parlors or crack houses with equal impunity—and no one would know.

Even U.S. presidents have attempted to oppose the CIA—and they've always failed. President Truman, who originally helped

set up the CIA, saw that it spied on U.S. citizens as well as foreign nations. Eisenhower warned, "Beware the acquisition of unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex" as he left office. Kennedy vowed to splinter the agency into a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds, and even fired Dulles. JFK did not live long enough to carry out his threat, and Dulles served on the Warren Commission that covered up the events surrounding his assassination.

The CIA has links to other secret societies as well. Two Knights of Malta have been CIA directors (John McCone and William Casey), and membership in the Freemasons seems a sure way to rise high in the Agency's ranks. The Masons even sponsor members to Washington's Foreign Service School to insure their influence among American spies. Significant factions within the CIA work with the Aquarius conspiracy to undermine the constitutional governments of other nations and even the U.S., preparing the way for the New World Order. Using alien technology and Nazi secrets (both scientific and occult), it presents perhaps the greatest threat to the modern American way of life.

MK-ULTRA

The MK-ULTRA experiments began in April 1953, when CIA Director Allen Dulles authorized the program. The project's goal was simple: to understand and harness mind control for espionage. The supposed brainwashing of POWs during the Korean War provided the initial purpose, but the research soon spun out of control. In fact, by 1958 one CIA auditor wrote, "Precautions must be taken not only to protect operations from exposure to enemy forces but also to conceal these activities from the American public in general. The knowledge that the agency is engaging in unethical and illicit activities would have serious repercussions in political and diplomatic circles." The CIA clearly had something to hide; the experiments were working.

Most of the MK-ULTRA documents were destroyed in 1972, when it seemed that the public might learn of the program. However, even the scraps that remain intact paint an ugly picture of the CIA labs' activities. The most widely known and notorious experi-

The CIA Toybox

The Central Intelligence Agency has long performed the espionage, assassination, and shadow operation functions of the U.S. government. Over the years, the agency has acquired a number of special tools that allow it to engage in both the subtlest and the most glaringly obvious forms of warfare. These include weapons of psychological warfare, specialized interrogation drugs, and disabling nerve and gas agents. The exact details of these dirty tricks are up to the Gamemaster, but can include anything in the *Player's Handbook* as well as the following four special—and quite unorthodox—tools.

Cancer Gun: This weapon resembles a short bazooka, a heavy tube about 8 cm in diameter and 40 cm long, with a central handle. When fired, it releases a huge (but silent and invisible) burst of X-ray radiation (equivalent to R5 radiation; see *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). Any target who becomes terminally ill as a result of this weapon develops inoperable cancer and dies within a few months. The operator is also exposed to R2 radiation each time the gun is fired. A Critical Failure on the operator's Constitution feat check means that the operator also develops an inoperable cancer, usually of the hands, brain, or throat (the areas closest to the gun).

Golden Dawn: Named after an occult society of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this opium derivative enhances both occult and extrasensory functions, though each is enhanced differently. An individual with psionic powers using the drug gains access to additional psionic strength points equal to half his Will; however, each time one of these extra points is spent, the individual suffers one point of fatigue damage. An Arcane Magic or Faith FX user gains a single additional FX energy point but suffers no fatigue loss.

The drug is a narcotic and extremely addictive, just like heroin and other opiates. The CIA uses golden dawn to control its more rebellious psi agents.

Heart Attack Inducers: In order to effect swift assassinations but still make the cause of death appear natural, the CIA developed fast-acting chemicals transmitted through the skin that seek out the heart, causing cardiac arrest. Treat these as contact neurotoxins with an onset time of 1 round and a duration of 1 minute. The target suffers a +4 step penalty to the Constitution feat check to resist its effects.

In autopsies, these chemicals almost always escape detection. The CIA and other groups use these chemicals so frequently that the fear of heart disease—one of the most common causes of death in the U.S.—may actually be quite overrated. The cholesterol scare of the 1980s may have been disinformation to cover up hundreds, if not thousands, of murders.

Necrotic Fleshworm: Employed as a tool of intimidation during interrogation on foreign soil, the fleshworms are deemed too much of a PR risk to use within U.S. borders. The worms are a specially bred species of parasite that lives just below mammalian skin, eating connective tissue and slowly destroying the link between the victim's body and his skin. When hundreds of these worms become active at once, they writhe beneath the surface of the skin, creating a rippling effect similar to a sheet flapping in the wind. Eventually, the worms devour all the victim's connections to the skin, making it possible to slide the skin around like a glove or jacket. At this point, the worms begin devouring nerve and muscle tissue, which is said to be the most extremely painful part of the process. Within two to five days the victim is dead, literally eaten alive.

In most interrogation cases, the victim is shown a dog or other animal in an advanced stage of parasitic infection as a scare tactic. If necessary, the victim is infected and allowed to slowly suffer the pain and rot until the desired information is obtained. (Apply a cumulative +1 step penalty to any Resolve–*physical resolve* skill checks made to resist the torture for each day of infection.) Removing the parasites requires a six-month course of expensive (and toxic) therapeutic drugs, which effectively destroys both the parasites and much of the host's muscle tissue. Survivors permanently lose 2 points of Strength.

ments were the CIA's studies of lysergic acid diethylamide, better known simply as LSD. The first acid trips in the U.S. were taken by government agents hoping to find a way to surreptitiously manipulate foreign leaders, convince prisoners to talk during CIA interrogations, and even brainwash prisoners into accepting agency explanations of paranormal events. Worst of all, many CIA experiments involved entirely unwilling and unknowing subjects, dosed in prisons or brothels run by the agency. In one documented case in Kentucky, seven volunteers were dosed for seventy-seven days straight. The bizarre Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, a man with a Ph.D. from Cal Tech who drank only goat's milk and ran a Christmas tree farm, led these experiments. Not the average gumshoe, at any rate. When he wasn't getting in touch with nature, he was experimenting on unsuspecting test subjects. He wasn't concerned about the potential harm brought on by the experiments, and his work continued with the approval of the agency.

Eventually, of course, the news got out. The fallout included, perhaps predictably, a blustering tempest from Congress, damning the project and those associated with it. In 1975 a member of one Senate committee stated, "From its beginning in the early 1950s until its termination in 1963, the program of surreptitious administration of LSD to unwitting human subjects demonstrates a failure of the CIA's leadership to pay adequate attention to the rights of individuals and to provide effective guidance to CIA employees. Though it was known that the testing was dangerous, the lives of subjects were placed in jeopardy and were ignored. . . . Although it was clear that the laws of the United States were being violated, the testing continued."

The drug work was only part of the CIA's investigation into extreme espionage. The program also included hypnosis, ultralow frequencies, sensory deprivation, and even a little occultism and telepathy. Fueled by the paranoia of the Cold War, the CIA looked for any advantage. As the evidence mounted that the psychic research was paying off, more and more funds were funneled into the project. Eventually, the agency examined hundreds of techniques and cherry-picked the most effective. Exactly what sort of results were they looking for? A 1955 MK-ULTRA document spells out a series of goals and objectives in the evaluation of new drugs and techniques. The list of highlights provides a clear picture of what the spooks were after. According to the memo, the agency hoped to find substances that would have the following effects:

> "Promote illogical thinking and impulsiveness to the point where the recipient would be discredited in public"
>
> "Increase the efficiency of mentation and perception"
>
> "Prevent or counteract the intoxicating effect of alcohol"
>
> "Promote the intoxicating effect of alcohol"
>
> "Produce the signs and symptoms of recognized diseases in a reversible way so that they may be used for malingering, etc."
>
> "Render the indication of hypnosis easier or otherwise enhance its usefulness"
>
> "Enhance the ability of individuals to withstand privation, torture and coercion during interrogation and so-called 'brainwashing'"
>
> "Produce amnesia for events preceding and during their use"
>
> "Produc[e] shock and confusion over extended periods of time and capable of surreptitious use"
>
> "Produce physical disablement such as paralysis of the legs, acute anemia, etc."
>
> "Produce 'pure' euphoria with no subsequent letdown"
>
> "Alter personality structure in such a way that the tendency of the recipient to become dependent upon another person is enhanced"
>
> "Cause mental confusion of such a type that the individual under its influence will find it difficult to maintain a fabrication under questioning"
>
> "Lower the ambition and general working efficiency of men when administered in undetectable amounts"
>
> "Promote weakness or distortion of the eyesight or hearing faculties, preferably without permanent effects."

Your tax dollars at work? Or part of a larger picture? Though experiments continued from the 1950s to the 1970s, after the heat of the Congressional inquiries the MK-ULTRA projects were supposedly closed down. In truth, the tests never really ended. They were simply reclassified, renamed the Lisbon experiments, and moved from their original facilities in Virginia to a new territory in the city of Billings, Montana, far from the scrutiny and prying that often accompanies such projects in more densely populated areas along the eastern or western seaboards.

Project Stargate and Project Override

Although supposedly under Department of Defense jurisdiction, Project Stargate (and other investigations like it) was really in the hands of the intelligence gatherers—the CIA. The project was a study in the use of precognition, telepathy, and "remote viewing" to gather information. Supposedly, a CIA study revealed the project to be a failure, and the formerly secret project was publicly shut down. But the results that the CIA had gathered, and its urgent need for new tools to combat the paranormal abilities of alien espionage, were too tempting to resist. The project was reopened under the new code name Override. Project Override exists not only to use psychics as spies, but also to create clairvoyant agents through genetic manipulation, drugs, or any other means necessary.

Project Override continues to the present day as a part of the Lisbon experiments, though funding isn't what it once was. The end of the Cold War put a damper on all intelligence gathering from about 1990 to 1996. Thereafter funding increased again, but the results were kept very well hidden, often reduced to a morass of figures and raw data to hide the increasing success that Override attained. The difficulty in verifying results and the pressures created by the need for secrecy have driven the project to years of complex double-checking, statistical analysis, and replication of experimental results. But the facts seem plain enough: Override has created several psychically endowed children partially based on a genetic type stolen from the Chinese.

Headquarters: Langley, Virginia.

Branches: Most major metropolitan centers in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, usually through the U.S. embassy or consulate.

Followers: At least 100,000 agents and support staff worldwide. The CIA also has a smattering of psionically talented agents at its disposal.

Resources: Satellite surveillance, bugs, wiretaps, hidden weapons, network of foreign agents, translators, and photo analysts.

Secret Knowledge: The truth behind U.S.-Grey contacts, as well as most assassinations of the last eighty years. Dossiers on the dirty secrets of many U.S. and foreign politicians. Mind-control techniques that work.

Primary Goal: Conduct espionage and covert operations.

Common Missions: Gain information on foreign leaders and armies, assassinate U.S. or foreign politicians, overthrow foreign governments, steal blueprints or working models of weapon systems, and infiltrate subversive or radical organizations within the U.S., especially left-wing groups but also militias.

CXS (Center for Xenological Studies)

On a quiet street not far from Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., a well-kept brownstone stands in a row of similarly pristine buildings, all quiet and unassuming, their window shades discreetly drawn during daylight hours. A closer look shows that the building's facade is marred by a profusion of security measures. Barbed wire is strung carefully along the inside of each bar of its iron fence, a security camera oversees the entrance, and at night, steel shutters cover the windows.

Though it doesn't advertise and the sign on the building reads simply "Xenogen Labs," the Center for Xenological Studies is a hotbed of activity in the shadowy world of alien biology. Often simply referred to as the CXS or "the Center," it is the U.S. government's repository for many of its alien tissue samples and the home base of the finest government researchers. While this black agency lacks both funding and authority, it does have the advantage of being the end of the line for the many bodies, objects, and samples collected by the CDC, the army, and other forces throughout the world. It has amassed a greater body of evidence, more useful fragments of the larger puzzle, and a greater number of unique samples of otherworldly creatures than any other organization.

Sadly, most of this trove is never catalogued, much less taken out of the packaging used to submit it to the Center. The entire science staff of the CXS numbers eight full-timers and three part-time assistants, not nearly enough to give more than a cursory examination to the bounty of materials turned over to it every year. The CXS research lead, Alexander Dorizas, considers

Dr. Regor Prometheus
CXS Scientist

Level 14 Human Tech Op

STR	10	[0]	INT	14	[+2]
DEX	12	[+1]	WIL	10	[+1]
CON	8		PER	6	

Durability: 9/8/4/4 Action Check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 0
Perks: Vigor, Willpower, Observant
Flaws: Infamy (academia; 2), Obsessed (alien research; 2), Poor Looks

Attacks

9mm pistol	15/7/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI/0
Rapier	12/6/3	d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w	LI/0
Unarmed	5/2/1	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Defenses

CF short coat: d4–1 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d6–3 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [10], Melee [10]–*blade [12];* Modern [12]–*pistol [15];* Vehicle [12]–*land [13];* Stamina [8]–*endurance [10];* Computer [14]–*programming [16];* Knowledge [14]–*deduce [15], language (English) [17];* Life [14]–*biology [15], genetics [16], xenology [15];* Medical [12]–*forensics [16], medical knowledge [15], treatment [16];* Technical [14]–*juryrig [15], xenoengineering [16];* Awareness [10]–*intuition [11], perception [14];* Lore [10]–*fringe [14];* Resolve [10]; Interaction [6].

Dr. Prometheus presents an ugly picture both physically and morally. He is a gaunt, sunken-eyed man, with a face half scarred by chemical burns and hair that can only be described as frantic. He is suspicious of everyone, corrupt and unscrupulous, confident and egotistical to a fault. He is not a man to be trifled with, at least in his own mind. In his view, his vast stores of knowledge, pure courage, and great self-confidence have allowed him to investigate strange and even bizarre theories in the physical and biological sciences, concepts no one else had the stomach to confront.

However, not everyone sees things as the doctor does. His investigations have involved frequent grave robbing, fraudulent use of research funds, and inhumane treatment of experimental subjects; these practices have led to his dismissal from every academic post he has ever held. That state of affairs—unconventional research, coupled with intermittent employment—has embittered the Serbian doctor no end. Currently he works for the CXS, examining and cataloguing materials found at alien sites, but he considers this work beneath him, fit only for clerks. However, even the infallible doctor has to eat and pay the rent, and the CXS allows him to do that.

As part of his continuing cycle of inspired research followed by marginalization by the mainstream, Dr. Prometheus is now attempting to sell the secrets he has been able to access. Since he knows that such a betrayal carries consequences, he is also practicing his marksmanship and the fencing skills he has cultivated since his youth. Someday soon, the world will learn it was wrong to ignore the doctor's work, and will rue the day it sent him down an impoverished path of ignominy and ridicule. Oh, it will pay.

the lack of resources a personal affront and petitions for more staff at every opportunity. Unfortunately, CXS Chief Administrator Hector Sanjuro is a political appointee more concerned with protocol, proper procedures, and tight security than with uncovering anything useful. In fact, he finds that his position makes him very uncomfortable (maybe it's the mandatory bodyguards that came with the job).

The CXS publishes the semirespectable *Annals of Xenology*, a scholarly journal that at different times has covered alien biology, botany, microbiology, archaeology, engineering, and linguistics. Founded in 1999, circulation of the journal is limited to an elite circle of roughly 350 subscribers worldwide, all of whom have elevated security clearances and are expected to be contributors as well as readers. The Hoffmann Institute has twelve subscribers, including Gheorghe Zamfirescu, head of the Archives Department in Philadelphia. The Institute has naturally been very careful to keep its own larger investigations hidden from the government agents who come to investigate the security clearances for those subscribers.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.
Branches: None known.
Followers: Approximately thirty-five full-time staff.
Resources: Alien artifacts, a network of xenological experts, numerous live and dead alien specimens.
Secret Knowledge: The most complete alien database in humanity's possession.
Primary Goal: Amass knowledge of alien lifeforms and technology.
Common Missions: Find and claim alien artifacts, capture aliens from the wild, test reproductions of alien devices, test alien artifacts, and reconstruct alien power sources, biological processes, and cultures.

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

During the early years of the Reagan presidency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began its bid for power. Reagan had appointed an old buddy, Louis Giuffrida, as the agency director. Giuffrida had a bit of chip on his shoulder; in the restless days of the Vietnam War era, he had been a National Guard officer with a big authoritarian streak. His favorite troop exercises included population control and antisubversion dragnets. To no one's surprise, Giuffrida soon began implementing the same sorts of oppressive policies within FEMA, transforming it into an instrument of government control over the people. As such, FEMA became the most powerful tool of the Aquarius conspiracy.

Giuffrida resolved to make the agency the primary source of law and order in case of any national emergency. In fact, FEMA officials soon drafted "standby legislation" that would "suspend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, eliminate private property, abolish free enterprise, and generally clamp Americans in a totalitarian vise," according to journalist Jack Anderson, the first to discover the legislation. Of course, the laws were only to be enacted in the case of domestic violence or a full-scale war, but the antidemocratic tone of the agency had been established.

Other journalists soon learned that the problem was even bigger than a few fascist bureaucrats with dreams of total control. The agency had been placed in charge of the special government shelters reserved for national crises. These "continuity of government" bunkers, the hiding holes of America's political and military elite, include sites such as the massive underground complex beneath Mt. Weather in Virginia. At the same time, FEMA made plans to round up the anticipated refugees, angry citizens, and rioting mobs that might come from a collapse of government. Col. Oliver North suggested using the military's tanks and bayonets for the task. Those strategies have since been incorporated into the United Nations' design for world government; North moved into the political arena, fighting for election in Virginia and abandoning his efforts on behalf of the black-helicopters command.

FEMA itself continues to plan for the worst of all possible worlds, taking on the burden of totalitarian power in the event of a nuclear war, biological catastrophe, or alien invasion. Current FEMA director Adrianne Manzekis keeps a low public profile, but several policy recommendations indicate that the agency has already considered a number of options for dealing with a recalcitrant public unwilling to accept possible domination by alien species. The most frightening of those recommendations seems to indicate a willingness by political leaders to sell out the U.S. to aliens in exchange for rewards and a role in any new power structure. However, these documents may be red herrings planted by enemies of the government or even by the United Nations, which would like to present itself as a credible alternative to local rule.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C. (official), NSA facility in Fort Meade, Maryland (secret).
Branches: San Luis Obispo, California (training center); Salt Lake City, Utah (communications center); Napa County, California (secret black helicopter mountain base); Bluemont, Virginia (The Facility, also known as Mt. Weather, a secret underground base). Regional support command bases are in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City, Denton TX, Denver, Seattle, and San Francisco.
Followers: 20,000 federal officers and 30,000 employees, only 2,000 of which are officially acknowledged (note that FEMA has the power to take control of any or all military reserves should it be necessary, and can further take control of other military branches in case of a national emergency).
Resources: Vast database of information on all American citizens, vast communications network (and the ability to restrict the communications capabilities of others), black helicopters, working relationship with the United Nations.
Secret Knowledge: Government secrets, cutting-edge or beyond-cutting-edge technology.
Primary Goal: Provide stability in case of government collapse or any major disaster (or take steps to prevent it).
Common Missions: Keep abreast of potential ecological and political emergencies, stage training exercises to remain prepared for emergencies, monitor possible subversive groups or individuals, gather data on all citizens, test new equipment or population control methods, and counter antigovernment movements.

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

As the agency ostensibly responsible for all extraterrestrial travel undertaken by the U.S. government, NASA has a shining past and a much murkier present. While public projects such as the *Apollo* missions, the *Mariner* and *Voyager* robot explorers, and the shuttle work on the International Space Station (see *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*) all earned the agency a good reputation, its work on more covert tasks has been less than satisfactory.

NASA's greatest source of embarrassment at the highest levels of government lies in the fact that it had missed the alien presence for so long. Most of the agency still doesn't know about the presence of alien crafts, though once in a while a large ship shows up on the radar screens as an unregistered orbital object. To insure that NASA remains within the loop for secret knowledge about alien contact and other classified information, Lew Allen was appointed head of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Previously, the well-connected Allen had been deputy director of the CIA.

NASA is firmly in the control of the Freemasons. Many of the administration's directors and high-ranking officials have been Masons, as have many astronauts—particularly those who went to the Moon (see above regarding the importance of *prima materia* to the Masons). Buzz Aldrin even carried a Masonic banner on the Apollo 11 mission. Now that the Masons have their Moon rocks, however, it's possible that they don't care about NASA any more—thus the relative (and disappointing) inactivity of the organization for so long.

SETI

There are an estimated 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. It's not unreasonable to assume that life exists near some of them. That's the simple premise behind a complicated global undertaking: the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, or SETI.

Astronomers began small-scale efforts to determine the presence of extraterrestrials in 1959, but the first serious work under the SETI name was accomplished as part of NASA in 1971, when the Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California, proposed Project Cyclops. Using radio telescopes, Cyclops was supposed to scan the sky for microwave signals emitted by transmitters on other worlds. The project was delayed and delayed again, as government funds were promised and then mysteriously disappeared from the budget. Finally, in 1992, private investors in Silicon Valley funded the High Resolution Microwave Survey.

The resulting effort, renamed Project Phoenix, searched the airwaves using a supercomputer to examine millions of frequencies from the one thousand closest stars. The search couldn't be stopped by either the apathy or antipathy of the U.S. government or hostile senators such as Richard Bryan of Nevada, who consistently ridiculed the notion of finding "little green men" with public money. Since then, the search has expanded globally. SETI programs run at UC-Berkeley and Harvard, as well as in Italy and Australia. Even amateur astronomers tune in via backyard satellite dishes. The silence and static between the stars has so far revealed nothing.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Branches: Ames Research Center, Mountain View CA; Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards CA; Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt MD; Independent Validation & Verification Facility, Fairmont WV; Johnson Space Center, Houston; Kennedy Space Center FL; Langley Research Center, Hampton VA; John Glenn Research Center, Cleveland; Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville AL; Moffett Federal Airfield, Mountain View CA; Stennis Space Center MS; Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island VA; and the White Sands Test Facility, White Sands NM.

Followers: Approximately 21,000 personnel.

Resources: Cutting-edge technology including space travel capability, alien artifacts, a network of scientific experts, vast funding.

Secret Knowledge: A detailed analysis of alien spacecraft encounters on Earth and particularly in space.

Primary Goal: Oversee all U.S. space activity.

Common Missions: Find and claim alien artifacts, cover up alien encounters, study alien technologies for use in human endeavors, build the International Space Station, probe the solar system (publicly and in secret), and conduct secret trade and communication with Moonbase Plato.

Additional Government Agencies

A few other government agencies may play a part in DARK•MATTER campaigns, including the following authorities.

ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms): This agency monitors the possession of the three controlled substances mentioned in its name. The organization is famous mostly for its involvement in the Waco debacle (a raid on an armed cult compound that ended in death and disaster). Many believe the ATF oversteps its bounds and violates constitutional rights in its monitoring and control of dangerous materials.

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation): Created as a police force able to cross state lines, the FBI's jurisdiction covers interstate crime, drug trafficking, and possible threats against the government from within. Although it has thousands of field agents and a vast network of field offices, the Bureau has been known to employ citizens to spy upon each other. The FBI is the one U.S. intelligence agency that does not open its database to the CIA.

Military Intelligence: Although some claim "military intelligence" is an oxymoron, the army's highly efficient intelligence corps has a long history of sometimes less than scrupulous behavior. A new agency, INSCOM, now carries out all Army intelligence duties. AFI (Air Force Intelligence) and OSI (Air Force Office of Special Investigations) are much newer, and may play a part in UFO disinformation. The ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) is the oldest of all U.S. intelligence organizations.

NRO (National Reconnaissance Office): A secret, "black" agency until recently, the NRO monitors spy satellites and interprets the data. The technology used on the spy satellites and their degree of accuracy is classified, but is said by some to be good enough to read a book from orbit. The NRO uses satellites to view activities within U.S. borders as well as without.

NSA (National Security Agency): Sometimes referred to as "No Such Agency," this supersecret organization is responsible for intelligence gathering and other activities surrounding communications and communications technology.

NSC (National Security Council): Made up of the president, the vice-president, and other high-ranking officials, the NSC exists to be the central recipient of all intelligence gathered by other agencies. At shown by its position at the center of the Iran-Contra affair, the NSC may engage in illegal covert actions of its own.

Secret Service: Best known for its protection of the White House and the president, the Secret Service (a branch of the Treasury Department) was created to fight counterfeiters and aided the Justice Department throughout the early twentieth century. The Secret Service also provides security at foreign embassies as well as for special visitors such as the Pope.

U.S. Space Command: This group was created to oversee all space-related research and activity. Operating out of the Crystal Palace within NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain complex in Colorado, USSPACECOM monitors space (near to Earth and deep space) and administers the supposedly defunct "Star Wars" defense program that placed armed satellites in earth orbit.

Visitors from the Stars: The Greys

In 1947, Kenneth Arnold coined the term "flying saucer" as he reported his sighting of strange unidentified flying objects. Later that same year, reports came from Roswell, New Mexico, that the military had recovered a crashed extraterrestrial craft. Alien encounters, however, are much older than these events. Although most of modern society does not realize or believe it, aliens have almost always been among us. Visitors from other planets visit, observe, and even interact with humans, and have done so since before recorded history. Ancient humans knew of them, although they did not always know exactly how to describe or categorize the aliens correctly. In fact, it may be that modern humanity is as incapable of truly understanding them as our primitive forefathers were.

The Greys are the most prevalent and significant alien presence on the Earth today. Their spaceships are seen flying over military bases, cities, and desolate areas alike. They are seen landing on Earth and the Moon, and their handiwork may be witnessed even farther out, on Mars.

Small in stature, they have incredibly advanced technology and impressive mindwalking abilities. Their ships cross interstellar distances, and they have the ability to deceive and even erase human minds. The Greys can manipulate energy and matter in startling displays of power.

Their agenda is unknown. The Greys mutilate animals. They abduct and study humans. They observe military bases and activities and follow air and spacecraft. Are they sinister or friendly? Are they something else entirely? No one knows for sure, although many claim to have the answers.

The mighty city-ship of the Greys is settled into the Valles Marineris, the great rift valley on Mars. It often sends scout ships to Earth; most of the time these scouts simply pick up atmospheric, marine, and biological samples for later examination, but occasionally they drop off an agent to investigate human cities, paranormal sites, or regions of known alien presence firsthand. In the most extreme cases, they send a retrieval or eradication team to remove traces of their presence. With their superior technology, mindwalking abilities, and command of gravity itself, the Greys find it relatively easy to keep these trips hidden.



Uneasy sentiment accompanied the Greys' settlement of the Sol system. The decision that determined the aliens would settle Earth was controversial even in its own time, and it has continued to be debated ever since, with views and counterarguments changing from generation to generation. Was it ethical to settle an inhabited planet? Was it right to attempt to aid humans? To what extent should the Greys attempt to moderate the human proclivity for violence? The issues have only become more urgent as humans have grown more and more technologically savvy. Indeed, in the last century humanity has surpassed Grey achievements in some areas of technological endeavor, primarily chemistry and micromanufacturing. More important, the Greys now have a much harder time gathering raw materials for their own industrial enterprises: Humans have laid claim to most of the terrestrial sources of petroleum, metals, and chemical feedstocks.

Humans have no idea what the Greys' true goals are. Indeed, why do they have such an interest in

Idan ba Tan
Junior Speaker of the Ahotti

Level 17 Grey Mindwalker

STR	6	[–1]	INT	10	[0]
DEX	11	[+1]	WIL	16	[+3]
CON	7		PER	12	

Durability: 7/7/3/3 Action Check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2
Psionic Strength Points: 24
Perks: Observant, Heightened Will
Flaw: Delicate

Attacks

Mass pistol	14/7/3	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m	En/0
Mind blast	18/9/4	d4+2s/d6+2s/d8+2s	—
Unarmed	3/1/—	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Defenses

Telekinesis–*kinetic shield*
CF softsuit: d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6–1 (En)
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged weapons
+3 WIL resistance modifier vs encounter skills

Skills

Modern [11]–*pistol [14];* Vehicle [11]–*space [13];* Knowledge [10]–*computer [13], deduce [13], language (Grey) [13], language (English) [13], language (Russian) [12];* Law [10]–*court (Grey) [12];* Physical Science [10]; System Operation [10]; Awareness [16]–*perception [17];* Resolve [16]–*mental [20];* Culture [12]–*diplomacy [16];* Interaction [12]–*bargain [15], charm [16];* Leadership [12]–*command [14], inspire [17].*

Psionic Skills

Telekinesis [16]–*kinetic shield [20], levitation [18], photokinetics [18];* Telepathy [12]–*contact [14], datalink [14], mind blast [18], mind shield [15].*

Idan is one of the most powerful and influential of the Ahotti, dedicated to the group's causes and ideals. Deeply conservative, she has spent the last hundred and fifty years denying the importance of the human industrial revolution, and she still hopes to retain Grey reclusiveness in an era of expanding human power, technology, and presence throughout the solar system. As long as ba Tan retains her influence, rogue Greys will still be hunted down and efforts to establish contact or provide humans with additional technology will be severely punished. Furthermore, if ba Tan succeeds in her goal to achieve the rank of Speaker of the Ahotti, her influence will become second to none among her people.

Idan ba Tan stands just over 1.3 meters tall and weighs no more than 40 kilograms; she is thin even for a Grey. Her advanced age has made her delicate, as might be expected in a Grey more than 180 years old, and she seems to prefer living in a zero-gravity or very low-g environment; she often receives visitors in a spherical zero-g chamber fitted with special gravity-nullifier columns. Rumor has it that those who displease her during these audiences find themselves crushed under the press of tractor beams or gravitic inducers that increase the victim's weight until the target can no longer stand or breathe.

While she tolerates a limited amount of dissent, ultimately those who too vehemently oppose her philosophy never prosper. Her view of the present situation demands that her people help themselves first, and others only later, if at all. Her attitude is decidedly suspicious, if not outright hostile.

humanity? They are presently observers, interfering very rarely and discreetly. A few are exceptions to the rule, preferring to adventure and see the world, but even those few are rather secretive.

Certain Greys even accost witnesses while posing as Men In Black; they adopt something like human form through telepathic illusions. Their mental abilities allow them to eliminate their tracks, or at least reduce the traces of their presence to a level that can easily be denied by human governments.

A few Greys believe that it is possible to "improve" the human species, reducing its penchant for violence and vulnerability to a wide range of alien pathogens, and addressing its lamentable lack of appreciation for—indeed, fear and hostility to—alien advancement, culture, art, and technology. These Greys abduct humans, use viral and physical tools to change their physical and genetic makeup, and release them to the wild, where they are tracked and studied. For the most part, they carefully choose victims most likely to pass on their legacy—that is, humans of childbearing age—but occasionally they take victims for gerontological studies as well.

The Greys who fear humans as a potential reservoir of disease and violence are fully in favor of continuing this program, but many others oppose it as too little, too late. In order for them to have had a large impact on the human gene pool, the changes would have had to be implemented long ago when the city-ship first arrived. Now, with a human population in the billions, no more than a few thousand can be altered by the limited number of scientists available for such research.

More cynical Greys suspect that the genetic tinkering may have other goals entirely. These scientists suspect that a faction among the Greys seeks to gather genetic samples to gauge human strengths and weaknesses for some dire plot.

A few Greys live among humans but keep their presence secret. The most trusted and skilled reconnaissance agents drift into human society under cover of mindwalking illusions or memory wipes that keep their presence a secret. These close-contact agents speak human languages fluently, understand human technology in detail, and always live in safe houses bought by the aliens through blinds, holding companies, and layers of lawyers.

More often, reconnaissance parties simply monitor radio, TV, and Internet topics. They collect data, may briefly question a human subject or two, and commission further research through third parties such as private investigators, polling agencies, and market research firms. Primarily, they seem interested in human beliefs, adaptability, and ability to cope with stressful or even lethal situations, as if they are testing the psychological profile of various human populations over time. In addition, they sometimes track obscure economic and medical indicators. What is ul-

timately done with all this data is unclear, but the Greys take it quite seriously.

Although many purport to know something of the history of the Greys before they came to Earth, such facts are always suspect. In truth, we know nothing of these aliens before they first contacted humans in prehistory, and precious little after that.

The ancients saw the Greys as gods. However, they could also be the source of many demon myths. In fact, no one agenda rules the Greys (see "Grey Politics," below). Certainly the political war fought among the aliens in the days of ancient Thera (see *Chapter 5: History of the World*) shows that they are not always a harmonious group.

Modern knowledge of these aliens comes post-Roswell, when the Greys formed a relationship (even if it was short-lived) with the U.S. government. Evidence exists that in the southwestern U.S., the government (or some part of the government) is working hand in hand with the Greys, performing sinister experiments or preparing for a dire plot. Some abductees report that human military personnel not only know about alien abductions, they assist the aliens in conducting them. Perhaps the government sold some of its people to the Greys in exchange for technology?

Other Greys seem interested in helping humans. In ancient times, they assisted people in building projects, taught them about the stars, and gave them limited amounts of technology. Even today, some humans who report encounters or communication with the Greys claim that they are benevolent creatures sent here to watch over us, help us, and in fact protect us from the rising Dark Tide.

Grey Politics

The Greys are far from a unified political body. Instead, no fewer than three distinct political factions exist—the Ahotti, the Iltan, and the Ziljir—with no doubt many smaller splinter groups.

Considered the most powerful of the Grey factions, the Ahotti (which translates roughly as "our people") have shaped most Grey policies for the past eight thousand years. For the first three thousand years of the Greys' presence on Earth, the Ahotti limited humanity's access to Grey technology, doling new advances out sparingly over time. In this way, they believed that humans could be brought up to the Greys' level without irrevocably harming human culture.

The activation of the standing stones of Thera, and the ensuing attack by the otherworldly beings that stepped through the doorway, encouraged the Iltan (literally, "free mind") to propose a dramatic increase in the rate of technology sharing. Fearing additional future encounters with the extradimensional invaders, the Iltan lobbied the current Grey Speaker to approve the granting of additional scientific advances to the Atlanteans. Despite their minority status, an alliance with the Ziljir faction—along with an agreement to allow the Ahotti to increase efforts to quash the growing Egyptian reliance on arcane arts—allowed the Iltan to sway the Speaker.

For their part, the Ziljir were content to act as "kingmakers" in Grey politics. Generally considered a fringe group, the Ziljir are often seen as troublemakers; their name is derived from the Grey term for "chaos-bringer." Most Ziljir were more interested in personal gain than in improving the humans' lot in life, and enjoyed taking advantage of their status as revered beings among the lesser humans.

During this time, many Iltan moved secretly within Egyptian society, working to undermine the Ahotti's efforts to discourage certain intellectual pursuits (such as the Hermetic arts). A few among them helped form the Companions of Horus, a human society dedicated to the free sharing of ideas and learning. Some even worked to open friendly relations with the kinori.

The destruction of Thera forced a major shift in Grey politics. Many Ahotti blamed the Iltan's new policies for the catastrophe. The humans could no longer be seen as equals, claimed the Ahotti, nor could they be allowed to continue the studies of arcane magic. A political firestorm arose, during which the Speaker (perhaps egged on by Ziljir extremists) was pressured to denounce the policies of both the Ahotti and the Iltan, restricting Grey development to single cities and leaving humans to form their own civilizations in certain preserved districts.

Though later Grey historians feel this decision prevented a civil war, the decision was not a popular one. Reasoning that the Egyptian culture was too poisoned against the Greys to continue efforts in this region, the Greys moved across the Atlantic to Central America.

There, the Greys pursued a more conservative plan, remaining separate from the young Olmec civilization. Despite the Speaker's prohibition, some Greys walked among the humans, spreading information and teaching the humans in the ways of agriculture and other sciences. These teachers entered Mesoamerican lore under such names as Kukulcan, Quetzalcoatl, and Viracocha. However, the Grey presence in Central America was shorter-lived than on Thera, and the city-ship left around A.D. 700 and made the Moon its new home. In the mid-twentieth century, when humanity seemed poised to leap across the gulf of space from Earth to the Moon, the city-ship moved to Mars, where it rests today in Valles Marineris.

Leaving the Earth did not end Grey interference in human affairs, however. Members of the Iltan faction are believed to have been in contact with the Knights Templar for about one hundred years, teaching them secrets of mindwalking and learning what the knights had discovered about dark matter and arcana in return. In fact, certain records—such as the Migashi Tablet, discovered in the Sahara by an Institute expedition in 1951—seems to indicate that Iltan efforts to share information with humans have continued into the present, despite the Speaker's prohibitions against it.

Rogues

From time to time, individual Greys display personalities that diverge greatly from those of their fellows. The Greys call these rogues, or *hesai,* and target them for reeducation or elimination as appropriate.

Some rogues follow selfish or evil agendas, preying on humans with their powerful mindwalking abilities. Their activities often result in cases that humans are at a loss to solve. In general, they try to keep their activities low-profile, as they are often the targets of alien trackers, strikers, and elimination teams if their activities become publicly known. The most notorious example currently operating on Earth is Eenevar jil Tan, a Mindwalker who controls a criminal empire in southeast Asia and traffics in heroin. Marooned after a surveillance operation

went wrong, Eenevar has turned his psionic gifts into a profitable tool to control the Shan arcanists. To them, he is simply "The White Ghost" and is revered as a supernatural figure. His compound in the jungle is heavily fortified and extremely isolated; it can be reached only by air.

Other rogues live among humanity quietly, without attracting attention and without using their mental powers to manipulate and abuse humans. These are often simply deserters from recon expeditions, and they are fascinated by human foibles and behaviors. Some, such as Itohiro Nakami, founder of the Hoffmann Institute, seek to help humans. In a few cases, hesai desert because they seek to master the arcane arts found among humans, generally without success.

Sasquatch

Although tales of Bigfoot, the yeti, momo, almas, skunk-apes, and other mysterious humanoids have been around for centuries, it wasn't until 1973 that humans first stumbled upon the truth. In September of that year, three women in Pennsylvania not only saw what appeared to be alien craft land on the ground, but three creatures emerge—"apelike, hair-covered creatures," according to the women. That year, 245 witnesses reported 118 sightings of hairy humanoid creatures in the area. There were also over six hundred UFO reports. Researchers can now match together areas of Bigfoot sightings along with UFO "flaps" before and since 1973.

According to biological and forensic studies, the sasquatch are believed to be creatures from early in Earth's history (or perhaps another planet altogether) genetically reproduced by the Greys to serve as servants and warriors. It seems likely that some of the creatures have escaped from their masters and now live in the wild on their own.

One of the greatest arguments against the existence of Bigfoot has always been no one had ever found a carcass or bones. The reason is that the Greys monitor and take away dead or dying specimens to continue to keep their presence a secret. Some reports of the sasquatch note their having equipment in their possession (tools given to them by their masters?), including devices that make them nearly invisible—most likely a further attempt to keep their secret.

Headquarters: Martian city-ship in Valles Marineris.

Branches: The Greys have station-ships at Shambhala (in Tibet), at the South Pole, and on the Moon. They also have a permanent observation platform high above the North Pole. Additional bases may exist.

Power and Resources: Advanced technology (including spacecraft and energy weapons), biological and genetic engineering techniques, and mindwalking powers.

Followers: Nearly a million on Mars; several thousand on Earth.

Secret Knowledge: The Greys have access to Progress Level 7 technology and have vast knowledge of mindwalking powers.

Primary Goal: Observe humanity. Some seek to "improve" the human species.

Common Missions: Abduction of humans, observation of humans and other species.

Or . . .

The Greys are not extraterrestrials, but ultraterrestrials, coming from an entirely different dimension or reality. Their spaceships are devices that allow them to travel not only through space but also through the dimensional barriers. They come from some alternate Earthlike world (hence their ability to create human-alien crossbreeds), and their agenda is too alien and bizarre for us to ever truly comprehend, at least until we ascend beyond this level of awareness. (Perhaps that is what the illuminati have been actually been after all along.)

Or the Greys are time travelers, come to us from our own distant future. They are, in fact, humans who have genetically altered their appearance. They seek to study the past, and reclaim some "pure" human genetic samples while they are here, but they also may be manipulating their past—our present—to accomplish some unknown goal.

They Walk Among Us: The Sandmen

Among the creatures that have arrived on Earth carried by the tide of dark matter, the sandmen and their cybernetic masters, the etoile, are perhaps the most dangerous. They seek to establish themselves quietly before proclaiming their rulership. In a few decades, perhaps a century at most, when their numbers have had time to increase and their understanding of human society is greater, they will make their move. This species of cybernetic parasites long ago adjusted to a consistently high level of environmental dark matter. Today, the etoile coming to Earth hold a strong position every way but numerically. The etoile have superior technology. They understand the consequences of dark matter. They have mastered biological processes that humanity can barely hope to understand. They have the initiative, and, unlike the bulk of humanity, they know that the war has already started.

To win that war, the sandmen seek to infiltrate positions of power and gather strategic resources. They have set watchers over strategic locations, corrupted generals and politicos, and prepared themselves with safe houses, networks of spies, and carefully concealed research programs that slowly are uncovering the extent of human technology, stamina, and methods. While the etoile gather intelligence on humanity, only the upper echelons of the political classes are even willing to admit that there is a real threat. Most of humanity remains blissfully ignorant.

Fortunately for us, several forces keep the etoile from taking over completely. For one thing, they are opposed by the Greys, who fear the etoile will ruin their efforts to "improve" humanity. Also, they must work in secrecy until they can gather enough strength to show their hand and seize everything they want.

Since 1991, the sandmen have made a large push to move significant numbers of scouts and stalkers onto Earth, but the vagaries of travel through the gateways keep their numbers relatively low. Nevertheless, their infection teams have slowly built a set of beachheads in North America and central Asia, two reasonably industrialized regions of the globe and thus—to the sandmen, anyway—valuable.

As far as anyone has been able to determine, the sandman presence in Asia is centered in the old Soviet city of Magnitogorsk, a heavy-industrial hellhole founded under Stalin in 1929,

and in the Caucasus, where open warfare has raged for years under the cover of an "ethnic rebellion." Reports from the region are sketchy at best.

In North America, the sandman infiltration point seems to be somewhere near the Houston Ship Canal, in a zone rich in refineries not too terribly far from the Mississippi River traffic. Throughout Texas, small towns have become homes to entire families of sandman troops, medics, and technical experts. They have made great progress in cracking human computer systems, and all sandmen are in frequent communication with others of their kind and with their etoile makers. They work together to cover up any discovery of their activities, and have been quite successful so far. Most Texans know of their towns as "kind of quiet, kind of creepy," but anyone who actually finds out the truth behind their isolation and secrecy is quickly silenced.

From these infiltration points, the etoile and the sandmen seem to be spreading out slowly, gathering around industrial sites. Reports have made it back to the Intelligence Division of the Hoffmann Institute about heavy machinery, loads of petrochemicals, and truckloads of specialized metal alloys being shipped to sandman sites (which the Institute has taken to calling "sandhills"). Since these goods are all legitimately ordered, paid for, and delivered, there's really nothing that can be done to stop them publicly without revealing that entire Texan towns are being subverted to someone else's ends. That's something the Institute is unwilling to do until it knows more about what the sandmen hope to accomplish with all of these materials, their hosts of human agents, and their advanced technology. At the same time, the sandmen seem quite willing to keep their designs hidden until, presumably, their plans are so far advanced that they cannot be stopped.

Headquarters: Unknown. The etoile and sandmen do not appear to have a single headquarters for their Earthly operations.

Branches: Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio, Magnitogorsk, Maracaibo, Tunis, Fez, Dakhar, Oran.

Resources: Advanced power sources, sophisticated computing and manufacturing technology, sandmen.

Followers: Unknown, but estimates claim that the etoile command at least 5,000 sandmen.

Secret Knowledge: Advanced cybernetic equipment, biological expertise, control over doorways.

Primary Goal: Take over the world by infecting all humans with transformative nanites.

Common Missions: Acquire special metal ores or alloys, construct new machine tools, infiltrate chip-manufacturing plants, modify operating system source codes, hack government and military computer systems.

Or . . .

The sandmen are visitors from our own future, a time when humanity has given up pure organic freedom to take up the banner of cybernetic coexistence with machines. These half-human, half-mechanical beings seek to change the course of history itself to ensure that their species will control Earth in the centuries to come.

Serpents of the Earth: The Kinori

Unknown to most people, humans have long shared Earth with the reptilian humanoids known as kinori. Although the Kinori's existence remains a secret, high-ranking Freemasons have forged a pact with these creatures to help them in the construction of secret, subterranean bases in exchange for arcane secrets. The best known of these projects lies underneath the newly constructed Denver airport, a secret Masonic stronghold as well as a kinori underground base. Tales of the Masonic masters providing the kinori with human meat while they work may or may not be true—no one has lived to bring back conclusive proof.



The kinori have long been constructing underground cities, perhaps as an expansion of the earthen dens they lived in early in their evolution. According to some, these subterranean cities may be the inspiration behind the human legends of Hades and Hell. Each of these strongholds is ruled by a blackscale, or a "Master of the Work," a type of kinori executive officer who keeps the entire site on track. Beneath him are the gate wardens and life engineers, as well as kinori of other careers and types. Over time, each kinori stronghold has been expanded, designed, and repaired by a group of "architects," engineers who oversee its growth. Each site provides storage for thou-

sands, even millions, of young, fully trained kinori warriors, as well as production facilities, mines, water treatment, and power generation. Most are buried quite deep, some as much as 10 or 12 kilometers down. They are said to be packed with thousands of kinori mummies and tens of thousands of fighters kept in stasis awaiting a great war.

With long-standing ties to the Companions of Horus as well as the Masons, the kinori are gradually recovering from their losses at the hands of the Hoffmann Institute in the early twentieth century. Though their Manhattan tunnels and materials were destroyed in the 1930s, they have since rebuilt in the vicinity of New Orleans—and their strongholds along the Nile and beneath the western reaches of the Sahara remain untouched. Their next move may depend on how threatened they feel by other species—and may well be directed at the Greys, rather than at humanity.

Some researchers refer to the kinori as saurians or reptilians and believe that they are extraterrestrial in origin, coming from the stars on their own starships. Even though this does not appear to be true, a great deal has been written about it. While many such researchers have different opinions about the intentions of the Greys, all seem convinced that the "saurians" are hostile, and think of humanity as a source of food.

Two different stories are told among the kinori about their origins; the kinori themselves are torn as to which story to believe. In one version of the story, they came through an interdimensional gate near Cairo and settled much of Earth long before the Greys ever arrived, until the most recent Ice Age slowly drove them into the tropics. The arrival of other aliens and the rise of humanity disrupted their settlements and led to brutal wars.

Another version of their legend claims that they never arrived on their own, but were merely told that they had done so by the Greys, who grew a small army of kinori from tissue samples taken from collected gene banks. When the kinori learned the truth about their past, they rebelled against their creators, but it was too late. They had been branded as dangerous tools of the Greys, and were thereafter the enemies of all other aliens. Unwilling to live in captivity, they struck out on their own.

In both versions of the story, the kinori lived alongside the Egyptians until around 2150 B.C. Here, the tales grow vague: Some claim the kinori peacefully shared their knowledge with humans, while others suggest they taught humans dark arcane arts to use them as pawns against the Greys. In any case, the destruction of the Atlantean civilization (see *Chapter 5: History of the World*) marked the end of widespread kinori–human cooperation, and the saurians were everywhere driven out of their settlements and hunted down.

Regardless of the truth of their origins, the kinori were worshiped by early humans as the *wadjet*, the incarnations of the cobra goddess, she who guards Egyptian royalty, and as *seth*, the Egyptian god of the peasants and darkness. Part of this reputation may stem from their days as allies of the Egyptians; part of it may stem from their ability to manufacture mummies (see "Mummy" in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms* for details). It is their gateway (or gateways) that the pyramids were built to blockade. More than most other species, the kinori have an experimental understanding of transdimensional travel. Their ability to manipulate it is limited, but it is enough for their purposes when dark matter levels are high enough, and they are always learning more.

Headquarters: Secret underground base in the Nile Valley.

Branches: Denver, New Orleans, the Sahara.

Resources: Extensive arcane power, tunnel systems allowing them to travel in secret.

Followers: The kinori number at least 100,000.

Secret Knowledge: Powerful occult knowledge, contact with the Greys.

Primary Goal: Protect their species.

Common Missions: Hold secret meetings with the Masons, construct underground bases, perform complex magical rites, obtain occult artifacts, oppose the alien Greys.

Or . . .

The kinori are not alien, but a terrestrial evolutionary offshoot of early reptilian species on Earth. Thoroughly terran, these creatures are as much at home here as humans are.

Other Organizations

Obviously, there are influential and important organizations beyond those mentioned above. Not all are secret societies—some are quite public, or secret only because they are so small or seemingly insignificant. The descriptions of the few mentioned below include a single adventure seed tied to each in order to work them quickly into a DARK•MATTER campaign.

Aum Shinri Kyo

The rough English translation of the name of this group is "Supreme Truth." Based in Japan, this doomsday cult is led by the self-proclaimed "Holy Pope" Shoko Asahara. In 1995, Aum agents released poisonous gas in the Tokyo subway. At the same time, Aum labs cultivated botulism and other biological weapons for use in destabilizing the country, making it ripe for takeover. Aum paramilitary units have training from Russian military units. Those who oppose the cult disappear, their bodies reportedly dissolved in acid so they will never be found.

Aum has connections with Yeltsin's administration in Russia (three-quarters of the Aum cultists are Russian, in fact), the Unification Church in Korea (which has links to the CIA), and the yakuza (which has links to the right-wing portion of Japanese government). Aum may be only one arm of a much larger conspiracy, or the middleman in huge illegal deals made between the Russians, the yakuza, and even the U.S. (The cult certainly has more money than it should based on its own resources.) But even if it sells arms or biological hazards or drugs between the Russians, the yakuza, and/or the Unification Church, that still doesn't rule out the fact that the leaders of the cult are doomsday nihilists interested in bringing about the apocalypse with the money from these illegal endeavors.

Adventure Seed: Aum members have been seen in Belgrade at the Nikolai Tesla Museum. Internal group publications indicate that they are studying Tesla's theory that earthquakes could be produced artificially through electromagnetic pulses. Further research uncovers other cultists in Moscow, buying vast amounts of surplus electronic equipment, including lasers. Investigation reveals that they are hatching yet another doomsday plot for Japan, and it also brings to the forefront their questionable sources of funding.

The Centurions

Unique among most of the groups that the heroes might encounter, the Centurions are a brand-new conspiracy, created in 1999. From the beginning, this secret society set out to create a power structure based on information control. Through a number of front corporations—most prominently the Century Corporation, created to help companies deal with the Y2K computer problem—the members of the Centurions act as consultants in the fields of computers, electronics design, media, marketing, and even criminal investigations. Various Centurion consultants work for the FBI, NASA, the Pentagon, and too many multinational corporations to name, all through different consulting agencies or private-sector think tanks created by the secret society (or, occasionally, through legitimate consulting firms). Clients find their assistance invaluable, and thus work with the Centurions over and over. What they don't realize is that the secret society behind the consultants gathers the information gained through clients and their work to create a vast database of knowledge. The Centurions use this information to analyze and predict trends and extrapolate hidden secrets.

Century Corp's motto is "New Solutions for a New Century," but the secret society's motto is "The Empire Never Ended." This appears to be a reference to the Roman Empire, suggesting a different connection with the word "centurion." Some researchers suggest that this might also connote a relationship with the Bilderberglike group known as the Club of Rome, which has connections as far and wide as Cambodia and Great Britain but is centered in, of course, Rome. Others claim that the Centurions want to see the return of a totalitarian world empire like that of ancient Rome. In fact, high-ranking officials in the group are called praetors and lictors, titles suggesting more connections with the Roman Empire. No "emperor" figure is known, but that discovery may just be a matter of time. The emperor could be still a young child being fostered by the Centurions, or the computer into which they feed all their gathered information. Conversely, the Centurions might work for another secret group, and their emperor—if such a person even exists—might exist outside the Centurions altogether.

The Centurions operate throughout the world but are based mostly in the U.S. Their actual headquarters—assuming they have a centralized leadership at all—is in Europe, probably Paris or (as one might expect) Rome. The Centurions actively recruit members, but only those individuals of very high intelligence and ability or who excel at some field of consulting (business, technology, or criminal investigators, mostly) or information gathering. Although they employ enforcers and guards, these are hired mercenaries and not actual recruits. The Centurions always value intellect and reason over brute force.

Adventure Seed: No matter what group affiliation (if any) the heroes currently have, the Centurions attempt to recruit them through the Century Corporation or another appropriate front. Assuming that the heroes don't completely rebuff these advances, they may gain opportunities to peer into another organization. If they work for or with the Hoffmann Institute (or another group) and are well trusted, they may be encouraged to join the Centurions in order to find out more about the society. Working for two different secret organizations during the same mission may create interesting conflicts and situations for the heroes, and eventually they will probably need to leave one or the other.

The East Coast Boys

Gunther Bern heads this small but powerful and influential group of computer hackers. Unlike the usual individualistic hackers, these young men (some are only teenagers) work together to break into operating systems, steal information, and sell it to powerful and wealthy sources. Many conspiratorial groups who have no care for legalities employ the services of the East Coast Boys.

Adventure Seed: The East Coast Boys are spotted on the Internet gathering up rumors and news about Qualitech, a small but upwardly mobile young electronics corporation. Word spreads that Qualitech may be due for a hacker hit soon, but it never seems to come. Research shows that Qualitech was hit, but the information stolen was top secret and the company did not want to publicize its loss. Qualitech came upon some reverse-engineered alien technology, and the Boys stole the schematics. The question is, whom did they sell it to, and whom did Qualitech get it from in the first place?

Knights of Unity

Mildred Fife broke away from the White Aryan Resistance in 1987 to form this militia group. Based outside Billings, Montana, the Knights of Unity claim to be a Christian community without links to racist societies. In reality, however, the Knights of Unity gain most of their membership from the Aryan Nations, the KKK, and the Posse Comitatus, so while they may not have an agenda of racial superiority, most of their members still harbor their prejudices. The Knights of Unity stockpile food, supplies, weapons, and explosives to prepare for the inevitable coming war against the "Satanic" government.

The Knights of Unity maintain a visible presence on the Internet, preaching their take on Christian theology and the evils of government. Like the Posse Comitatus, they insist on not carrying any licenses (driving, hunting, gun, or marriage), not holding Social Security cards, and not paying taxes. They hope to eventually become a fully self-sufficient community, but until that time they make money by selling (mostly over the Internet) their own publications on survival techniques, conspiracy theories, the government, and religion.

Adventure Seed: The Knights of Unity are known to have links to the violent skinhead band KWM (Knights of White Might). Through clues in the lyrics of the band's distasteful music, it has become clear that the Knights of Unity know a great deal more about the government conspiracy known as Aquarius than would be expected. Although the group's beliefs may repulse investigators, interested parties may wish to contact the group and attempt to gain this information—and find out how they got it.

The Mafia

Although organized crime is in the public eye, it nevertheless fits the definition of a secret society. The Mafia is very old, coming originally from Sicily. A number of Swiss and Italian Masonic lodges, primarily the infamous P2 Lodge (see *Chapter 7: Places of Interest*) have connections with the Mafia. In the United States, the CIA and other intelligence organizations have worked with the crime syndicate to gain information and carry out assassina-

tions. The CIA hired the Mafia to kill Fidel Castro in the 1960s (although it obviously didn't work). It may have been involved (again, at the CIA's behest?) with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The crime syndicate was certainly no friend of JFK's crime-fighting brother Robert Kennedy, who was also—perhaps not coincidentally—assassinated.

The Mafia has vast monetary resources and followers skilled in infiltration, robbery, and murder. Its connections are international and extensive. While the organization usually doesn't have a stake in the paranormal or the earthshaking conspiracies of a DARK•MATTER campaign, it is often involved on the periphery as a go-between or hired muscle.

Adventure Seed: Influential Mafia boss Victor Mirabelli disappears while on retreat in upstate New York. Violence breaks out in New York City as his subordinates blame rival crime families. Investigation proves, however, that he was actually abducted by the Greys. Coincidence, or does Mirabelli have information (or something else) that the aliens want?

MUFON

The Mutual UFO Network is a public organization dedicated to studying UFOs and cataloguing sightings. Members live throughout the U.S. and a few other countries and communicate through newsletters, an information hotline, and, of course, the Internet. Not all UFOlogists belong to MUFON, or even agree with its methods or conclusions, and—as is true with any type of science or pseudoscience—there is great dissension among those in the know.

Adventure Seed: While searching through secret government files obtained for an entirely different purpose, investigators discover that MUFON was created by the paranoid NSA to catalogue the people in the United States interested in information regarding UFOs and aliens. It also suggests that the upper ranks of the organization have access to great secrets involving alien contacts in the past. When confronted, however, MUFON denies everything, claiming it to be disinformation. If it's true, what was the government planning on doing with the list of names, and if not, why is the government so keen on discrediting the network?

Odessa

When Nazi Germany fell at the end of World War II, the Odessa Plan went into effect, smuggling high-ranking Nazis out of Germany. Most fled to South America with stolen money and seized works of art worth millions. They used this money to forge a new empire—a new Reich—of drug smugglers and terrorist training camps.

Adventure Seed: Researchers have discovered a number of sites (most prominent the so-called Omicron site in New Zealand, but also the La Venta site in Mexico) that contain both telluric generators (similar to those built by the Greys) and other machines, dubbed resonance generators. While the telluric generators are relatively easily identified, the resonance generators present much more of a puzzle. The Omicron site machines have resisted categorization for years.

However, their identification isn't entirely hopeless. The Tesla documents seized by the U.S. government in 1943 show a remarkable level of familiarity with the presumed functions, moving parts, and manufacture of such a generator. Hints in those documents indicate that the telluric generators can easily generate a continuous level of power up to 2 gigawatts, and bursts of up to 20 gigawatts for short periods. A device such as the resonance generator creates a standing electrical field that seems to enable—or at least alter—psychic abilities in nearby creatures. What other purpose these devices might serve remains a mystery, as do the secret of their construction and the identity of their makers. Investigation suggests human manufacture, but the entire appearance seems to indicate alien design. Parts can be traced to companies owned by the ex-Nazis of Odessa. But what are they trying to do?

The Priory of Zion

The Priory of Zion is the ancient group of secretive religious leaders who manipulated events in Palestine to create the Knights Templar. They instructed the Templars in their sacred duties and urged them to investigate the Temple of Solomon for lost religious treasures such as the Ark of the Covenant, the Spear of Destiny, and even the Holy Grail. They also concentrated their attention around a small church in a village in the south of France called Rennes le Chateau. It is here, they claimed, that Christ and his wife Mary Magdalene escaped after faking his death on the cross. In the church lies the evidence, and not far away is the grave where he was finally buried.

The Priory of Zion still exists to watch over the lineage of Christ and Mary. The Merovingian kings were among the first prominent heirs to this dynasty, and even today many of the members of existing royal families can trace their lineage back to the south of France and the "holy bloodline." This semioccult group's mysterious membership is purportedly composed of influential European figures and—not surprisingly—royalty. Whether or not its beliefs are true, the Priory of Zion is a powerful group with odd traditions based on Christian, Judaic, and pagan sources.

Adventure Seed: An anonymous tip indicates that Princess Diana was murdered in Paris in 1997, not the victim of a simple car accident. Further, the tip says that the murder took place at a place sacred to the Merovingian kings. She was a sacrifice, they say, to sanctify the existing holy bloodline. Investigation shows that a young supposed member of the bloodline, Thomas Plantard de Saint-Clair, has been groomed for years to be a leader. Even now, Priory members within the United Nations manipulate events to raise him through the ranks and one day make him the leader of the New World Order, even if they have to lie, murder, and steal to get him there.

Skull and Bones Society

If the Masons are the largest conspiracy in the world, the Skull and Bones Society may be the smallest. Choosing from the student body of Yale University, this society selects a very small number of members to join their elite ranks. Their headquarters (located on campus, in the public eye) is called the Tomb. No nonmember has ever been within, but supposedly the society keeps macabre trophies, including skulls of famous people (Pancho Villa among them).

Skull and Bones members often graduate to careers in politics, law, and in particular, the intelligence community. In fact, some speculate that the group is nothing more than a recruiting agency for the CIA.

The Skull and Bones Society is almost certainly linked—at least historically—to the identically named secretive occult lodge based in Germany of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This lodge can trace its own origins to the Bavarian Illuminati themselves. With such an illustrious pedigree, it is difficult to believe that the Skull and Bones Society does not possess some important secrets or agendas.

Adventure Seed: On a mission to determine what exactly the Skull and Bones Society does, the heroes are assigned to infiltrate the Tomb. Penetrating surprisingly sophisticated defenses and alarms, they discover that the group lives up to its name—it's a cabal of necromancers and their animated, undead servants. Potential members are tested for their occult abilities, and if they are found lacking, they are killed, reanimated, and placed forever under the power of the remaining membership. These undead servants can operate in normal society fairly well, and over time even seem to age. However, they are supernatural beings of great strength and other abilities, completely under the sway of the Skull and Bones Society. The heroes must decide what to do with this information, particularly in light of some of the group's more famous members, such George Bush and William F. Buckley, Jr. (Undead servitors or necromantic masters?)

UMMO

In 1966, UFO sightings began around Madrid, where a flying disk was seen sporting a symbol that resembled this:)+(. As these sightings increased, strange cylinders began appearing throughout the city, bearing the same symbol. Within, investigators found highly advanced plastics bearing mysterious inscriptions.

Soon, scientists and philosophers around the world began receiving neatly typed messages signed with the same symbol and the word "UMMO." These missives contained highly advanced scientific and philosophical content. Some physicists were even able to advance their work significantly using the information contained within. Over the intervening years, cures for diseases and information leading to the capture of dangerous criminals have come from UMMO. UMMO has even leaked information from one illuminati group to another.

UMMO claims to come from a world obscured by dark matter (absorbing matter, it calls it in one message) circling a star called Iumma. Other sightings indicating that UMMO is an extraterrestrial group or entity include a mass sighting in Moscow in 1989 that involved gigantic humanoids and flying disks with the)+(symbol. The symbol was even burned into the asphalt near a power plant by a beam of light. Nevertheless, humans claiming to represent UMMO, ranging from physicians and scientists to writers and thinkers, have made their presence known over the years. Usually, they accomplish some task and then disappear as quickly as they appeared.

Adventure Seed: UMMO itself may not be as valuable as an adventure seed than as a source for mysterious messages in the campaign. UMMO watches over the world and informs individuals of certain information when doing so suits its purposes. This group (entity?) might be offended by a society of nihilist sorcerers seeking to destroy the world in an arcane cataclysm or preparations by the secret Aquarius group within the U.S. government to test a biological weapon upon a small Texas town. In response, UMMO sends the heroes (or their superiors, or someone else entirely) information about those groups and their plans. Perhaps the information is straightforward, but more likely it's slightly cryptic (due to UMMO's alien nature). Perhaps it accomplishes the task in a roundabout way, prompting someone to create a cure for the biological weapon mentioned above with only the vaguest references of where and when it needs to be used. The Gamemaster can determine UMMO's motives and allow UMMO to become a secret, bizarre source of anonymous information that confuses and worries the heroes as much as it helps them.

The Vril Society

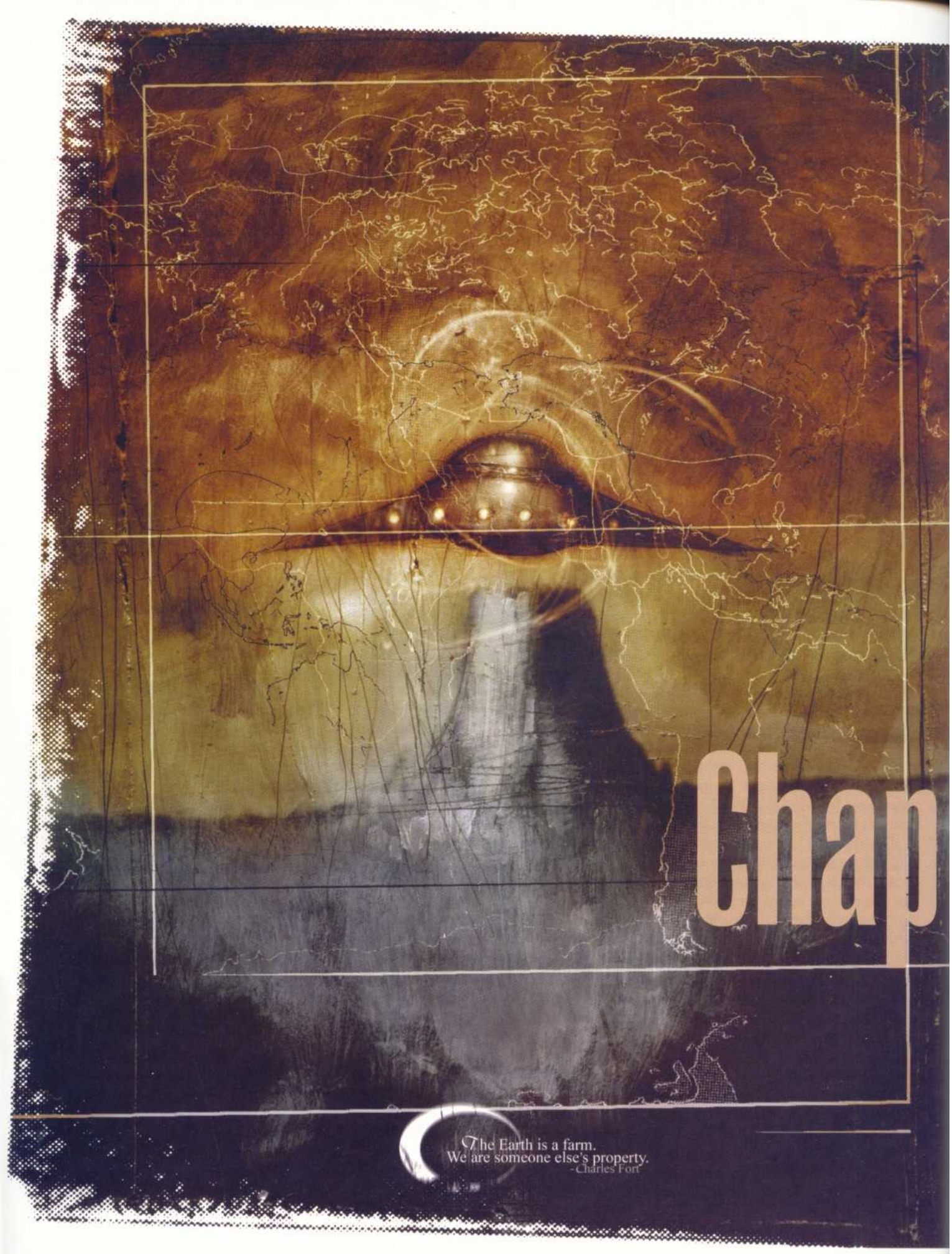
Late in the 1800's, the concept of *vril,* an energy source unknown to conventional science, was widely disseminated. Furthered by the study of groups such as the Golden Dawn and the Theosophists (with whom the Vril Society had a great deal of contact), vril was thought to be an energy that could transform a mortal into a god. Apparently, a superhuman race of subterranean people in an underground kingdom called Agharti first discovered and exploited vril, although there is evidence that the people of Atlantis knew of and used vril or something like it. The theory says that some people can store vril better than others can, allowing them to use the energy to manipulate objects and people to one degree or another.

In 1930s Germany, the Luminous Lodge—or the Vril Society—was formed from an occult group that (at least originally) had links to the Masons. These occultists had racist, Aryan notions that vril would allow their race to achieve their rightful place as masters of the Earth. Hermann Goering was a member of the Vril Society and believed in both the vril and the idea that accompanied that theory, which was that the world was hollow and that humans lived on the inside.

(A related German occult group of the time, the racist Thule Group, also believed in a superhuman society. Instead of an underground kingdom, however, their mysterious lost realm was a now-sunken island called Thule, which resembled Thera/Atlantis in almost every respect. The Thulists also attempted to tap into the vril, and their philosophies and beliefs may have greatly influenced Adolf Hitler.)

The occultists of the Vril Society claim to be able to mentally contact distant sources. While they spend most of their time attempting to communicate with and locate Agharti, they also channel information from extraterrestrial sources. According to some, they used information obtained in this way to help the German military reverse engineer a crashed alien starship before and during World War II. The Vril Society of today has only moderately fascist connections and is located in small lodges throughout Europe and North America. Members still maintain their racist beliefs that only those of Aryan blood can utilize vril.

Adventure Seed: A deep-drilling operation in Central Asia uncovers what appears to be—according to seismic tests—a vast underground network of large caverns. Although the reports are vague, these caverns appear to have buildings and structures within them. Is this ancient Agharti? No one knows, because the crew and everyone associated with the drilling operation died or disappeared mysteriously over the course of a single month. When the heroes investigate, they learn—as they are racing to discover if Agharti has indeed been found—that the Vril Society kills anyone who gets too close to the site.



The Earth is a farm.
We are someone else's property.
-Charles Fort

In numerous locations throughout the world, various factions conduct secret research or perform rituals, and the hidden work of governments and corporations flourishes. Most such places remain far from the public eye, but the Hoffmann Institute makes them its business, infiltrating some and simply keeping an eye on others.

Dark•Matter campaigns can be set in urban centers and wildernesses all over the Earth, from Machu Picchu to Sri Lanka, Crater Lake to Tunguska. Most campaigns will probably begin in a small, familiar area but inevitably branch out from there; such phenomena as the Institute investigates rarely situate themselves conveniently close to home.

Africa: Birthplace of a Species

The human species can trace its origins to the continent of Africa, where our first upright and sentient ancestors scratched a living from the red earth. Humans have spent more time living in and evolving in Africa than anywhere else; the African gene pool shows more variation and more extremes of morphology than any other branch of the human family tree. Who knows what wonders remain hidden in the jungles, savannas, and bloodlines of this, our Garden of Eden?

Well, primarily the French.

France has long had close ties to North Africa, and held many colonies here throughout the height of the imperial age of the nineteenth century. Indeed, French is still a unifying language in much of Africa, and France still commands some influence (and just as much resentment) in its dozens of former colonial possessions. These former colonies include Algeria, Benin, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, the Malagasy Republic, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Togo. The only colony still administered by France is Mayotte, an island that lies between Africa proper and the Malagasy Republic near the Comoro Islands.

ter 7 places of interest

The Congo

Long thought to be home to a small population of large, rare reptiles, the Congo is densely inhabited near the coast and much less settled in the interior. Its legends of gigantic lizards such as the mokele-mbembe have attracted cryptozoologists, but no definitive evidence of a large dinosaurian species has ever come to light. It is entirely likely that one or more enclaves of kinori exist in these jungles as well.

King Leopold's Mines

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Belgians entered a brief colonial phase and held the Congo as a colony. In fact, they treated the natives more like feudal serfs or slaves than as citizens, and the tales of Belgian atrocities in the Congo are notorious. Most such stories revolve around murdered Congolese, about five to ten million of whom died during that period. Many died of starvation, disease, and overwork, all in the name of harvesting rubber. Whippings, murder, rape, and other crimes by King Leopold's colonial administrators were commonplace. The worst of the abuses stopped in 1909, when King Leopold died (warm in his bed and rich from the suffering of distant millions). Now, with dark matter levels rising, the old feeling of injustice has resurfaced, together with the ghosts of the millions of victims that have risen in anger. Shamans and witch doctors are performing record business putting these unruly ghosts to rest throughout the country. Even so, the number of angry spirits is climbing, and many attempt to visit their vengeance on modern-day Belgians, especially descendants of the royal house.

These abuses went unchecked for several reasons, not the least of which was the sheer remoteness of the Congo. The first Westerner to see the interior was Henry Stanley in 1874. Though the country is more accessible now than then, it is still rather loosely tied into international transportation links. Many of the activities taking place in the hinterland go entirely unreported to the wider world.

Egypt

Despite centuries of study and museums full of books and artifacts on the topic, the land of Egypt remains a great mystery. Though much is written on topics such as the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the pharaohs, far more remains in the realm of rumor and legend.

The Companions of Horus

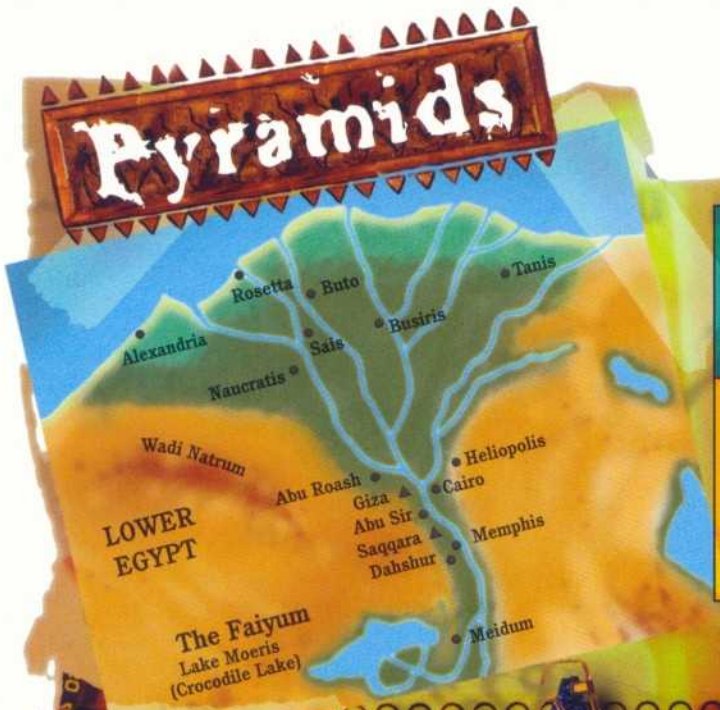
The Shemsu Hor, or "Companions of Horus," is an ancient and secret order begun in Egypt during the time of the pharaohs. Though most of the Companions abandoned Egypt for Tibet long millennia ago, a few dedicated inheritors of the original wisdom of the Greys remain in Egypt, posing as professors of archaeology and Egyptology and guiding government policy on which research proposals to approve and which to deny. No sanctioned dig in Egypt happens without the Companions knowing about it. There are simply too many things better left buried.

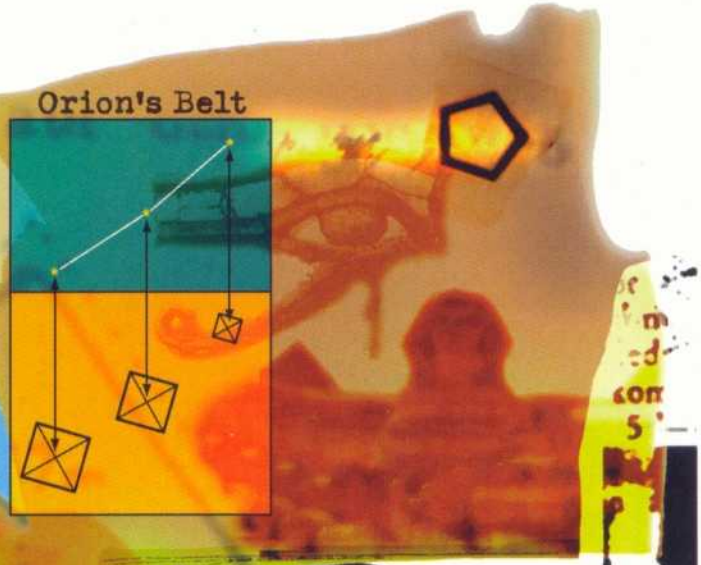
Today, the Companions of Horus are known as the Rosicrucians (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

The Pyramids of Giza

Still mysterious, still capable of evoking wonder among humans, the pyramids of Giza are hardly the only pyramids in Egypt. Other, lesser pyramids were built both before and after the Great Pyramids; oddly enough, none of these are nearly as well designed, and all have suffered far more from the ravages of time. The great mystery of the pyramids, of course, is the reason for

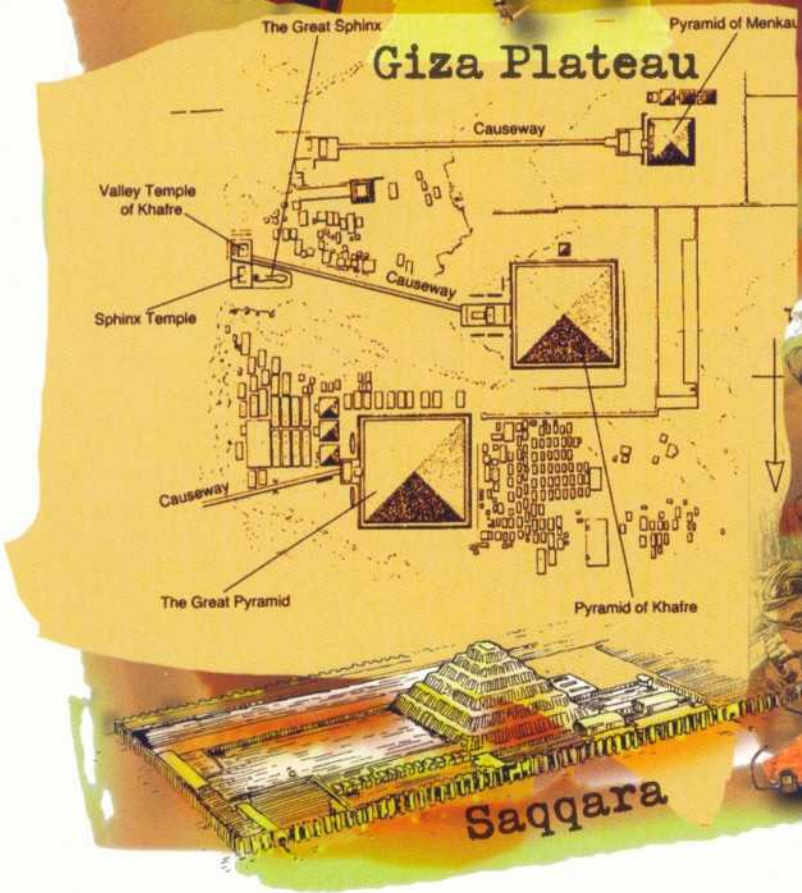
Pyramids

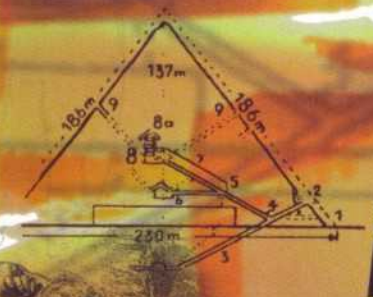

Rosetta
Buto
Tanis
Busiris
Alexandria
Sais
Naucratis
Wadi Natrum
Heliopolis
Abu Roash
Cairo
Giza
Abu Sir
LOWER EGYPT
Saqqara
Memphis
Dahshur
The Faiyum
Lake Moeris
(Crocodile Lake)
Meidum


Orion's Belt






The Great Sphinx
Pyramid of Menkau
Giza Plateau
Causeway
Valley Temple of Khafre
Causeway
Sphinx Temple
Causeway
The Great Pyramid
Pyramid of Khafre


137m
186m
180m
230m





Saqqara

their existence. Most Egyptologists claim that they are merely the tombs of ancient kings, meant to shepherd them into the afterlife. This is clearly nothing but a Big Lie. The pyramids had some other purpose; their role as tombs was secondary.

Proposed explanations include the pyramids' use as gigantic planetary clocks monitoring and warning against earth-crust displacements, landing sites for UFOs, storage batteries for mystic energies, or monuments to alien gods. Whether their precise geometrical alignments were meant to measure the precession of the equinoxes or the distance from the Earth to the Sun, the sheer simplicity and colossal scale of the pyramids remain impressive. The Companions of Horus and others who presumably know their true function have remained remarkably silent.

In one case, the truth is simple: The pyramid of Saqqara (the first to be built) was constructed to entomb a doorway between Earth and the world whence the kinori came fourteen thousand years ago. The doorway has slipped out from under the pyramid, and now opens and closes a few hundred meters away.

The Sphinx

The great Sphinx is a relic from the Age of Leo, a time so long ago that human history has no record of it. The human farmers of North Africa were growing crops and watching the stars even then, but their civilization was buried in the sands of the Sahara when the climate changed. Now only the Sphinx remains, and even its secrets are quickly shrinking. A concealed chamber beneath its forepaws was discovered in the twentieth century, but the Egyptian Department of Antiquities forbade all access to it until 1999, when a live television broadcast (funded by Rupert Murdoch; see "News Corp" below) "explored" its depths. Despite the discovery of some interesting chambers, anything truly exciting here has remained hidden from prying archaeologists to date, although no one knows whether this is due to vigilance on the part of the Companions or simply the fact that the chamber's treasures were discovered and moved long ago.

Sahara Desert

The popular image of the Sahara is that of an ocean without water, endless dunes rolling from horizon to horizon. While much of the Sahara does consist of sand and dunes, rockier terrain including mud flats, desiccated mountains, and riverbeds that have lain empty for centuries abound as well. In every case, the extreme desert solitude of the Sahara is barren and hostile; nothing and no one disturbs the land that once, long ago, was a green breadbasket to the Romans, Carthaginians, and other civilizations before them.

Those days are long gone, and the fertility of North Africa has turned to endless kilometers of desert, broken only by an occasional oasis or stony outcropping. Yet ancient cultures flourished here even before Egypt and Carthage—and the structures and mysteries they left behind have been awakened or restored by recent alien expeditions to the region. Even with the construction work on the Trans-Saharan motorway, the region remains isolated from the rest of the world.

Tuat Oases

The Tuat Oases of west central Algeria provide an important gathering place where the Berbers, Arabs, and Haratin (a group of Berbers descended from former slaves) come together to meet, exchange goods, and (in modern times) fight together against the French. The oases run in a 120-kilometer-long line along a wadi from the northwest to the southeast just west of the Plateau of Tademaït.

The site where the etoile first crossed between dimensions to visit Earth also lies near the Tuat Oases, and here many of them still visit. They create sandmen from among the tribesmen, though doing this has become more difficult in recent years. Kinori activity in the area seems to be restricted to nocturnal raids.

The Underworld

Buried under the Saharan sands lie forgotten frontier outposts of the Egyptian dynasties, kinori warrens deep under the stone, and even the enigmatic rock paintings that dot some of the Saharan mountains. These underground caverns and conduits are often used to serve human purposes as well: For instance, the large settlement of Adrar (population 65,000) is irrigated through the use of *foggaras*, artificial underground irrigation conduits. The foggaras prevent excess evaporation and allow the settlement to grow excellent dates, grains, and vegetables. The foggaras also sometimes break through into kinori warrens, old tombs, or other underground structures.

The Tuareg

In the Sahara of western Africa lie the Ahaggar Mountains, a range of peaks so inaccessible and desertified that few humans now willingly live there. But it wasn't always so; during the early years before the founding of dynastic Egypt, this region and indeed the entire Sahara was much greener, a vast expanse of plains dotted with occasional watering holes. The original inhabitants were the Tuareg, a people who were nomads even then.

The Tuareg are related to the Berbers of North Africa, but form a distinct ethnic group. They were the original inhabitants of the Saharan plain. Their legends extend back to the days before the sands claimed North Africa. In the modern era they were first described to the West by Henri Duveyrier, a French explorer of the Sahara. His published accounts of time spent in the region from Morocco to Tunisia and through the region south of the Atlas Mountains included the first European reports of the Tuareg people, as well as many other contributions to African ethnology.

In the seventh century A.D. the Tuareg were overrun by the Arabic Muslims and adopted Islamic ways. Regardless, their traditions remain unchanged from those of a thousand or even ten thousand years before. Since adopting Islam, the Tuareg wear veils, and they believe that their veils (worn by male and female alike, and often dyed a deep indigo that rubs off onto the skin) keep out evil spirits.

Their heartland is in Timbuktu and on the central Saharan plateau of Algeria, among the Ahaggar Mountains (highest elevation 2,918 meters at Mount Tahat) and the Tasili Mountains (2,158 meters). During the fifteenth century, the Tuareg had their own sultanate in central Niger, with a capital at the town of Agadez at the southern edge of the Aïr massif.

Since the collapse of that state, they have been a people without a nation to call their own, wandering the Sahara as traders and nomads. They speak the Berber language and live from Al-

geria and Libya to northern Nigeria, and from Timbuktu to Fezzan. There are roughly one million Tuareg, crossing many national boundaries.

Rumors persist that some Tuareg work closely with the kinori. What exactly the Tuareg have to offer the saurians is unknown.

Legionnaires

From Algeria it's just a short hop across the Mediterranean to France, which once held the North African nation as a colony. The French Foreign Legion frequently trained and held maneuvers here.

Rumors within the Knights of Malta indicate that the two most active alien species in the region are the kinori and the etoile, though it is unclear whether the two are cooperating or actively opposing one another. Whatever secrets lie buried in the mountains, they are being actively pursued by the Foreign Legion in the nations where their presence is tolerated. (Algeria bans Legionnaires, but Mali and Niger are happy to host them—and if they slip across the invisible border into Algeria's hinterland once in a while, well, no one complains too strenuously.)

Yamoussoukro

Near Abidjan, the principal city of Côte d'Ivoire, lies a strange relic of human endeavor: the oddest ghost town in Africa, Yamoussoukro. Yamoussoukro has been the official capital of the country since 1983, but it exists primarily as an embodiment of the will and delusions of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who led the country to independence in 1960. The president decided to spend much of the nation's treasury to turn his native village into a city that resembles one of the metropoli of modern France, with deserted Parisian-style boulevards, empty eight-lane highways (complete with more than 10,000 streetlights), and—towering over the city—Christendom's tallest church. But the city is a largely uninhabited wreck, built without a thought for its potential inhabitants.

The church—the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, to use its full name—cost $300 million to build and was thrown together in an awful hurry. Whereas St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome took a century to build, Our Lady of Peace was finished in just three years. Its dome is slightly lower than St. Peter's, but only because the Pope himself intervened. The gigantic cross on top makes it the tallest church in the world. It is surrounded by a seven-acre outdoor plaza, with room for 300,000 people (in this nation of 14 million, only 1.2 million people are Catholic). Despite its lavish scale, the cathedral is rarely visited by more than a dozen people at a time; the granite and marble plaza looks out over jungle and coffee plantations.

What possessed the president to build such a monument, and to beggar the country doing it? Rumors floating around Abidjan claim that Houphouët-Boigny saw a vision, a creature so terrifying that he built a cathedral to create the largest possible amount of holy ground he could. The rituals to sanctify the new structure were extensive and thorough. What did he see? The most common story declares "a demon," though in West Africa, that could mean a number of things. Even now, the residents of Yamoussoukro maintain that the basilica was built on haunted ground, and that something possesses the souls of those who worship here. Perhaps that accounts for the low attendance at the weekly High Mass.

The Americas: A New World

North, South, and Central America were home to amazing civilizations before the arrival of Columbus, but their secrets have been largely lost to us due to the conquistadors' destructive efforts. Remnants of these cultures' legacies survive in the form of ancient artifacts, several functioning doorways, and a small network of Grey sympathizers.

The U.S. government is one of the primary forces behind the current cover-up of alien activities on Earth. The government doesn't like what it can't control, and the Greys have made it very clear that they don't intend to play by the government's rules. On the contrary, they expect the government to continue to do as they direct: keeping the space program to a minimum, leaving certain portions of the globe unsettled and unexplored, and generally staying out of Grey business.

Alaska

The largest and least settled state in the Union has always been a great place for booms and busts, for rotten weather and lying low from the law. Not surprisingly, a number of crazed speculators and outlaws have made their way to Alaska and accustomed themselves to its bright summers and bitter winters. A number of groups that prefer to operate in secrecy have also made Alaska their home, including the Order of St. Gregory and the CIA. As a halfway point on the Great Circle route between the U.S. and Japan, the Aleutian Islands also retain their strategic importance. Finally, Alaska remains the gateway from the U.S. to Japan and Siberia.

Denali National Forest

A small team of CDC researchers recently visited the slopes of Mount Foraker in this national park, ostensibly to take "biodiversity project samples" for a gene bank in Washington, D.C. The Hoffmann Institute agents who investigated the alpine forest a few month later found traces of residual radiation as well as the bones of three missing hikers. The mystery of their cause of death remains unsolved.

Dutch Harbor

The Order of St. Gregory is remarkably entrenched in the Aleutian Islands; it may have arrived here with the first Russian Orthodox missionaries. Certainly many of the order's agents spend some of their time posing as priests of the Orthodox churches found throughout Alaska.

A recent and classified U.S. Air Force report indicates that an unknown object crashed on one of the more remote Aleutians. According to an informant, the Hidden Order was very quick to respond to the scene, commandeering a Coast Guard cutter to arrive there just hours after the crash despite foul weather.

Juneau

Accessible only by boat or plane, Juneau lies beneath the Coast Mountains and across the sound from Admiralty Island. During the summer, DeHavilland Otters and similar seaplanes are a pop-

ular form of transport in the region, and hunting, fishing, whale-watching, and hiking trips from the town are frequent. Less well known are the stories of the Bigfoot that hunters and hikers sometimes meet. Rumors of a sasquatch sanctuary on the eastern side of the mountains (in Canadian territory) remain unconfirmed.

Alcatraz

Settled by Spaniards in 1573, the San Francisco bay area—specifically, the San Jose/Silicon Valley corridor—is home to the highest concentration of high-technology companies in the U.S., narrowly outstripping the Microsoft/Boeing technocenter of Seattle and the tech corridors of Boston and Texas. It is also home to a small rocky island about two kilometers offshore that was the site of a remarkably famous high-tech prison: Alcatraz.

The island was first explored and described in 1775 by the Spanish Lieutenant Juan Manuel de Ayala, who gave it the name *Isla de los Alcatraces* (Island of the Pelicans) for the many seabirds that roosted there.

In 1850, the island was commissioned as a fortress. By 1868, it was both a fortress and a military prison. In 1934, a new, modern facility was constructed. The goal of the prison was to isolate the most intractable and dangerous criminals from their usual channels of communication, thereby preventing them from running their criminal organizations from the inside. The best-known example, Al Capone, was transferred to Alcatraz in 1934. Five years later, Capone was clinically insane, driven mad by a combination of syphilis, incarceration, and the dark spirits of the Rock. Voices, chills, clanging sounds, whistling, running feet, and other apparitions still haunt D Block.

The Rock was usually described as escapeproof in the press, but several attempts were made to evade the guards, the sharks, and the currents to reach the mainland. In all, thirty-six prisoners were involved in escape attempts. Most were recaptured, but seven were shot and killed, two are known to have drowned, and five remain unaccounted for. The prison shut down in 1963 when maintenance costs grew prohibitive.

The island was seized by a group of eighty-nine Sioux Indians in 1969 (under treaty rights granted to them in 1868 and largely forgotten by the U.S.), who recognized the site's potential for spirit summoning. They remained there until 1971. The site became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972 and is still open to the public.

Since 1997, a group of diabolists calling themselves the Children of Satan have taken to meeting at Alcatraz once each year, at the winter solstice. The nature of the spirits or demons they summon is unknown. The diabolists are believed to spend the remainder of the year in a compound somewhere in the mountains to the east, though the Hoffmann Institute has also investigated claims of occult activity in wealthy Marin County to the north.

The Black Hills

Long sacred to the Lakota and Oglala Sioux Indians, the Black Hills of South Dakota in modern times have been an intersection of greed, motorcycles, and magic. In the frontier days, the famous lawman Will Bill Hickock died holding aces and eights (the "Dead Man's Hand") in the Black Hills casino town of Deadwood, and Calamity Jane spent wild years living here as well. Not long after the Indians were given the Black Hills by treaty, the Hills became the site of a gold rush at the misnamed (or alchemically accurate!) town of Lead.

In the twentieth century, the region was abandoned to roadside attractions, mammoth carvings such as Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse monument, scrounging for tourist dollars, and ranching on government dole. Recent reports indicate that a number of strange groups and creatures are active in the region. Both critters and cultists may be hiding in the region's caverns: Wind Cave, Rushmore, Jewel Cave, and Crystal Cave are only the well-known, public caverns in the Black Hills. Many others lie undiscovered in the hinterlands—perfect refuges for a hidden base, an alien hideout, or a paramilitary compound.

Devil's Tower

Long a UFO-associated site, Devil's Tower is a freestanding set of hundreds of hexagonal basalt columns, 384 meters tall. Northern Plains tribes referred to it as Bear's Lodge, and Kiowa Indian legends tell the story of its origins: Once upon a time, seven little girls were playing in the woods far from home when they came upon a family of bears that chased after them. The girls found refuge on a great rock, and the rock rose into the sky with them on it, making them into stars. The signs of the bears' struggles to reach the girls are the claw marks in the rock that makes up Devil's Tower.

Sturgis

Biker gangs such the Hell's Angels, the Banditos, and the Jackpine Gypsies gather at Sturgis every August for a weeklong motorcycle rally, a potent brew of racing, music, beer, and high-performance machinery. The Sturgis Class Motorcycle Rally turns a tiny town of 3,000 souls into a massive gathering of more than 200,000 rabid motorcycle gearheads. During the day, the events include nitro-fueled motorcycle drag races, short track races, and hill climbs—as well as coleslaw wrestling, tattoo competitions, and pickle-licking contests. Swamp rock, metal, and boogie blues fill the air, and stages are always packed.

What happens around the bonfires when the day's races are done? A lot of partying, and more than a little decadence that makes the daylight events seem tame. Rumors, FBI case files, and arrest records have documented the frequent practice of Native American peyote rituals, often-lethal knife fights, Tantric sex rituals, and even Bigfoot sightings after dark in the many area campgrounds. Sturgis makes the West seem wild again.

End of the Ghost Dancers

In the declining years of the Plains Indians, hope was a precious commodity. Treaties were worthless, the warpath led nowhere but to tragedy, and the reservations were pits of despair. The Ghost Dancers offered hope to a fading culture, but that hope lasted less than a year.

The dance arrived among the Lakota Sioux in the spring of 1890, where it was happily adopted by the Miniconjou band and other enthusiastic believers. Their great reservation had been broken up the previous year, and the dance promised a messiah, a renewal, and the removal of the whites from Indian lands. Local agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs immediately tried to sup-

press it, and called for troops. In the rush to arrest Sitting Bull, who was suspected of sympathizing with the dancers, the holy man was killed by police. Many of his followers fled to the south, where they joined the Miniconjou band led by Chief Big Foot.

To avoid further bloodshed, Big Foot took his followers south, avoiding Standing Rock and heading toward the reservation at Pine Ridge, hoping for shelter there. They never made it; Big Foot and the Miniconjou band were massacred at Wounded Knee Creek on December 29, 1890.

The Sioux were flying a white flag when they were surrounded by soldiers. The Indians were prepared to surrender their weapons, but when a gun went off accidentally, the slaughter began. Soldiers ran down women and children who had fled as much as three kilometers from the battle. Boys coming out of hiding to surrender were shot down. Big Foot was among the first dead; his body lay frozen and unburied for three days, until it was dumped into a mass grave with the rest. Ghosts still haunt the site.

Cahokia

The central U.S. was once home to a huge and thriving culture, which extended from Wisconsin down to the Gulf of Mexico and the farthest edge of what is now Florida. Known variously as the Temple Mound Builders or as the Mississippian culture, these people flourished from about A.D. 700 to about 1400 and were centered in the Mississippi Valley bottomlands, between the southern tip of Illinois and the northern edge of Louisiana.

Cahokian Mounds

Built between A.D. 900 and 1150, a huge earthen pyramid called Monk's Mound stands at Cahokia—just across the river and about 32 kilometers southeast of modern St. Louis. The terraced pyramid stands 30 meters high and covers 16 acres. This central mound was just the center of a village stretching 10 kilometers long along the river, and served as home to about 80,000 people and eighty-five other temple and burial mounds. Most of these mounds have never been subjected to archaeological scrutiny, and the causes behind the collapse of the city are poorly understood. Something drove the Mississippians away, but no one is quite sure what.

Regardless, many mysteries remain to be unearthed at the mounds. On a cold, windy Saturday morning in January 1998, workers drilling to construct a drainage system within Monk's Mound revealed a 10-meter-long stone about 13 meters below one of the western terraces. Since stone doesn't occur naturally at the mounds, the slab had to have been imported with painstaking effort from elsewhere. Who brought it, and why? Oddly, the modern drill bit broke after cutting through a portion of the rock. Later investigation with seismic waves, drilling, and electromagnetic impulses revealed that the slab was part of a structure made of large stones placed together. A temple? A tomb? Something the Cahokia dwellers feared and buried deliberately?

There may be an answer in the obsession with death that took hold after A.D. 1200 in the entire Temple Mound Builder culture. After that date, their sculpture, pottery, masks, copper sheets, and other art forms become filled with representations of human sacrifice, stylized skulls, bones, and weeping eyes covering any ornamental object. This period is variously referred to as the time of the Southern Cult, Death Cult, or Buzzard Cult (see below).

The Natchez Indians

The legends of the Natchez Indians (the successors of the Mississippians, and the last surviving remnant of that once-great culture) tell that their branch of the Temple Mound empire "escaped" during the last years of the reign of a dark god, a bloodthirsty figure with some similarities to the wendigo legends of southwestern tribes such as the Anasazi. According to the Natchez, this great sorcerer and prophet demanded constant sacrifice and sought to build a "gateway to the ancient mysteries." Whether he succeeded is unknown; perhaps the Natchez knew, but their culture died out after the Natchez Revolt of 1729.

The revolt was initially successful, with the death or capture of hundreds of French settlers at Fort Rosalie and throughout the Mississippi Valley. The Yazoo tribe joined the uprising, killing a French missionary and the mission's entire garrison. The French soon recovered and retaliated, launching two great strikes from the city of New Orleans that crushed the rebellion. The first of these retaliatory strikes included a strange lieutenant, a French-Indian half-breed named Bernard Lemercier. According to accounts of the time, Lemercier was recognized among the Natchez as one of their own. They made warding signs against his presence, and he seemed much hated for having betrayed his people to the French. Lemercier's response to the Natchez's charges of witchcraft and consorting with evil spirits is not known; certainly the accusations seem to have carried no weight with French colonial authorities.

The tribe as a whole was shattered. Only a few small bands remained to carry on the fight, and these were snuffed out one by one over the following years. The captured Indians were sold into slavery in Santo Domingo, but a few survivors settled among the neighboring tribes—primarily the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, all of which survive today. Those immigrants soon gained reputations as mystics and wise folk because of their mastery of the Southern Cult, which survives among those tribes to the present.

The later whereabouts and final grave of the half-breed Bernard Lemercier remain unknown. Some believe he may still walk the Earth.

Lemercier and The Southern Cult

Tracking similar cult activities into the past leads to a long and remarkably consistent trail of mound building and sun cults ending in periods of bloody violence. Institute research indicates that Bernard Lemercier may be the same figure responsible for the blood cults of the Olmecs (1000 to 500 B.C.), the Mayans (about 424 B.C. to A.D. 727), and the late Tiahuanaco of Peru (circa A.D. 750 to 1000). There follows a period of uncertainty, when he may have been active among the Chimu of Peru (circa A.D. 1000 to 1300), or he may simply have been imprisoned or otherwise disabled. Under this theory, Lemercier either was driven out or abandoned the Mexican empires during a period of Grey rule or the interaction of the Toltec period.

Certainly the trail is easy to pick up again in the fourteenth century, when the Aztecs (1337 to 1521) rose to power, soon followed by the bloodlust of the Spaniards (during their rape of Mexico after 1521). After the bloody time of the Aztecs, Lemercier made his way to modern Louisiana, where he first dwelled among the Temple Mound Builders (until 1600), then the Natchez (circa 1600 to 1729), and later among the French (after 1729). If this is

the case, he may still be active in New Orleans today, perhaps disguising his bloody activities by preying on tourists.

In seven documented cases, the cult performed human sacrifices simply to carry messages to ghosts and the spirits of the dead. The priests, sometimes called "ghost hunters," also seem able to call forth and manipulate ghosts and spirits. In all cases the cult has preferred to sacrifice outsiders, but it often ends up sacrificing its own members. Whether this is done because a cycle of violence spins out of control, or because the cult summons up forces it cannot control without bloodshed and sacrifices, is unclear.

Cape Hatteras

Known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic, this cape off the North Carolina coast has long been a scene of nautical misadventures. In one of the more famous incidents of the region, the cape became the final resting place of *Queen Anne's Revenge*, a French warship captured by the pirate Blackbeard in 1717 and immediately converted for use as a pirate flagship. Using the *Revenge*, Blackbeard conducted a reign of terror along the American coast, including a weeklong blockade of the port of Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1718. The reign of *Queen Anne's Revenge* ended just one week later, when she ran aground while trying to enter the harbor of Topsail (now Beaumont Inlet).

The Wrecks

Blackbeard's flagship is only the most famous of hundreds or even thousands of ships that have run aground, foundered, or otherwise wrecked on the shifting sandbars of the cape. After every major hurricane, bits of wrack and wreckage wash ashore. Many of these are from recent wrecks of coal barges, oil tankers, and freighters, but occasionally the remnants of a sailing ship wash up from the deep onto the shore.

The Locals

The locals of places such as Kitty Hawk and Jacksonville are normal enough, though they speak with an unusual dialect that outsiders sometimes have trouble understanding. The locals of Queenshead are a different kettle of fish entirely; their town lies right where the East Dismal Swamp meets Pamlico Sound, and a single two-lane road barely connects Queenshead with the rest of the world. The swamp is home to many small shacks, and negotiating the waterways is difficult at times. The locals certainly don't help; no guide service exists.

The residents of Queenshead are descended from ship-breakers, scavengers who collected the wrack and flotsam of ships and who—in hard times when wrecks were infrequent—lit bonfires to create the illusion of a friendly harbor's lighthouse, thus leading ships to run ashore nearby. The present citizens display a marked hostility to outsiders and keep their own counsel about their work, their heritage, and any crimes and misdemeanors among their own kind.

Rumors of cannibalism, diabolism, and mutant bloodlines remain unsubstantiated, but even the Marines of Camp Lejeune tend to avoid the place. Tourist brochures certainly never mention it. To all appearances, it is an insular small town that hopes to stay that way.

Sea Creatures

In the last several years, small and even medium-sized ships have again been disappearing in the waters off the cape, at a rate of one or two a year. The Coast Guard suspects either modern-day pirates or a rogue whale. The locals—Queenshead natives excluded—fear that these vanishings may deter tourism, and the fat fees tourists pay for boat tours and fishing expeditions.

The Institute has been following a different path of inquiry from that of the Coast Guard; its records show that a day-tripping fisherman recently reported encountering a sea serpent. Described as over 50 meters long, bluish-black, and undulating in semicircles above the waves, the creature matches a description of the Loch Ness monster more than it matches any known sea creature. No additional sightings have been recorded, but shortly after that sighting a small charter fishing boat called the *Day Tripper 3* disappeared in the area during a day of open skies and calm seas. No wreckage or bodies were found.

The Cascade Mountains

The Cascade Mountain range overlooks the metro area of Seattle, an important Pacific port and the home of several important members of the Bilderbergers, including Bill Gates. Companies such as Boeing and Microsoft financially dominate the Puget Sound area, and billionaires Gates and Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen dominate local political life. The days when lumber and salmon were king are fading, as these natural resources' ability to replenish themselves slowly degrades. Also, Seattle is the site of the Order of St. Gregory's attempt to establish broader contacts in the continental U.S.

Mount Rainier

As the single largest and potentially most dangerous volcano of the Pacific Northwest, Mount Rainier stands like a looming ghost over the cities of Seattle and Tacoma. If it ever blows its top, the permanent glaciers on its peak will turn to water, and the mudslides will wash away entire areas downslope, such as the towns of Orting and Puyallup. So far the mountain has remained quiet, but National Geological Survey teams monitor its activity closely.

Among the many reasons that Rainier attracts attention is its role as a historic landmark in UFO history. In 1947, the first widely publicized sightings of UFOs were made in the skies above Rainier. Pilot-eyewitness Kenneth Arnold described nine lights in the sky as crescent-shaped lights traveling in a line. His report was picked up by the news services and led to a rash of sightings throughout the country, as people looked to the skies. Though the furor died down eventually, sightings are still relatively common in this part of the country.

The Psi Agency

In the Cascade foothills east of Seattle, at the end of a tree-lined avenue on a 75-acre estate, stands a slate-roofed, forty-room manor. Hidden from view by hedges, trees, and the slope of a hill, the manor is the home of the Hoffmann Institute Psi Agency, which is responsible for training psionically endowed Institute

Miranda Escovera
Psi Agency Instructor

Level 23 human Diplomat (Free Agent)

STR	6	[–1]	INT	10	[0]
DEX	7	[0]	WIL	14	[+2]
CON	11		PER	12	

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 10+/9/4/2
Move: sprint 12, run 8, walk 4 #Actions: 3
Reaction Score: Marginal/1 Last Resorts: 2
Perks: Psionic Awareness, Superior Talent (6)
Psionic Energy Points: 7

Attacks

Unarmed*	3/1/—	d4–1/d4/d4+1	LI/0

* +d4 base situation die

Defenses
+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills
Athletics [6]; Vehicle Operation [7]; Stamina [11]–*endurance [13];* Knowledge [10]–*computer [11], deduce [12], language (English) [13], language (Spanish) [13];* Admin [14]–*bureaucracy [17], management [18];* Awareness [14]–*intuition [18], perception [16];* Lore [14]–*psychic [26];* Resolve [14]–*mental [18];* Teach [14]–*mindwalker [18];* Interaction [12]–*interview [16], intimidate [13].*

Mindwalking Skills
ESP [10]–*mind reading [18], sensitivity [16];* Telepathy [12]–*contact [16], mind shield [18].*

Escovera is proud of her blue blood (Puerto Rican, but of Spanish rather than mestizo or Indian descent) and equally proud of her success with students. She might be considered a power player, if she were ever interested in doing more than teaching. She prefers to work through her students, rather than on her own. After all, as she says, she's "just an old woman"—with a mind like a razor and an iron constitution. Standing outside the normal Institute chain of command, Escovera reports directly to Dr. Nakami.

agents to access, control, and strengthen their psychic abilities. Not surprisingly, security is fairly tight, and access is limited even for Institute employees. In fact, the Psi Agency doesn't even show up on any Institute records, nor does it fit into the normal hierarchy of the Institute. To the outside world, it is simply known as the Turnbull Estate, widely believed to be the home of a wealthy but eccentric software guru. In fact, the Institute bought the property from Mr. Turnbull, a software designer who also happened to have a natural talent for psionic interaction with computers.

The estate is run by Miranda Escovera, an elderly Hispanic woman with a strict sense of order and discipline. She has trained more than fifty psionically talented individuals for the Institute in her sixty-one years, and she doesn't have any plans to retire. The Psi Agency rarely hosts more than four trainees at any one time; Ms. Escovera gives each student individual attention. The course of instruction runs as long as she deems necessary for a student to optimize his or her abilities. In some cases, that may be as little as eight months, but in most cases training and general mindwalking education continues for up to six years before a psi agent is ready for fieldwork. Agents who have difficulty with their abilities or who discover new talents during the course of their careers within the Institute often return to the Turnbull Estate to refresh themselves on the basics or to expand their abilities.

Temple Cascadia

Deep in the Cascade Mountains, somewhere near the Washington–Oregon border, is a compound consisting of about a dozen wooden buildings and two large stone structures, all built sometime in the 1950s. The surrounding terrain is heavily wooded, and no roads lead to the site, though a small landing strip is available for light planes. This is the Temple Cascadia, the training base for the White Section of the Hoffmann Institute's Special Division, the Institute's most ambitious project in direct action.

The Temple Cascadia is home to over one hundred twenty templars, including thirty-two sasquatch raised from a set of embryos granted (or stolen—stories differ) from the Grey gene banks and devoted to the Institute. The sasquatch have been raised from birth steeped in the culture and traditions of the Knights Templar to maintain a sense of structure and purpose in their lives, while the humans have been recruited from the ranks of the Institute (and occasionally from the outside). All are experts at hand-to-hand combat, stealthy movement through natural terrain, and the honorable destruction of the Institute's enemies.

Each of the ten barracks houses a unit of twelve templars (or "equerries," as they're called here). Most units have at least one sasquatch; one unit (dubbed "Tusk and Claw") has eleven sasquatch and a single human. Barracks are built to slightly larger than human scale, with doors about 2.5 meters tall and wider than usual. Likewise, tables, chairs, and steps are about 10% bigger than their usual human equivalents. Ceilings are a full 4 meters high, leaving clearance for claw-fights and swordplay.

Other than the barracks, the temple has relatively few buildings: an octagonal stone chapel with stained glass windows; an armory containing a jogging track, a weight room, and racks of weapons and armor; a mess and kitchen building; a laundry; a motor pool (including a Hind helicopter and landing pad); and an officer's quarters, called the Preceptory. The entire compound is surrounded by motion-sensor alarms at a distance of about one-half kilometer; anyone venturing into the area despite bright pink "No Trespassing, No Hunting" signs is captured and turned over to Institute security.

The temple's leaders are Preceptor Kundal Marrizhon (a sasquatch), Marshal Warren Wyman (human), and Incantors Kromel and Durghan (both sasquatch; see "Sasquatch" in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms* for information on incantors). Ten sergeants (seven human and three sasquatch) are responsible for the training and readiness of a unit of equerries. Each of these officers is fully devoted to the cause. The Preceptory is also used to house the relics and insignia of this stronghold, which include two suits of Templar Grand Master plate armor, the flag of the Temple Cascadia (sunrise over green mountains), and an embalmed and gilded skull said to have occult powers.

Kundal Marrizhon
Sasquatch Preceptor

Level 23 Sasquatch Diplomat (Combat Spec)

STR	14	[+2]	INT	9	[0]
DEX	8	[0]	WIL	10	[0]
CON	12		PER	10	

Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action Check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 1
Perks: Heightened Strength
Flaws: Code of Honor (Knightly), Primitive (2; bought off)

Attacks

Claws	18/9/4	d4+2w/d4+4w/d4+2m	LI/0
Sword	18/9/4	d6+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m	LI/0
Crossbow	12/6/3	d6+2w/d8+2w/d4+1m	HI/0

Defenses

Templar Grand Master armor: d6+1 (LI), d6–3 (HI), d6–3 (En)
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Armor [14]–*combat [18];* Athletics [14]–*climb [16];* Melee [14]–*blade [18];* Unarmed [14]–*power [18];* Acrobatics [8]–*daredevil [9];* Primitive [8]–*crossbow [12];* Stealth [8]–*hide [9], shadow [12];* Vehicle [8]–*land [11];* Movement [12]–*swim [14], trailblazing [13];* Stamina [12]–*endurance [16], resist pain [14];* Survival [12]; Knowledge [9]–*computer [11], first aid [12], language (Grey) [12], language (English) [12], language (Japanese) [11], language (Latin) [10];* Tactics [9]–*infantry [11];* Admin [10]–*management [11];* Awareness [10]–*perception [13];* Resolve [10]–*physical [11];* Teach [10]–*combat spec [11];* Interaction [10]–*interview [14], intimidate [14];* Leadership [10]–*command [15], inspire [14].*

Equipment

Motorcycle helmet, boots, great sword, crossbow, hunting knife, GPS tracker, templar cross.

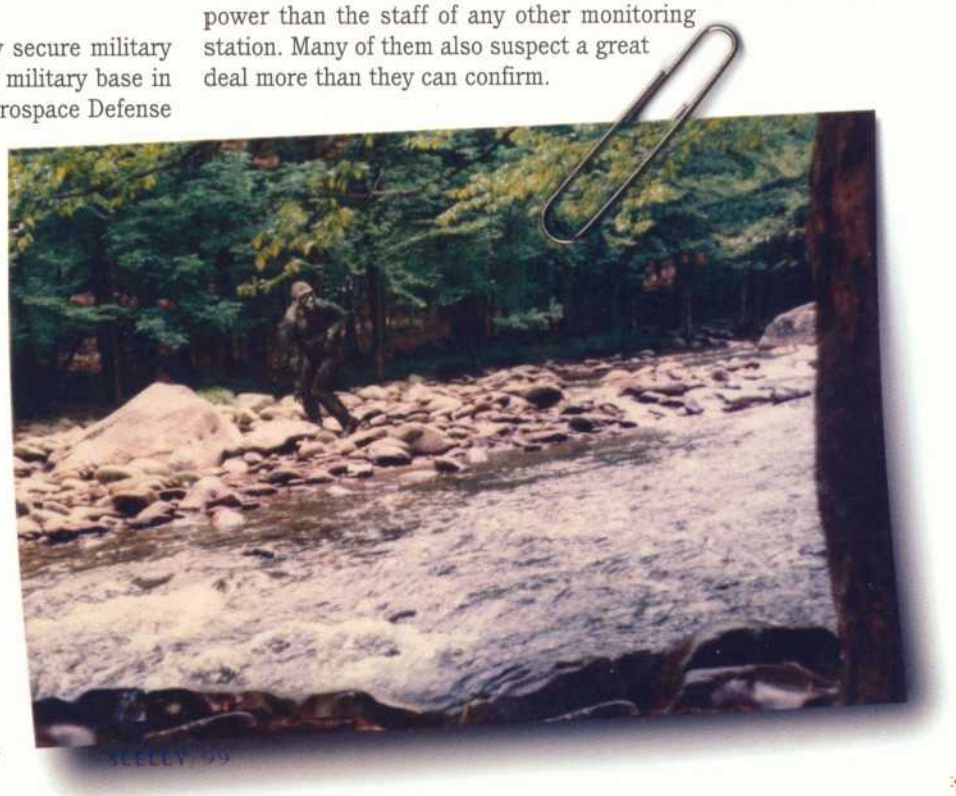
As the leader of the Institute's White Section and the chief administrator of the huge training grounds called Temple Cascadia, Marrizhon carries a heavy burden of responsibility. He commands an army highly trained (many from birth) in the martial arts, firearms, and tactics, and all loyal to the New Templar Order. And every time he takes them into action, he knows how horrifying the losses may be. He's seen more of the devastating effects of high-tech or alien firepower than anyone else has.

While one might expect that these bitter experiences would make Marrizhon cautious, in fact he remains remarkably levelheaded, if more determined than ever to root out the enemy. He enjoys working for the Institute and reporting to Dr. Nakami; the work is never dull, and combat remains at the core of his sasquatch identity. In his spare time, he ponders the nature of his foes, but so far he has had no interest in studying them except during interrogations and dissections.

Cheyenne Mountain

Just outside Colorado Springs lies an incredibly secure military installation, perhaps the most important purely military base in the nation. It is home to the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the U.S. Space Command, and the Air Force Space Command. Built in the 1950s, the base was literally constructed within a mountain by removing 700,000 tons of rock. The more than 4.5 acres of space inside can be sealed off from the outside world by 20-ton steel blast doors a meter thick, and the air inside can be maintained from within, preventing contamination by external radiation, bacteria, or poison gas. The Cheyenne Mountain base is meant to withstand a direct 10-kiloton nuclear strike.

Inside the mountain, 1,500 soldiers and airmen collect intelligence from the world's largest network of satellites, radar tracking stations, airplanes, and radio-intercept stations. They know where every object orbiting the Earth is at any given time. They know whenever a missile is launched, anywhere on the globe. The people stationed at Cheyenne Mountain have the highest levels of security clearance, and they know more about the global positioning of power than the staff of any other monitoring station. Many of them also suspect a great deal more than they can confirm.



The workers are split up among fifteen different buildings on three separate levels, each lined with hallways painted a standard slate gray. Halls are monitored by video cameras, and every door is guarded by a combination lock. The base has its own generators, water reservoirs, lodgings, and cafeterias. If all life on Earth were wiped out, Cheyenne Mountain would still be self-sustaining for at least a month.

Many of the mountain's levels are completely sealed and classified; the work done here may be on biowarfare agents, on documents that even the president never gets to see—or on the living Greys, kinori, and other aliens captured by U.S. military forces throughout the globe and shipped back to North America. Tissue dissection, probing for biological and chemical weaknesses, and basic anatomy work are routine here, as are genetic testing, weapons testing, and interrogation. Aliens who check into the Cheyenne Mountain test facilities are never released.

Chicago

Long a manufacturing hub and commodities brokering center, Chicago is also a major transportation center and home to an enormous population of hardworking, no-nonsense people with no time for the frivolous pretensions of the coasts. It is both more pragmatic and more devoted to work than the coastal cities, and justly proud of its strong work ethic. Chicagoans take a perverse pride in their town's ability to weather political, social, and climatic storms. So far, the tides of dark matter have left the city largely alone, and this has led the Hoffmann Institute to store some of its most important assets here in the Chicago Specimen Collection.

Bachelor's Grove Cemetery

The most haunted place in Chicago is this German immigrant cemetery, built near the Rubio Woods Forest Preserve and inactive since 1965. Overgrown and poorly maintained, the cemetery is frequently vandalized because of its remote location, and disinterred coffins, defaced gravestones, and animal sacrifices have been found on the grounds.

The cemetery was founded in 1864 for the use of immigrants building the Illinois-Michigan canal. In the 1920s and 1930s, gangsters often dumped their victims in the cemetery's lagoon. The cemetery's most famous ghost is the White Lady (also called the Madonna of Bachelor's Grove). Carrying a baby in her arms, she is seen only on nights of a full moon. She seems to be somehow related to a white-robed, monkish figure that also appears from the lagoon. Ghost lights and phantom vehicles are also common in the area. In all, more than two hundred ghost sightings have been recorded in the cemetery's long history.

Chicago Specimen Collection

Begun in 1931 after the Manhattan Sewer War (see Chapter 5), the Hoffmann Institute Serological and Type Specimen Collection (generally called simply the Chicago Specimen Collection) has collected, analyzed, and stored more than 400,000 specimens of paranormal, mutant, and otherwise unusual biological entities—from alien bodies to ichor recovered at crash sites, blood samples to viruses, and sea monsters to noncancerous but regenerative human cell lines. If it needs storage in deep freeze or in formaldehyde, the field agents send it here.

In addition to preserving physical samples, the collection does a great deal of genetic research. The work includes compilation of known mutations and known instances of human bioengineering, as well as medical testing of vaccines, diagnostic techniques, and antigens that may help fight epidemics of various alien diseases. Because much of this work is classified, the site has been largely kept a secret from the government. What the Institute knows about the U.S. Army's biowarfare experiments, cloning studies, and continuation of Nazi eugenics studies wouldn't be healthy for Institute staff if it were more widely known at the Pentagon.

Lower Wacker Drive

Home to rats and litter and crushing rush-hour traffic, Lower Wacker Drive is a street that runs as a subterranean parallel to Upper Wacker Drive. It's also home to more than a few sites of strangeness and has connections to the Chicago sewers, electrical conduits, and the entire understory of a huge number of skyscrapers. Inhabiting this warren of technology is a small tribe of mole people (see *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*), passing as homeless humans during daylight hours.

This particular group has an advantage over their kindred souls in New York, Paris, Moscow, and elsewhere: Among them lives a powerful adept—jokingly referred to as the Mole King—who seems to believe that he and his disciples are somehow entitled to the goods of the surface world. As a direct consequence of this belief, he preaches that his followers should raid bank vaults, jewelry shops, and other high-profile, high-value targets, then return to the depths with their loot. So far, the mole people remain unconvinced and have stuck to their traditional low-profile lives, avoiding the attention of law enforcement.

Greenland

While Greenland has always been a site of marginal human settlements, it has never been a place of prosperous ones. The Inuit and the Vikings both carved out a living along its rocky shores, but the cold interior remains both inaccessible and uninhabited, buried under kilometers of glacial ice. What lies there? Things best left alone. However, as is the way of modern man, that doesn't mean that they *are* left alone.

Scientists digging for ice cores to measure the history of Earth's atmosphere and oil company geologists hunting for new deposits of oil, shale, and natural gas measure the bounce from seismometers, combing over tough terrain that might yield up a fortune in natural resources. For the most part, Denmark—whose government administers Greenland politics, such as they are—discourages such prospecting in the interior.

The Balserk Glacier

Buried under the pure ice of Greenland's Balserk Glacier lies a Grey scout ship (the *Vīdunas*) lost since the final days of Atlantis. A testament to Grey engineering, its generators still function, its computers and machines humming silently until the day when they are called upon again.

The ship either crashed or was abandoned here at around the time of the cataclysmic explosion that destroyed Atlantis. The Greys knew of the ship's location, but more pressing matters prevented them from recovering it at the time. They aban-

doned hope of recovering the ship immediately, planning to send an expedition in a hundred years or so when the Theran debacle had been forgotten. By then it was too late: The snows had turned to ice, and the glacier itself had carried the ship many meters from its original resting spot. Extracting the ship would have required drilling through the ice and thus carving the ship free, but the Greys did not undertake the project, reasoning that the ship had likely already been destroyed by the moving glacial ice.

The truth of the ship's disappearance is not discussed openly, but rumors of sabotage—perhaps by rogues of the Iltan or Ziljir faction—persist.

The Ice People

The Inuit tell many legends of the whale, the seal, and the ice people. These ice people are generally described in terms resembling the Bigfoot of the North American continent. Could there be a species of ice-bound sasquatch roaming the Greenland ice sheets? It seems improbable, considering the amount of food such a large carnivore requires.

The Kangilia Meteorite

In late 1997, U.S. Department of Defense satellites detected a meteorite impact roughly halfway between Nuuk and Qaqortoq; it is said to have broken into at least four pieces. One piece exploded about 46 kilometers up, and the others exploded near each other between 28 and 25 kilometers up, all near 62.9 degrees North, 50.0 degrees West. The Danish government mounted the Tycho Brahe expedition to find the pieces but came up with nothing. Informed speculation suggests that the pieces of the meteorite may have been the pieces of an alien craft; whether the pilot and crew survived is a matter of conjecture. Many stories of luminous, supernatural creatures have been reported in the last few years by the Greenlanders in the Kangilia region, but few of these stories agree in details.

The Lost Viking Cavern

Somewhere under the coastal cliffs, legend says, lies a sea cave that holds an ancient treasure of Norse myth: the Spear of Destiny, supposedly wielded by Odin himself. This relic is surrounded by a number of legends, from the tales that it was responsible for the success of Viking raids against Christian monasteries in the ninth century A.D., to fragmented stories that it was sought by certain occult-savvy elements of the Nazi Party during WWII.

Little verifiable information exists about the spear's powers, guardians, or exact resting place, but many clues to its location and history are scattered throughout the Norse sagas. These were compiled in a Nazi-era research document called *Der Stahl des Nordens* (literally, Steel of the North). According to legend, it is said to be guarded both by a serpent mage (perhaps a kinori, but more likely something else entirely) and by an ancient curse, which demands that anyone seeking to use the spear must pluck out his own eye. According to writings of the old Norse religion, the spear is variously said to double or triple the magical power of an adept holding it, to shoot a bloodred shaft of fire against the wielder's foes, or even to grant visions of the future and guarantee victory in battle.

Groom Lake (Area 51)

The desert north of Las Vegas is a hallucination of the American West, an odd mixture of barren rock, radioactive testing grounds, and small towns. In an isolated part of the state lies the top-secret testing ground known as Groom Lake, better known as Area 51.

Groom Lake is a dry lake bed in Nevada that serves as home to the U.S. government's "skunk works," its site for developing high-security military projects. Area 51 (a name taken from its designation on Nevada test site maps) is also the government's best-known "secret" base. Though it obviously exists, and photos of it have been taken with telephoto lenses by aircraft magazines, it never appears on government documents or military budgets.

But frankly, despite all that, Area 51 isn't much of a secret anymore, though security remains airtight. The reasons are simple; the base has been a big employer since the 1950s, with more than 3,000 employees working on the site, about one-third of them civilian. Furthermore, until access to a nearby ridge was restricted in the late 1990s, Groom Lake's runways, radar towers, and many of its two hundred buildings could be seen by anyone who cared to look.

Area 51 is isolated from any populated area, surrounded by inhospitable desert terrain, and watched over by both armed guards and electronic sensors. Among the desert scrub and Joshua trees, ominous warning signs are scattered everywhere within kilometers of the base. Some ask the visitor to turn around, others prohibit photography, and still others inform that only "Authorized Personnel" are allowed onto the base. The most direct and to-the-point signs are quite straightforward and simply say, "Use of deadly force authorized." In many ways, all these precautions to deter visitors just draw more attention to the base.

To reach the base, a visitor simply travels along Highway 375—the UFO Highway—toward Groom Lake Road. This road appears flat but actually slopes up very gently as it climbs toward Campfire Hill, a lookout point near Area 51. From that hill, visitors can watch the security patrols, who use binoculars, motion sensors, and a variety of other equipment to keep tabs on anyone within kilometers of the base. Most of the time, the only living creatures nearby are cattle, allowed to graze on the thin forage of the area.

The only real landmark is a white (formerly black) mailbox that marks the intersection of Highway 375 and Mailbox Road; it belongs to a nearby ranch. West from that intersection, one can see Bald Mountain and the radar installation on top. The most fanatical say that the mountain itself resembles a Grey, but the resemblance is difficult to see in full sunlight. It helps to squint.

Security at Groom Lake is very tight. Access is only granted to U.S. government employees and special civilian contractors with top-secret security clearance. Hundreds of its civilian employees are flown in each morning on unmarked planes from McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas and flown out each evening, free of charge. Those with access to the most sensitive materials live at the facility until their employment ends. Nothing is allowed to leave the premises except the workers themselves; furniture, trash, automobiles, and even toxic waste is either buried or burned on-site to reduce the risk of espionage. All employees are required to sign an oath to keep all information about the base

Jeremy Kwan
Groom Lake Director of Research

Level 20 human Tech Op

STR	7	[0]	INT	14	[+2]
DEX	9	[0]	WIL	10	[0]
CON	8		PER	12	

Durability: 8/8/4/4 — Action Check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 — #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 — Last Resorts: 2
Perk: Gearhead
Flaw: Alien Artifact

Attacks

Martial arts	12/6/3	d6s/d6+2s/d4w	LI/0

Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks (*power martial arts*)
+2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [7]–*climb [8];* Unarmed [7]–*power [12];* Vehicle [9]–*land [12];* Stamina [8]; Knowledge [14]–*computer [15], deduce [21], language (Korean) [17], language (English) [17];* Physical [14]–*physics [20];* Technical [14]–*invention [19], knowledge [21], xenoengineering [23];* Admin [10]–*bureaucracy [15], management [15];* Awareness [10]–*perception [13];* Interaction [12]–*bargain [13], interview [14].*

The son of immigrant parents, Kwan excelled at his studies from an early age. As a graduate of the Caltech engineering program, he was quickly snapped up first by Jet Propulsion Labs, then by the Air Force for its Aurora project. Over the years, he gradually moved from doing research to leading research teams to managing a research facility. He is now in charge of one of the most secret and advanced research sites in the world, leading a two-dozen-member team responsible for everything from operating the Aurora spy plane to building military satellites to reverse engineering the remains of the Grey scout vessel in Site 4 buildings. It's exciting work, but most of the time Kwan is stuck with the routine work of setting schedules, overseeing hiring and firing, and preparing the financial paperwork for every black-budget project run at the facility.

To relieve the tension and boredom of the day-to-day grind, Kwan keeps up his martial arts skills at a Groom Lake tae kwon do academy. In addition, he works on his rock climbing and mountaineering skills once a month or so. He's not very good yet, but is enthusiastic about the activity.

What Kwan doesn't know is that the Groom Lake site has been the object of intense scrutiny by a group of militant Greys who badly want to retrieve the scout ship stored there. A number of times recently they have entered the base and used their mindwalking abilities to destroy all memories or records of their presence. Kwan has begun to have his suspicions; the base has suffered security breaches or videotape wipes six times in the last eight months. If incidents continue at this pace, he may call up some of his old friends from Caltech, one of whom now works at the Hoffmann Institute, for an informal investigation.

The alien artifact Kwan holds is the Key of Karnak, an ancient piece of Grey technology once thought to have been used by the pharoahs. It resembles a key only superficially: It is a long wand of bluish-gray metal that seems more slippery than it ought to be. Both ends are laden with projections that resemble thorns or bristles. Its precise use is long forgotten, but it is thought that the crook and flail of the later Egyptian dynasties were based on the Key and a second item, often called the Crescent of Karnak by knowledgeable occultists.

Jeremy Kwan has only the vaguest idea of the Key's origins, purpose, and power. Though he doesn't know it, he and his facility have become targets of everyone from the kinori to the sandmen to the Comte St.-Germain. How long he manages to hold onto the Key—and whether he even discovers its value before it is stolen—remains an open question.

confidential, and the workers and retired workers take that oath seriously.

Among other things, Groom Lake is the site of extensive flight testing of advanced military aircraft. The U-2 spy plane, the F-117A stealth bomber, and the F-22 fighter were all developed and flight-tested here; likewise, many captured Soviet aircraft were tested and assessed here during the Cold War. According to rumor, the government still tests its latest and greatest "black projects" here, such as the Aurora, a spy plane said to be able to sustain speeds of Mach 6 or more. More infamous is the alien aircraft recovered from Roswell in 1947 and hidden here.

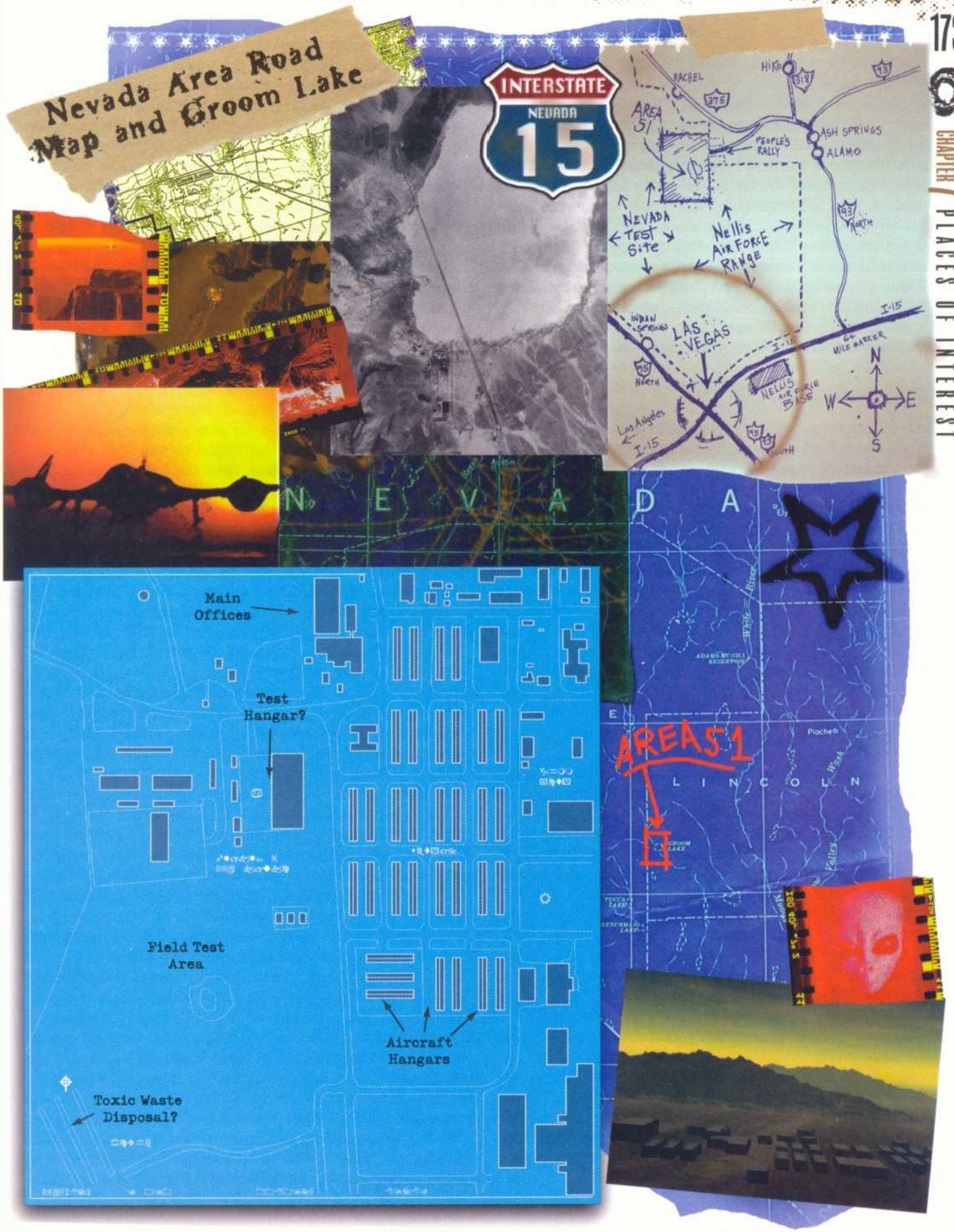
Site 4

Site 4 (usually abbreviated S4 in official documents) began as a site for reverse engineering the Grey scout ship captured at Roswell in 1947. During the Cold War, it also doubled as the major location for testing and evaluating captured Soviet equipment. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet empire, S4's work on evaluating human technology declined, and increasing amounts of the workload have been devoted to deconstructing captured technological artifacts and material from Strangers such as the sandmen, kinori, and etoile. The primary work project at Groom Lake continues to center on reproducing Grey gravitic technology.

Site 4 appears as a series of barracks and bunkers, but much of the working area of the site is actually underground. The buses on the compound all have blacked-out windows to protect those within from unwanted attention—and to keep passengers from seeing portions of the compound they aren't cleared for. Guards patrol the compound, some with canine partners.

The Grey scout ship kept at S4 is not fully functional; its gravitic engines failed as it was straining to carry a cargo of processed sheet titanium from Earth to the Grey city-ship (then stationed on the Moon). The ship is intact, but its engine compartment is badly burned, and its computers were destroyed by the Grey self-destruct system. Most of the controls are still oper-

Nevada Area Road Map and Groom Lake



ational, but they respond only to psionic instructions, so the human engineers responsible for taking the ship apart and learning how it works have had a great deal of trouble with the interfaces.

Ithaca

A small university town in upstate New York, Ithaca is one of the luckier settlements in that region: Farming and other industries have largely collapsed in the area, leaving only a thriving tourist trade. Favorite destinations in the area include the vast Adirondacks Forest (one of the the largest virgin wildernesses in the continental U.S.), fully six million acres of which were set aside as a protected preserve in 1892; the Finger Lakes, a chain of long, narrow lakes filling what were once glacial valleys; and Watkins Glen, a tiny town that sports a racetrack. In the midst of all these recreational attractions, and with a population of just 30,000, the little town of Ithaca hardly seems like a likely place for the paranormal. But Ithaca has more than its share of the unusual haunting its hills, farms, and student co-ops.

Cornell University Rare Book Room

Cornell University in Ithaca maintains an excellent collection of original and ancient manuscripts from Southeast Asia, as well as copies of ancient Mayan writings such as the *Popul Vuh*, a document written in Quiché (a Guatemalan variant of the Mayan tongue) that chronicles the gods, deeds, and creation of the Quiché people. It also includes a genealogy of Mayan kings. The original translation is at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Likewise, the Rare Book Room contains a facsimile of the *Dresde Codex*, a book of incredibly accurate Mayan astronomical calculations of eclipses and the synodical period of Venus. The original is in the Saxon State Library in Dresden, Germany. Both of these volumes and the Thai, Cambodian, and Vietnamese manuscripts are connected in that their translators claimed that they refer to the drowned continent of Mu, in the Pacific.

The Pot Farmers and What They Found

With a temperate growing season, many abandoned farms, and frequent hills and canyons, the terrain near Ithaca is ideally suited to growing America's most popular cash crop: marijuana. While the local cops and growers play frequent games of "high-speed chase" and "seizure of associated property," the pot farmers spend more time tramping around the woods with an open mind than anyone else, even deer and duck hunters.

The hills and streams of the Finger Lakes region have created a number of deep incisions, gorges cut into the blue-gray stone of the area. While cooling off after tending their crop, two farmers named Toland and Lewenstein taking a swim in the Medusa Gorge near Watkins Glen found a small overhang. Exploring farther back, they discovered a set of glowing petroglyphs and signs of recent habitation. Freaked out by what they found, they soon left, taking a chip of the glowing stone with them. Toland even went so far as to press her hand against one of the petroglyphs, transferring a faint impression of its glow onto her palm. Over the next few weeks, this luminescent tattoo (visible only in darkness) grew larger and larger, eventually covering her entire arm. Skeptics claim that this merely proves she found a way to put bioluminescent inks into a tattoo needle and is hoodwinking the gullible local potheads. Others aren't so sure.

Naturally, their story wasn't believed when they returned, especially when it became clear that they had been "sampling the product" before going caving. Their glowing stone failed to keep its luminescence long enough for them to show it to anyone else. Nevertheless, they found a ready audience for the story despite the skepticism, and others soon visited the Medusa Gorge. This was all fine until Melissa Barton, one of their regular customers, disappeared without a trace. Her last known destination was the gorge.

A manhunt combing the woods and fields turned up nothing, and when Toland and Lewenstein returned to the site of the cave, they saw no sign of the entrance. They have since taken to calling their find the "lair of the cave people," and freely speculate about what sort of people or creatures live in the Medusa Gorge. Though they are usually dismissed as cranks, a few people have related their own stories about the gorge, claiming to have seen strange lights in the area. The Barton case remains under investigation by local authorities.

La Venta

Though influential in a small regional way, the Olmec civilization (see "Mesoamerica: A New Canvas" in *Chapter 5: History of the World*) never reached the sheer scale of the Egyptian empire. The largest Olmec settlement ever found is that at La Venta, Mexico. The site was founded around 1100 B.C. and thrived for about 700 years before being abandoned. Archaeologist Matthew Stirling rediscovered the site in 1939 and published his findings even as the site was being transformed around him. Most archaeologists believe that La Venta was the wellspring of Olmec culture, which in turn was the source of Mayan, Aztec, and other cultures in later centuries.

The inhabitants of La Venta produced the largest pyramid of its time, but the surrounding area was home to just 18,000 people at its height. The pyramid itself was built to resemble a volcano oriented 8 degrees west of true north, complete with ridges and gullies. All the materials used to build it were brought from elsewhere, primarily basalt stones from the Tuxtla Mountains about 100 kilometers away.

In addition to its huge centerpiece, the site yielded hundreds of jade figurines as well as three large "pavement" masks made of 485 blocks (now covered over by an airstrip). Though many tombs were dug at La Venta, no bones have ever been recovered because of the acidic soil.

The La Venta pyramid and the entire surrounding site were destroyed in the 1940s by oil corporations, which built a refinery and an airstrip on the site, starting with a wildcat oil rig placed there in 1940 by PEMEX, the Mexican national petrochemical company. Supposedly, all the items of archaeological interest were removed from the La Venta site before it was bulldozed, but in fact only the items of academic interest were moved. The most important and most secret finds of the site stayed right where they had always been: beneath the new chemical plant. These finds included a huge ceramic and alloy machine beneath the main pyramid as well as a wide array of associated artifacts, in total an astounding array of copper, gold, and iron relics without parallel in Mesoamerica, or indeed the world. The oil company scientists determined that the largest of the items—a power generator dated at roughly 600 B.C.—was probably not of human manufacture. A few scien-

tists believe that it was an Olmec or Atlantean device, but most are convinced the machine was not built by human hands.

It is in fact a largely intact Grey telluric generator, still hooked into the Earth's magnetic lines of force but no longer capable of generating power. The oil company has made considerable progress in determining how it works (despite the fact that several critical components are missing), but the work slowed considerably when it became clear that this generator could put the entire company out of business. A few trusted oil company scientists and technicians continue to work on the generator, restoring it and documenting its parts. Whether it can be made to function again is anyone's guess.

Los Alamos

The Los Alamos research facility rests in a secluded valley between the Jemez and the San Pedro mountains, about 30 kilometers northeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, as the crow flies, but easily double or triple that by the best available roads. Nearby are the Puye cliff dwellings of the ancient Anasazi and the Jemez Pueblo. What goes on at the National Labs is often classified, but much of it is weapons research.

The area's major highways form a large, vaguely triangular area that marks the "off-limits" area. It stays off-limits because some areas are still radioactive from aboveground testing, because the Air Force still bombs the crap out of the place on a fairly regular basis, and because the site is a powerful center of paranormal phenomena created by the bomb blasts.

Most of all, this land of desert solitude is the birthplace of the atom bomb in the Los Alamos National Labs, where from 1942 to 1945 a team of hundreds of scientists worked on the Manhattan Project under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer. The Trinity Test Site is not far from the Los Alamos research facility, about 250 kilometers due south past Albuquerque. The theoretical and prototype work to build the weapons tested here occurs farther north, in the greener territory near Santa Fe. The Trinity Test Site was designated a historic landmark in 1975. It retains a level of radioactivity ten times the natural local background radiation.

Opening Doorways

The Trinity Test had another effect, entirely unobserved at the time: It opened a window. The creatures that passed through that doorway came to be called the Bering demons, and they were the first of their kind to come directly to Earth without suffering the strictures usually placed on them by a diabolist's summoning (see "Bering Demon" in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*). Later hydrogen bombs exploded in the South Pacific, Nevada, and Alaska allowed yet more demons to pass from their dimension to Earth. These demons soon established themselves in the southwestern United States, China, Alaska, the archipelagoes of the Pacific, and the Siberian wastes.

The arrival of these Strangers didn't go entirely unnoticed. Institute operatives warned the U.S. and other governments of the danger as early as 1956, but the governments were slow to react. In the end, the decision was reached to ban atmospheric nuclear testing on the surface, where demons might come through from beyond the veil. The U.S. Senate ratified the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty on September 24, 1963, and President Kennedy signed it on October 7 of that year.

The Anasazi and the Mothmen

Of course, not every meeting between humans and Strangers results in warfare. In at least one case, humans allied with a race of Strangers against a greater enemy. These people, the Anasazi (a Navajo word translated variously as "Ancient Ones," "Ancient Ancestors," or even "Ancient Enemies"), lived in the region now known as the American Southwest for over twelve hundred years, beginning in the first century A.D. The Anasazi had a high culture of learning and agriculture and resided in large cliff dwellings throughout that region.

The alliance began during the late twelfth century when a tribe of mothmen came through a doorway called the Speaking Stone, which connected their homeworld to the sunny, dry, rocky lands of the American Southwest. Though early meetings between the Anasazi and the mothmen didn't go well—including a skirmish at Chaco Canyon—cooler heads prevailed as the mothmen convinced the Anasazi that they came in peace. Indeed, they sought help against the evil spirits they called the wendigo.

The wendigo (spirits that possess sentient beings and transform their hosts into cannibals) had followed the mothmen through the doorway and now began to haunt the Anasazi. Together, the two races worked together against these evil spirits. It's believed that both races shared similar religious views, and their shamans shared knowledge in an effort to find a way to defeat the wendigo. Over time, flying mothman patrols grew ever more daring in their attempts to shield their human friends from harm.

Around 1275, the Anasazi died out. Three main theories seek to explain the disappearance of this tribe. The first claims that the Anasazi or the mothmen learned how to close the doorway allowing the wendigo access to Earth, but the humans were driven away from their homes by the wendigo already present. A simpler explanation claims that the wendigo destroyed the Anasazi utterly. The most interesting theory claims that the Anasazi disappeared through that (or another) doorway and are now living elsewhere, perhaps with the mothmen, perhaps in another place entirely—and might return at any time, now that the doorways are again opening. It's unclear how any of these theories can be confirmed or disproved, short of questioning a mothman for its version of events, or finding a descendant of the Anasazi stumbling around the American Southwest.

Some legends of existing tribes of that region claim that the Anasazi possessed evil powers. Whether this points to encounters with wendigo-possessed Anasazi or suggests that some may have practiced diabolism (perhaps learned from rogue mothmen?) is unclear.

Machu Picchu

When the Incan Empire fell, the conquistadors didn't find everything. Many of the Inca nobles fled to a great city in the mountains above the Urubamba River, practically at the headwaters of the Amazon. This city was Machu Picchu, and the conquistadors never found it, nor did their descendants.

The city lies in a remarkable position, high on a terraced hill with a spectacular view. The Urubamba River that runs hundreds of meters below it was sacred to the Incas, and the city on the hill became their great retreat where the wisdom of the Greys was kept safe. Just as important to the Incas, the city also kept alive

the bloodline of the Inca kings until about 1820, when the last member of the bloodline was killed in an internal struggle with members of the Inca elite, leaving no acknowledged heirs. When he died, he was buried with great ceremony and dignity, and the city was abandoned.

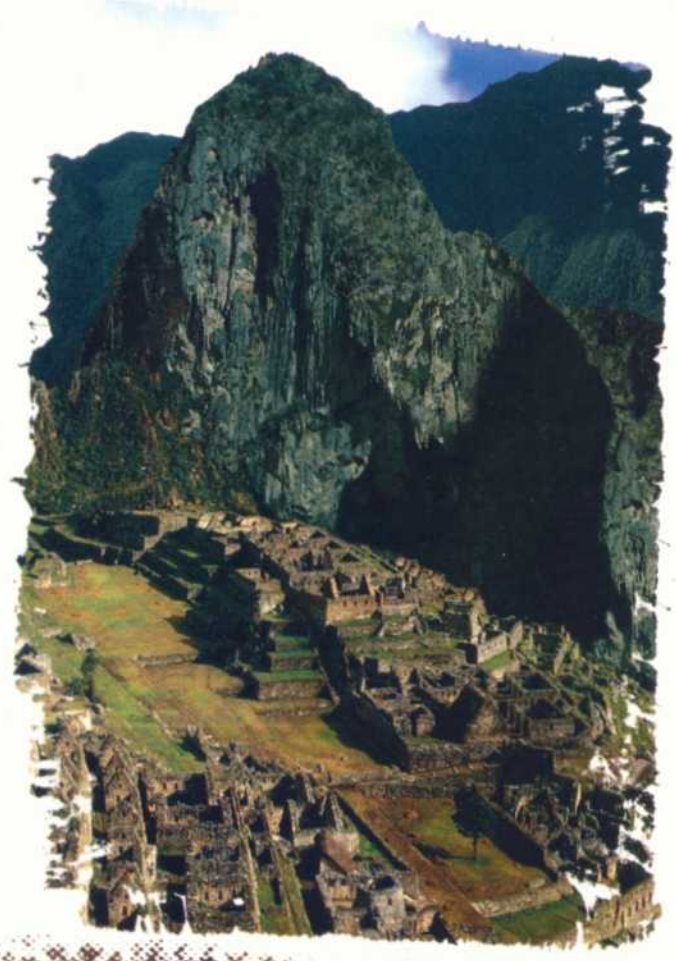
The great explorer Hiram Bingham rediscovered the city in July 1911, eight years before his discovery of the Incan fortress of Sacsayhuaman at Cuzco, Peru. Since that time, it has become a remote tourist site and the site of arcane or hidden battles between those who seek to preserve the site's mysteries and those who want to plunder its few remaining treasures.

The works left behind by Viracocha (see *Chapter 5: History of the World*) and his human followers remain impressive and may include a number of sites that have yet to be fully excavated. The stonework of the city of Machu Picchu superficially resembles that found at Sacsayhuaman. Both sites contain many stones weighing 200 tons or more, and the constructions may date as far back as 7000 B.C.

To unenlightened archaeologists, the stones themselves are mute, and their relatively crude, blocky construction offers few clues to the identity of their makers. Those aware of alien influence on Earth believe that this was a site of early Grey colonization—though why it wasn't destroyed as per later Grey policy is unclear.

The Prince's Tomb

Within Machu Picchu itself lies a great tomb: the tomb of the last of the true Incas, the Sun Gods. For centuries the city continued to lie abandoned, until it was rediscovered by Bingham. However, the white explorer did not find the Prince's Tomb, and perhaps it is just as well. The Hidden Order of St. Gregory knows of the existence of an interdimensional doorway within the tomb and wants to see it kept closed. At the moment, a great 42-ton stone seals the entrance to the Prince's Tomb. But seismography, magnetic deflection mapping, or other methods may someday reveal the presence of a hollow beneath the city. If and when the doorway is in danger of discovery, the order will act to protect its secret. Knowing the cost of previous experiments in opening other doorways, it will not hesitate to kill to keep the secret. Others, of course, will use methods just as extreme to learn what lies hidden atop the Incan peaks.



New York City

Founded as New Amsterdam by the Dutch in 1626, this city at the mouth of the Hudson River is America's largest. New York City is the financial center of the country and a fashion, banking, transportation, shipping, and communications powerhouse as well. Despite its huge population, it is home to at least two not-quite-human species: A large conclave of mole people lives in many of its depths, sewers, and subway tunnels, as do a small number of kinori (though they largely abandoned their efforts in this area after their great defeat at the hands of the Institute—see "The Manhattan Sewer War" in *Chapter 5: History of the World*). In addition, a small number of ekimmu prey on New York's nightlife.

The Cloisters

Founded in 1938 with money donated from the Rockefellers, this 9-acre museum and park is located in Fort Tryon Park, in the north end of Manhattan overlooking the Hudson. It houses a vast collection of art and architectural treasures from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, including the famous "unicorn tapestry," dragon sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, and a fine herb garden nestled among the arches and carvings from several cloisters.

The Cloisters focuses its efforts on education, the display and curatorship of its collection, and the acquisition of additional art and religious treasures from Europe. It has rebuffed several efforts by interested parties to acquire any of its treasures, but so far there have been no successful attempts at theft. With the increase in the value of certain arcane and religious relics, that may soon change—or it may not. The Cloisters' perfect security for its treasures partly stems from the fact that one of the sections of a monastery brought over from France contains a living gargoyle. This protective creature is only active by night, when it watches over the Cloisters' gold and other treasures. It regards the collection as its own and is entirely willing to eat trespassers. Museum security guards have covered up several such incidents in the past; fortunately, no one inquires too closely into the disappearances of a few small-time burglars.

The Metropolitan Club

Located in an unremarkable brownstone near Central Park, the Metropolitan Club is home to hundreds of the New York's richest and most powerful men and women, including many members of the Bilderberg Society (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*). Their building is protected by a small army of private detectives, body-

guards, and security staff, about half of them in plain clothes. It is also shielded by the most sophisticated array of security and antibugging devices that money can buy. The Club's cigar smoke-stained wallpaper and mahogany-paneled walls are practically bursting with cameras, metal detectors, bomb sniffers, and other devices. Unwanted eavesdroppers, reporters, and even government agents are quickly escorted off the premises. Those who return are taken to the local police precinct and charged with criminal trespass.

At the same time that the club deploys restrictive security measures, it prides itself on its conservative, comfortable atmosphere. The kitchen's lobster Newburg is first-rate, the wine cellars are filled with racks of Chateau Rothschild, Dom Perignon, and other fine vintages, and the service by its experienced, discreet staff is impeccable. The thick blue smoke of fine Cohiba Habana cigars frequently stains the air, and many of the club's members are attended by personal assistants, valets, and chauffeurs: Money is fashionable here. International deals, elections, and entire economies are bought and sold over dinner.

Despite the moneyed, privileged atmosphere so ostentatiously on display at the club, sometimes a darker side bleeds through. Stories circulate among the staff that limousines sometimes pull into the club's underground parking garage carrying drugged or kidnapped passengers. These passengers are bundled off into Elevator 3, an old and creaky conveyance built in the nineteenth century that leads down to some of the club's most exclusive and most secretive levels, usually called the Colonial Rooms for reasons now forgotten. The stories of the Colonial Rooms include the most lurid tales: a specially appointed "snuff room" arranged to dispose of enemies and their bodies without a fuss, and rumors of servants who are all mute and dumb, and must read lips to take an order. Other stories involve only slightly more mundane gossip: graphic details of the members' sexual perversions, a hidden chamber said to be devoted to white slaves, and an initiation room stained with blood. A gas chamber in the Colonial Rooms is said to be flooded not with toxins, but with aerosolized narcotics, euphoria-inducing nitrous oxide, or strange new aphrodisiac serums from pharmaceutical test labs.

Sewers and Subways

Not all immigrants to New York came through Ellis Island. A few kinori swam into the city's sewers and subways and took up residence during the boom times of the nineteenth century. The kinori live like recluses, inhabiting the oldest and deepest levels of the New York sewers and subways, levels that have been abandoned for years and even decades. They have access to power, water, and electricity just by carefully tapping into the conduits that surround them. It isn't hard to live down in the oldest parts undetected and in decent style.

The NYC government doesn't bother to investigate because so many homeless live in the depths. It's easy for many people—even entire work crews—to disappear here, so the city workers pretend the lowest levels don't exist. The Department of Public Works frequently ignores job orders to investigate the deepest underground sections, and yet the phone, sewer, gas, and electrical systems continue to function normally.

The kinori have learned that it is much easier to live on scavenged food from dumpsters and supposedly closed supermarkets than it is to hunt down their own. Their tunnels and warrens now extend from Battery Park, north underneath the financial district, and up to and including entrances in Central Park. The lizard people frequently come into conflict with the mole people of New York, who inhabit all sections of the sewer system.

Spiritu Sancti

This faux-Goth nightclub is a strange medley of Catholic imagery and modern dance music, housed in an old church that has been remodeled and expanded. It attracts a very wealthy clientele and is believed to be the primary meeting place for the Order of St. Gregory and the Bilderbergers to exchange information, offer bounties for specific information or technology, and occasionally kill each other whenever one side or the other feels betrayed.

While most of its bar and dance business takes place in the ground-level bars, foyers, confessionals (used by couples looking for a little privacy), and in the club's downstairs dance floor, Spiritu Sancti also has a series of private meeting rooms and dining areas on its upper floors. These rooms are often booked by reclusive, nondancing patrons with names such as "Smith" and "Jones" and accompanied by heavyset, bearlike bodyguards. While the identity of these patrons is difficult to determine in the dark and smoky confines of the club, the midnight-to-dawn bartender, Jamal van Cleef, is said to occasionally reveal such information to Institute agents. Jamal claims to be a "tattooed Dutch/Pakistani native of Indonesia" with contacts among the Borneo headhunters; his accent places his origin somewhere closer to the Bronx than to Jakarta.

Tiahuanaco

Located on the high plateau of Bolivia/Peru, Tiahuanaco is the oldest city on Earth, older than Babylon, older than the Pyramids of Giza. It was built 15,000 years ago by an unknown species, before humans arrived in the Americas and long before the Greys arrived. The builders may have been elohim, mothmen, or perhaps some other species entirely. At the time, humankind was still a dispersed population of hunters and gatherers in the most fertile and tropical regions of the globe. The city was constructed on the shore of a rich lake, or perhaps even on an island. In the intervening millennia, the continuing rise of the Andes mountain chain tilted the land that made up the lakebed, slowly increasing the distance between the city and the lake until today, when Lake Titicaca is more than 20 kilometers away. Perhaps this subsidence caused its inhabitants to abandon the city, or perhaps a wave of preternatural creatures capable of traveling between worlds swallowed it up.

In any event, at some point around 10,000 years ago, humans found the site and took it for their own use. At first this went well; a small village sprang up by the lake, and the nobles lived in the huge, imposing buildings of enormous stone blocks. Over time, these were carved with decorations to gods now long forgotten. But eventually the climate changed as well, and the soil acquired too much salinity for agriculture, the heritage of thousands of years of irrigation. Humans slowly abandoned the city, and today the land around Tiahuanaco is a desert. Few people live here, but perhaps someday its original owners will come to reclaim it.

The Drowning Pools

The images of fish-men and the prevalence of extensive water systems in Tiahuanaco have led scholars to speculate that it was once the site of a water cult. The exact details are unknown, of course, but the name of the place in the ancient Aymana language is *Akapana*. Broken down, this word is formed from the roots *hake* (people) and *apana* (meaning "to perish by drowning"). Ghosts are said to haunt the area, but no one can understand what they say.

Gateway of the Sun

At the heart of the remaining complex is the Gateway of the Sun, an enormous stone that stood at the center of the Kalasasaya, the Place of Upright Standing Stones. The gateway is carved of gray-green andesite, is covered with hundreds of symbols, and weighs about 10 tons. Parts of its lettering serve as a calendar; other portions are decorative, such as images of *Cuverionius* and *Toxodon*, large South American mammals that became extinct 11,000 years ago. More than anything else, it resembles a doorway in a 3-meter-high and 4-meter-wide arch—a doorway that doesn't connect rooms but connects dimensions. The ceremonies or machinery that once controlled the doorway, however, are long since forgotten or lost.

Toronto

While most of Toronto has all the charm of any large urban center, a few strange things have been creeping around its margins for the last thirty years, imported from Hong Kong by subjects of the British Empire in the decade before China reclaimed its territory in 1997. Toronto remains the largest—and in many ways the most important—city in Canada.

Chinese Quarter

This area maintains an arcane connection to Hong Kong's tattoo magicians and their unusual dragon magic, which might more properly be termed "tattoo magic." These arcane adepts gather their power through the careful shaping of tattoos over their entire bodies; these tattoos follow the lines of biological energies mapped out by acupuncturists, and the designs allow the adepts to both sense and manipulate the positive and negative energies they call yin and yang. In some cases, the tattoos themselves are said to leave an adept's body whenever a particular spell is activated, only to reappear when the spell is finished.

CN Tower

The largest freestanding structure in the world is the Canadian National radio tower and observation platform, towering 553 meters above the ground at its peak, with a globelike observation area fully 447 meters up. Recent stories claim that strange lights have been seen atop the tower, but so far investigations haven't turned up anything unusual. Rumors around the Institute claim that the tower has somehow been used as a "pickup zone" by Grey ships shuttling agents into and out of the city. Senior members of the Institute have vigorously denied the rumors, which only makes those spreading the information that much more certain that something is going on.

Queen Street

Recently, the trendy downtown shopping district known as Queen Street has been the site of a number of high-profile murders. In each case the victim was a young white woman, no more than 25 years old. While the police are not revealing details of the case, local reporters have caught the scent of something strange going on behind this story. The reporters are right; the serial murders are bad enough, but the victims were all distantly related to lines of British nobility, especially the Scottish house of Sinclair and the English house of Mountbatten. Oddly enough, the post-mortem exams also show that each woman recently gave birth. The police are at a loss to account for the killings, much less to explain the blood ties between the victims.

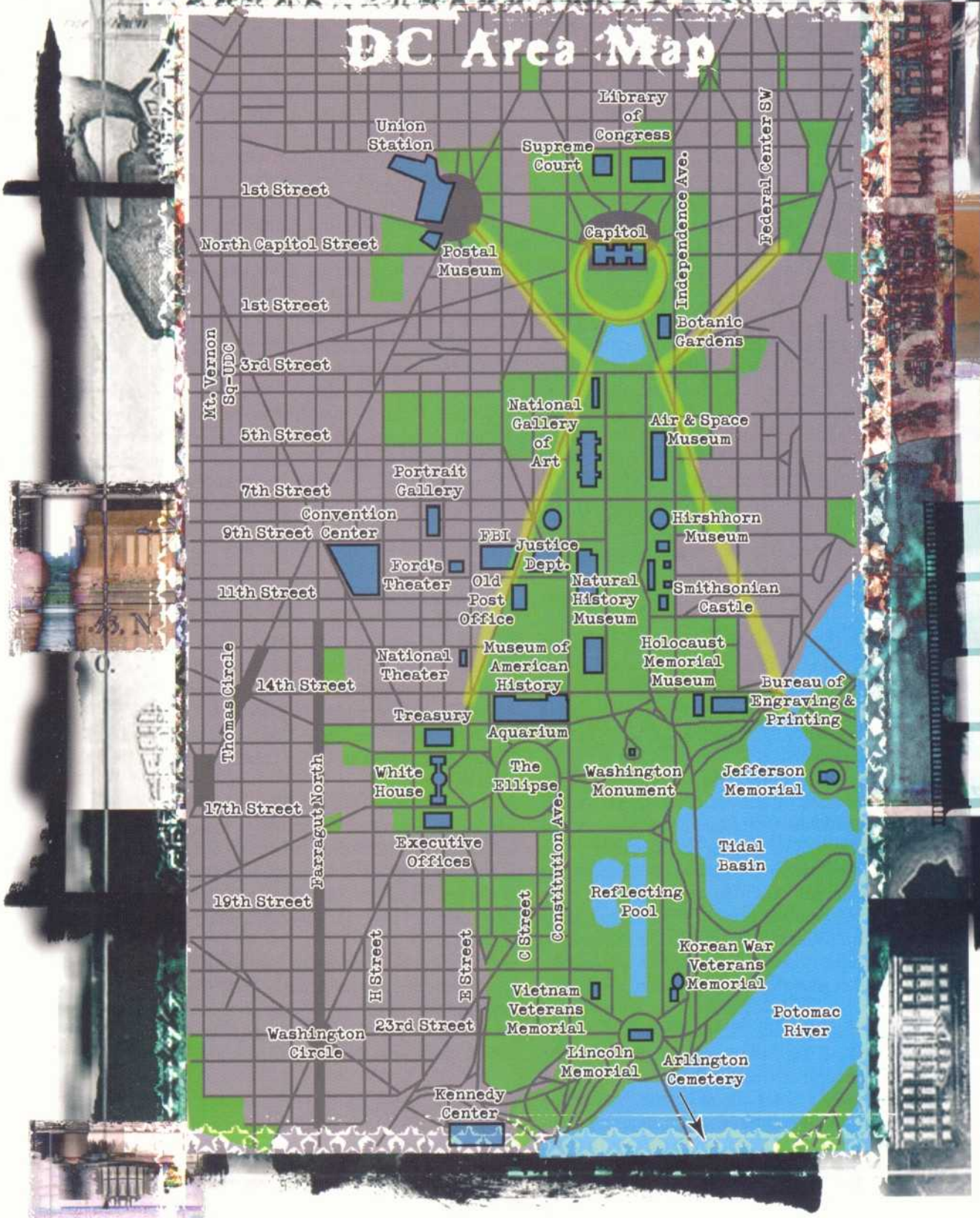
Washington, D.C.

As the center of U.S. power, Washington presents a strangely schizophrenic face to the world. On one hand, it is home to the largest concentration of government power, bureaucracy, intelligence, analysis, and money in the world. On the other hand, it is a decaying, squalid capital with a higher violent-crime rate than most of the U.S., not to mention any other wealthy industrialized country.

The city was built according to plans drawn up by French architect (and Mason) Pierre L'Enfant. British diplomats once earned hazard duty pay when stationed here, due to the pestilential, even malarial air of the city's swampside location. The environs of the District of Columbia retain their aura of genteel rot even now, but the ferment created by so much money and so many agendas all sharing the same space has given rise to some very strange places indeed. A chunk of the Moon is embedded in the stained glass windows of the National Cathedral. Tens of thousands of soldiers and statesmen lie buried in Arlington Cemetery under endless rows of white crosses. Slums lie abandoned, and the earth still bears marks from the siege trenches that cut up the ground between Washington and Richmond during the Civil War. Ghosts haunt the White House, the Smithsonian Museum, the Capitol Building, and the house called the Octagon. As the focus of political power among the democracies of the twenty-first century, Washington remains a feverish dream of the rational, the occult, and the political. Sometimes the lines between the three become quite blurred.

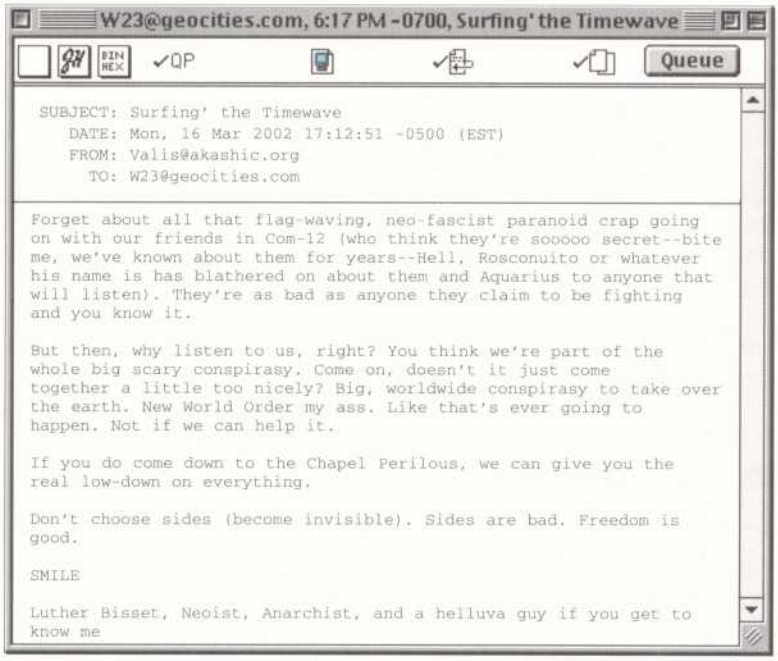
The Pentagon

Built in a shape having occult significance, the Pentagon nevertheless is a thoroughly modern building that was built on wasteland, swamps, and dumps during World War II. Much of the huge building is open to the public, civilian workers, and members of the armed forces with little or no security clearance. It is subdivided into five concentric pentagons connected by ten spokes. The layout is so efficient that despite its 28 kilometers of corridors, it doesn't take more than seven minutes to walk between any two points in the building. The building has its own bus and taxi terminals, and its own heliport. But with a 29-acre footprint and 583 acres in the surrounding compound, there's plenty of room to hide things that the military would rather keep concealed. More than 23,000 employees work here each weekday, about half of them civilians.


DC Area Map
Union Station
Library of Congress
Supreme Court
Federal Center SW
1st Street
Capitol
North Capitol Street
Postal Museum
Independence Ave.
1st Street
Botanic Gardens
Mt. Vernon Sq-UDC
3rd Street
National Gallery of Art
Air & Space Museum
5th Street
Portrait Gallery
7th Street
Convention Center
Hirshhorn Museum
9th Street
FBI
Justice Dept.
Ford's Theater
Old Post Office
Natural History Museum
Smithsonian Castle
11th Street
National Theater
Museum of American History
Holocaust Memorial Museum
Thomas Circle
14th Street
Bureau of Engraving & Printing
Treasury
Aquarium
White House
The Ellipse
Washington Monument
Jefferson Memorial
17th Street
Parragut North
Executive Offices
Tidal Basin
Constitution Ave.
19th Street
Reflecting Pool
C Street
H Street
E Street
Korean War Veterans Memorial
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Potomac River
Washington Circle
23rd Street
Lincoln Memorial
Arlington Cemetery
Kennedy Center

The Pentagon is said to contain the digital files of every person ever to have entered the U.S. armed forces, as well as medical histories, actions, and reports. In addition, intelligence reports dating back to the Civil War are stored here, many still stamped with the label "War Department," the name of the Department of Defense before politicians attempted to whitewash the organization's basic purpose.

The secret tunnels beneath the Pentagon are said to connect to the D.C. bunkers (see below), and periodic tales claim that the building's shape is meant to contain powerful occult energies, perhaps even a demon of some kind. Despite the success of most U.S. military adventures, the presence of a demon under the Pentagon's cornerstone or at its heart has always been dismissed as merely wild speculation. The existence of five chapels within the building and the employment of a full-time staff of ten military chaplains don't necessarily support this claim.



Underground Bunkers

Not far from the center of government (within 15 minutes by helicopter) lies a series of nuclear fallout shelters dug out of the bedrock. In the event of a full-scale nuclear exchange, these bunkers were meant to protect the members of Congress, the administration, and high-ranking military officials from a multi-megaton blast. The exact location, size, and amenities of this facility remain highly classified, and the site is not mentioned in any government files available to the public. The site is referred to as Blue-1 in certain classified Secret Service and Air Force documents, but even these seem reluctant to go into detail.

Washington Monument

Begun in 1848 as a monument to the first president, this stark obelisk was originally designed to be surrounded by a temple and colonnade at its base. Events intervened; funds ran out in 1854 when the Washington National Monument Society was taken over by the Know-Nothing Party. Construction halted at the 45-meter level for the next 25 years.

However, the Monument is anything but a simple memorial. Its cornerstone is a 12-ton block of Maryland marble shipped to Washington on the B&O Railroad, then laid down with full Masonic ceremonies on July 4, 1848, under the auspices of the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. The monument was to remain closely tied to the purposes of the Freemasons throughout its construction. From 1851 to 1855, Masons across the U.S. contributed commemorative stones and plaques to the column's construction; more than a hundred such stones are incorporated into the monument. A second wave of Masonic contributions came in 1874 and 1875.

Finally, in 1876, Ulysses S. Grant's administration took control of the project and convinced Congress to appropriate funds. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restarted construction in 1878 and completed the exterior work in 1884. There is still a visible line between the earlier and the later stonework. The dedication ceremony was held in February 1885, and again the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia presided, repeating the rituals of 1848.

In fact, the monument is part of a larger Masonic plan for the city, as laid down by Pierre L'Enfant when the city was surveyed, planned out, and founded in the 1790s. The monument stands 168.2 meters tall and is topped by a 1500-kilogram capstone and a small aluminum pyramid, 14 centimeters on each side and 22.25 centimeters high. The aluminum pyramid is engraved with the names of those who built it, as well as the Latin motto *Laus Deo* (literally, "Glory to God").

Yucatan

The Yucatan peninsula is a geographically distinct region of Central America that includes some of the poorest regions of Mexico, as well as the entire nation of Belize and part of Guatemala. It is also the cradle of Central American civilizations, including the Olmecs and the Mayans. The region is positively littered with lost cities and recently restored pyramids and religious centers, such as Chichen Itza. The Greys also had a settlement somewhere in the Yucatan, where their city-ship took refuge after the Theran cataclysm.

It is a remarkably dry region for a jungle. Little surface water exists, and few rivers. For millennia, most of the area's human inhabitants drew their water from cenotes, large sinkholes up to 40 meters deep that allow access to the region's low water table. All of the lost cities of the Yucatan are built near these cenotes, and many offerings to the gods were left within them, including human sacrifices.

The Yucatan limestone that allows such large sinkholes also forms many large caverns and underground rivers. In some of the caverns, natives still hold to the ancient ways and offer corn and blood to the old gods. What else might live in these caverns is unknown, as most have been only partially explored.

The Mitchell-Hedges Skull

This crystal artifact is a perfect replica of a female human skull. Though the skull's owner, Anna Mitchell-Hedges, claims that she discovered it on her seventeenth birthday, during her father's

1924 archaeological expedition in the Lubaantun, Belize, this claim soon collapsed under scrutiny. No documentation or even references in the family's own writings and conversations refer to the skull prior to the mid-1940s—and records show that Anna's father bought the skull at auction from Sotheby's in London for 400 pounds in 1943. Today, the skull remains in the possession of Anna Mitchell-Hedges, who lives in Canada and displays the skull on tours.

Despite the fabrication of its origin, the skull's manufacture remains a mystery. It is remarkably similar in form to a real skull, down to the detached mandible. Most other crystal skulls (see below) are much less precise and formed of a single block. Furthermore, no one has been able to put forward a reasonable explanation of how the skull was made: The crystal was carved against the natural axis of the stone, a process that should have shattered it, even if modern tools or lasers had been used. In addition, experts could find no scratches on it that would show the use of metal instruments. The best theory going is that it was roughly carved with diamonds, then the detail carving painstakingly done with sand and water—a process that could have taken decades or centuries of labor. The skull's existence seems to imply the use of a stonecarving trick or techniques unavailable to anyone today. As one researcher remarked, "The damned thing simply shouldn't be."

Other crystal skulls exist, including the British Skull and the Paris Skull, both said to have been brought from Mexico by mercenaries sometime in the 1890s. They are similar in size and shape, and one may well be a copy made of the other. Their workmanship is far poorer than that of the Mitchell-Hedges skull. The same can be said of both the Mayan Skull and the Amethyst Skull, found in the early 1900s in Guatemala and Mexico respectively, and "Max" the Texas Skull, also from Guatemala, said to have been brought to Texas by a Tibetan holy man.

All these skulls are credited with the ability to cure cancers and infections, just as other crystals are said to have healing powers. Others say that all crystal skulls are able to transmit and absorb mystic vibrations and serve as conduits of psychic energy. Some claim that the skulls are repositories of hidden information, which can be extracted by psychic abilities or simply by shining light on or through the skulls.

It's impossible to carbon-date the skulls, since they contain no organic material, so their exact age can't be determined. Theories put forward include manufacture by Atlanteans, by extraterrestrials, and even by an advanced human society living at Earth's hollow center. Others speculate that they were originally hollow, human-bone skulls that were transformed into solid blocks of crystal through the use of psychic or arcane powers. The most obvious answer is that they were made where they were found, by Mayans, Mixtecs, or Aztecs (the most likely of the three, due to their wide use of skull imagery and skill in carving crystal). Others claim the skulls weren't made in Central America at all, but in Germany as recently as the 1840s; indeed, electron microscopy has revealed the presence of straight, evenly spaced surface markings—perhaps made by a modern polishing wheel—on one of the crystal skulls, which supports this theory. Other level-headed speculation places the skulls as objects of Qing Dynasty China, based on the sheer size of the blocks of crystal used. The truth behind the skulls remains elusive; their manufacture is the least of their enigmas.

Asia: Land of Ancient Wisdom

The wisdom and the vast distances of Asia have long captured the Western imagination, but its ancient knowledge and valuable insights into the practical application of dark matter tides have made it a hotbed for paranormal research. From Chinese herbal medicine to ancient Indian vedas filled with clues about the past, Asia remains a place where the Hoffmann Institute hopes to gather information that will shed light on the gateways, the Strangers, and their relationship to the cyclical history that Asia understands so well.

But work in this region remains difficult. Those who hold esoteric knowledge in Asia are reluctant to share it with outsiders, however noble their intentions. Tradition and xenophobia combine to create a great wall of silence around the monasteries of Tibet, the most sacred temples of India, and the hidden records of Japan's history as a host of the Greys.

Aiping, Inner Mongolia

All of the great invading cultures of the millennia have come from Central Asia: the Han, the Mongols, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, and the Turks. The poorest region of China is the northern sector, a region of small farming villages built on the yellow clay of the Ningxia and Gansu provinces. The Gobi Desert lies just 300 kilometers to the west, and the region receives just a few centimeters of rain a year. At an elevation of over 1,000 meters, it is cool in summer, bitter in winter. This is the home of one of the great artifacts of ancient times: the Smoking Mirror, an ancient relic of the days of the Greys' mastery of Mesoamerica, which has since made its way west, over the Bering Strait and into Asia. Currently, the mirror rests in a tiny peasant village named Aiping, far from the mainstream of the industrialized world.

The region is heavily influenced by the Islamic culture and religion brought to the region by silk traders. The peasants of the region often seem curiously old, their weathered faces and dry hair belying their years. Growing up in the desert seems to prematurely age those around it; perhaps the Smoking Mirror has something to do with it. Studies by medical doctors from Beijing of this phenomenon have been classified, but the studies in the region continue and have even been extended. For the most part, the peasants do their best to ignore the poking, questioning, and blood sampling.

Archaeological digs have uncovered a number of strange finds in the region near Aiping. The strangest of all is the remarkably high background radiation levels near the Gobi Desert, and the fused green glass here that resembles the substance formed by atomic explosions in the testing grounds of Nevada and New Mexico. This has led to wild speculation that the Gobi Desert and nearby regions were targets in a prehistoric nuclear war. So far, there is little evidence to support this wild claim, and Chinese authorities are remarkably unwilling to allow any investigators to visit the site.

Angkor Wat

The archaeological site of Angkor in present-day Cambodia was the capital of the Khmer empire that reigned over most of Indochina from the ninth to fifteenth centuries; it lies near the



modern town of Siemreab. Angkor Wat was a temple in its capital, built as a model of the universe.

The temple portion of the capital, Angkor Wat itself, was built in the twelfth century by King Suryavarman II, who ruled from 1113 to about 1150. A second temple, Angkor Thom, was built around 1200 by King Jayavarman VII. The religious focus at Angkor began with temples to the Hindu god Shiva, then to Vishnu, and ended with temples of the Mahayana Buddhist cults devoted to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The temples built by the divine monarchs of the Khmer were also means to godhood. Angkor Wat, for example, was built as a funerary temple; King Suryavarman II's remains were deposited here, symbolically linking him forever with the god Shiva.

The city itself lay at the heart of an empire that reached from the Bay of Bengal to Vietnam and all the way south to the tip of the Indochina peninsula. It was at the center of the largest and most powerful kingdoms in the history of the region. Over the years, the city was planned to be a symbolic universe matching Indian ideas of the cosmos, with a central pyramid temple representing the mountain at the heart of the universe. In addition, it included reservoirs, canals, and other implements of irrigation and water control. These tools of irrigation were also tools of political control at the time, allowing the lords to claim control over the fertility of the land. While these moats and canals were part of a lavish and thriving metropolis in the late thirteenth century, in time they and the city fell into decline. Thai invaders sacked the city in 1431, enslaved the inhabitants, and destroyed the Khmer culture. The city was subsequently abandoned except by a group of Theravada Buddhist monks, who maintained the Angkor Wat temple as an important site for pilgrimages.

The city remained "lost" for centuries (except for the temples and pilgrims) until the creation of the French colonial regime in the 1860s. A French explorer named Henri Mouhot rediscovered Angkor Wat around 1860. At that point, French archaeologists began unearthing and investigating the ruins, and reconstructing its fallen walls, statuary, canals, and other wonders. Much of this work was undone in the second half of the twentieth century, when warfare, thieves, and neglect combined to erode and engulf the ruins. The continued decline in the fortunes of the region has led to further decay; today, the city is considered haunted by many of the region's inhabitants.

The Khmer Rouge

From the Khmer Rouge's seizure of power in 1975 until the Vietnamese invasion of 1979, more than two million Cambodians died in the killing fields around Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge shot anyone who opposed them, anyone with ties to the outside world, anyone with education, anyone wearing glasses, anyone who might know too much. Why torture millions? Why the forced disease, famine, and executions? It seems to defy rational explanation.

The Khmer Rouge tactics of depopulating cities and forcing people to work the fields at gunpoint were, in fact, an attempt to completely remodel Cambodian society as a medieval system of peasant agricultural society. What induced this genocidal madness? Perhaps it was nothing more than a particularly grotesque form of political hysteria during the height of the Cold War. Perhaps it was related to the ancient ruins of Angkor, and the spirits of the restless Khmer kings long thought dead and gone.

Regardless of the source of the tragedy, one in five Cambodians paid the price. The danger of a similar outbreak elsewhere cannot be ignored.

The Golden Triangle

The origin of 60% of the U.S. heroin supply is a relatively small corner of Southeast Asia known as the Golden Triangle, which sits at the intersection of Burma, Laos, and Thailand. Though the area is technically subject to the government of those nations, the real rulers of the triangle are a small group of warlords whose only master is money. The most famous of these outside the triangle itself was Changi Chi-fu, also known as Khun Sa. Wanted by the U.S. and with a $2 million price tag on his head, he escaped capture for decades, though he often "negotiated the terms of his surrender" to Burmese authorities when the U.S. put pressure on local government. Burma has no extradition treaty with the U.S., and Khun Sa effectively ruled his own kingdom within Hmong territory, only nominally answerable to any outside authority. In 1998, Khun Sa stepped down as leader of the Shan United Army, the force he had built up over several decades. Then all hell really broke loose.

Though the Shan United Army had always been a rather frightening and ruthless group, willing to sell narcotics to further its cause, it had never been accused of trafficking with dark powers until after Khun Sa left. Almost immediately, stories began to circulate in international intelligence circles that the general's departure had released a number of ghosts or demons, spirits that he had tied to the army and used to ensure its success in combat. These spirits, it was said, hungered for human blood and had begun consuming the army from within. A few soldiers deserted, but most were destroyed. Only a tiny core of women and children survived.

Today, the mothers have disappeared and only the youngest children remain faithful to the Shan cause, having formed a children's army still fighting the Burmese government. Their time spent being tutored by the Shan spirits seems to have warped them in horrible ways: Stories claim they are werewolves or demons in human form. In fact, most are adolescent diabolists who act without remorse and have no compunction about taking human lives. They have recently begun reasserting their control over the heroin trade in the U.S., Japan, and Europe, in part by executing the competition, in part by simply sending demons to possess the competition. The summoned demons seem entirely willing to dabble in the drug trade and have not yet turned on their masters. Either the Shan spirit summoners are very, very careful, or they can provide the demons with something that keeps them loyal.

The Himalayas

The Himalayas (a Sanskrit word meaning "Abode of Snow") comprise the tallest mountain range in the world. The vast chain is settled by entire nations, many of them Buddhist and all of them relatively backward technologically. Its greatest peaks lie within the borders of Nepal, Tibet, China, and India. Indeed, this area was not well known before the British popularized it with exploration and mountaineering campaigns. Even so, the heights remain remote and inaccessible even in the twenty-first century. Many of its peaks are yet unclimbed, and many of its mysteries remain hidden from outsiders.

Mount Everest

The tallest mountain in the world is fully 8,848 meters high. It frustrated the efforts of mountain climbers for many years after its "discovery" as the world's tallest peak in 1852. It was first successfully scaled by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953, and has subsequently been climbed successfully by hundreds of others—though about one in every thirty climbers attempting Everest dies in the attempt. On May 8, 1978, Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler climbed Everest without using supplemental oxygen, astounding the climbing community that thought it couldn't be done.

The greatest danger of a peak of this height is the "Death Zone" that takes hold above 7,500 meters. Relatively few peaks reach that height in the stratosphere, but Everest stands fully as high as the cruising altitude of a commercial airliner, and those jets are invariably pressurized. While the air pressure at sea level is typically 1,013 millibars, at the elevation of Denver (about 1,600 meters) it is already reduced to 640 millibars and water boils at just 95 degrees Celsius. By the time a traveler reaches the top of Everest, almost nine kilometers up, the air is almost unbreathable and is thin indeed, at a pressure of about 330 millibars.

The Sherpas

The only people who fully appreciate and depend on the Western impulse to investigate the peaks are the Sherpas, members of a small ethnic group of about 60,000 souls who are born and raised at high altitudes, typically over 4,000 meters. The leader of any expedition of Sherpas is always referred to as the "sirdar," a title much like the English "boss."

Most Sherpas are farmers and yak herders. Those few who seek work as "climbing Sherpas" are accorded great respect among their people. They earn this respect: The work is brutally hard and includes ferrying climbing supplies into the high peaks, building camps, chopping ice for water, and bringing every piece of equipment back down from the high camps after the end of the season. The exertion is worth it; they

Yeti Sightings and the Pangboche Hand

The yeti were first noted by British explorer L. A. Waddell, who saw the footprint of one in the snows of Nepal. However, his report received little notice at the time; not until 1921 would an expedition led by Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury make the yeti a household word. His team found footprints on Everest and, using binoculars, sighted dark figures. The Sherpas called the creatures he sighted the *metoh-kangmi* (a word applied to many mountain beasts). The term was mistranslated into "abominable snowman," and suddenly the newspapers were filled with the story. The news stories often misreported the color of the creatures, describing them as white when most eyewitnesses stated they were black or brown.

The next major find was made in 1951, when an Everest expedition found a perfectly preserved giant footprint at an altitude of about 5,500 meters. The print was 45 centimeters long and about 30 centimeters wide. The footprint was photographed by Eric Shipton, the expedition leader, but no sightings of the creature that made them were reported during the rest of the trip.

All the publicity surrounding the yeti led Tom Slick, an aptly named Texas oil millionaire, to launch his own expedition in 1957 just to find and bring an abominable snowman into captivity. The expedition failed, but the 1958 follow-up led to the discovery of a set of yeti hand bones. The bones were relics kept at a Buddhist monastery in Pangboche, Nepal. While the expedition wanted to take the hand, the monks refused. In 1959, expedition member Peter Byrne substituted human bones for the yeti bones and smuggled the originals out of the country (with the help of actor Jimmy Stewart).

Unfortunately, primatologists could not agree on the origin of the bones, and in time the smuggled bones were lost. Worse, when Sir Edmund Hillary came to debunk the yeti legends on a skeptic's expedition in 1960 and 1961, he was hindered by the fallout of previous efforts. He examined the hand at the monastery and mocked it as nothing more than a human hand mixed with animal bones—which is just what Byrne had left for him.

receive not just the respect of their fellows, but also wages equal to ten times what a farming Sherpa can hope to earn. Costs to the visitors being guided range from $4,500 for a relatively straightforward expedition lasting a month, to $50,000 a person for an attempt on Everest or any major peak, which requires bottled air, specialized supplies, and expensive permits from the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism.

Despite the money that Sherpas may earn on the slopes, they also face onerous restrictions and great risks. Sex on the mountains is frowned on; a Sherpa may refuse to guide an expedition that includes couples, married or otherwise. Indeed, angering the mountain is more than just a superstition to the Sherpas. It can be a cause of death, for angering a mountain spirit can inflict terrible frostbite on a climber or induce a fatal cerebral or pulmonary edema. Finally, it is important to note that to the native Sherpas of Nepal and Tibet, each mountain has its own goddess. For instance, the goddess of Everest is called Sagarmatha, the goddess of the sky, known for her power to gather fierce storms to destroy those who displease her.

Lhasa and the Potala

The city of Lhasa is the capital of Tibet, situated on a large, level plateau at an elevation of about 3,600 meters along the banks of the Lhasa He, or Lhasa River. Europeans were banned from the city for hundreds of years until 1904, when a British expedition fought its way to Lhasa from India. The leader of the expedition, Colonel Francis Younghusband, promptly bargained with the Dalai Lama and secured special privileges for the British in Tibet.

The Potala was a great monastery and the winter palace of the Dalai Lama from the seventeenth century to 1959. In 1959, the Tibetans rebelled against the Chinese occupation, and the Dalai Lama was forced to flee. The palace was built during the reign of the Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-rgyamtsho (1617–1682), better known to posterity as the "Great Fifth." The monastery's name means "Palace of the Gods." It stands more than thirteen stories tall, towering over the city and visible from literally kilometers away. Its gilded roof covers more than one thousand rooms, including audience chambers, reception halls, and throne rooms. At its center lies the area called the Red Palace, where the bodies of past Dalai Lamas are enshrined.

However, the Potala is not the only great palace in the city of Lhasa: the Nor-bu-gling-ka, or "Jewel Palace," was the summer palace of the Dalai Lama. The Jewel Palace has been renamed the People's Pleasure Park and has been open to the public since the Chinese invasion.

In addition, Lhasa is home to the Jokang, the holiest temple in Lhasa. It stands near an open marketplace in the center of town and was built in A.D. 652 by King Songtsen Gampo. While it is unimpressive from the outside, it contains gold and silver altar vessels and a jeweled image of the young Buddha brought to Tibet by King Gampo's wife, Tang princess Wen-Cheng. The temple has the characteristic gilded roof common to many Tibetan monasteries and temples, and it stands three stories tall. Because it is especially holy ground, no woman is allowed to stay on the temple grounds overnight.

The Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are each an incarnation of a particularly famous and important *tulku*—a holy spirit that is reincarnated over and over—but there are literally thousands of these holy lines of reincarnation. Are the tulkus the same spirits, returning to earth again and again to watch over the Tibetan people, guiding their spiritual development? Or are they something else—a form of the ekimmu perhaps, imported from the west long ago and taking up residence in the lonely mountain kingdom? If this is the case, the appearance of reincarnations of famous tulkus elsewhere in the world might be explained.

Monastery of Inner Light

Near Thimphu, high in the mountains near the Tibetan border with Bhutan, is a monastery that few ever see: the Monastery of Inner Light, home of the Ascended Masters. Like the Potala, it is an enormous building, but it is better hidden from contact with the modern world. The monastery is surrounded by high mountains, and its pass is closed by snow and storms about ten months of the year.

Within the monastery's walls lives an order of psychics and mystics who know much of the history of the Greys, from their landing in the Mediterranean basin to their departure from the region. The monks, called the Kha-glor, are members of the secret group known as the Companions of Horus. Indeed, they are the remnants of that group, which fled from Egypt to Tibet after the departure of the Greys from that region. They were pursued by the armies of Alexander the Great, who followed them as far as the Indus River. Alexander died in 323 B.C. at a feast in Babylon, perhaps after being poisoned. After his death, his armies dispersed and no one else seems to have had contact with the Companions of Horus until the eighteenth century, when they first began sending emissaries out into the world. In the 1930s and 1940s, many influential Nazis visited—and later, fled to—Tibet and Nepal. The influence they may have had on the Companions of Horus is unclear; it may well be that certain advanced technologies of the Reich were derived from Tibetan sources.

The Kha-glor monks are masters of biokinesis and ESP, and many of them are also martial arts experts. A few have some ability to manipulate Enochian magics. In addition, Sherpas and people of other native ethnic groups have reported a few scattered contacts between the Kha-glor and the yeti. But for the most part, the monks keep their mysteries to themselves.

Named after the British explorer who first described it, the Kretchenmore Mandala—an elaborate sand painting—is an object of veneration and fear among the natives of the high Himalayas. It is said to allow one to see behind the veil of illusion that cloaks the world to the truth beyond it, in a form of induced enlightenment. What happens to those so enlightened afterward is unclear; certainly no one has ever returned to his or her former life from Tibet claiming to have seen the Mandala and been transformed.

Finally, the monastery has befriended a small group of yeti. These yeti make occasional appearances bearing gifts from the Greys, and a few have acted as tutors to the wisest, the youngest, or sometimes simply the most courageous of the monks. These apprenticeships always take the same form: A yeti comes down from the mountains and invades a monastery, taking up residence in a meditation hall. After a few hours or sometimes days, the yeti chooses a pupil who then follows the yeti back into the mountains, or, in the case of elderly monks, is carried off. Those monks who

return (and not all do) tell tales of the yeti's marvelous caverns, and of the difficulty in learning their languages and their martial arts. No such "kidnapped apprentice" has been reported in Tibet since the Chinese invasion. However, two cases have been reported in neighboring Nepal.

Shambhala

To many, the real mystery of Tibet is why the Chinese invaded in the first place. The country is poor, with few natural resources and a devoutly Buddhist population that has steadfastly resisted the imposition of Communism. What did the Chinese hope to find here? What impelled them to loot the monasteries, torture monks, and plunder the cities and palaces? The answer remains concealed at Shambhala.

This legendary kingdom of enlightenment has hidden from the world for centuries. Lying deep within the Tibetan Himalayas, the refuge has been a goal of mystics and truth-seekers from the earliest times. Its name is a Sanskrit word meaning "the source of happiness," and it first appears in Western references in 1627, when a group of Catholic missionaries from Istanbul traveled to Tibet and heard about a place they wrote about as "Xembala." Legend does not tell us whether they found it, but it may well have been the first meeting of the Order of St. Gregory and the Great White Brotherhood (aka the Companions of Horus or the Rosicrucians), whose headquarters are said to have been in Shambhala since roughly 500 B.C. The monks are hardly the last Westerners to have visited it; St.-Germain claims to have learned from the Brothers, and indeed Shambhala served as the headquarters of the Ascended Masters who instructed Madame Blavatsky in occult and mystic lore during the nineteenth century. Since then, few others have been allowed to visit, though many have sought to do so.

To the ordinary Tibetans, Shambhala is a heaven where the gods live; to the lamas, it is a Pure Land, a sacred place of spiritual significance. Within its walls lie sacred, secret spiritual teachings that formed the foundation of Buddhism, including the Kalacakra ("wheel of time"), a set of teachings long limited to the Tibetan Buddhist canon. The Kalacakra texts are known outside Shambhala, but the true symbolic meaning of their paths of wisdom provide a path to enlightenment, astronomy, medicine, and alchemy. Unfortunately, the texts' hidden wisdom cannot be understood with oral teachings. According to legend, only enlightened yogis—able to fly over the mountains and see through the illusion that is the world—can find Shambhala.

The reality behind the legend is relatively simple: Shambhala is one of the Grey station-ships currently moored on Earth. The monks of the Monastery of Inner Light know the way to the ship's hiding place, but they rarely share the secret with outsiders. When the Red Army invaded, they sought this ship. Though they didn't locate it, they did recover a scout ship near the village of Lungdo (see "The Secret War" in *Chapter 5: History of the World*).

Japan

The Japanese isolation of the Tokugawa period appealed to the Greys, and a few of the most daring scouts sometimes appeared in rich watered silk, wearing masks and offering advice to favored warlords. A station-ship is believed to have settled in Japan for a period roughly matching the Tokugawa period (1600–1854), and the more adventurous members of its crew sought to modify Japanese culture to match Grey sensibilities. Even today, the Greys retain contacts in Japan among the yakuza and among the ruling class, and have a web of special relationships with a few of the manufacturing conglomerates. As long as the Greys pay in gold for their purchases, no one asks too many questions.

Ena

On the island of Honshu, Japan, on a forest hillside near the town of Ena, stands a series of three beautiful stone monoliths, each of them a pyramid about 2 meters tall and almost 4 meters wide at the base. Each pyramid was cut from a single block of stone. In size and shape, any one of them might well be the missing capstone of the Great Pyramid or one of its cousins. Even in the twenty-first century, locals often leave offerings at the Ena pyramids, putting flowers or burning incense at their bases.

The pyramids are the source of many legends and a few enduring mysteries. The most common concerns a white serpent that is said to dwell within or underneath them. Local Shinto worshipers sometimes place eggs near the pyramids for the snake to consume; doing so allegedly fosters human and plant fertility in the region.

The region surrounding Ena harbors many clues to an ancient culture that may have flourished here in prehistoric times. It is rich in petroglyphs, some of which have been incorporated into the gardens and courtyards of local homes. These petroglyphs contain human and geometric forms, but their precise meaning and date of origin is a mystery that will probably never be unlocked. The nearby pine forest also features a set of standing stones oriented to the winter solstice, just like the stones at Avebury, the woodhenge at Cahokia, and other astronomical calendars.

The region's rice is farmed in an ancient manner that has led the Japanese government to declare it a national treasure, preserving the local way of life on hundreds of terrace-farms. However, this system of terraced farming is strangely familiar to anyone who has visited the ancient Andean sites of Ollantaytambo or Machu Picchu. This similarity leads to the speculation that Ena was the site of a visitation by a Grey station-ship believed to have also visited the Andes (around 1500). The similarity between the serpent legend of the Ena site and the Great Serpent Mound of the mound-builder culture is another tenuous but suggestive link between the sites, since it clearly shows a serpent disgorging or swallowing an egg. Was there influence from an alien culture at both sites?

Russia

Winston Churchill once said that Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. He was right. Even after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia and its territories cover almost one-sixth of the Earth's land surface. Most of this vast area is the Siberian wilderness—a sweeping expanse of deserts, mountains, plains, and boreal forests stretching for thousands of miles across northern Asia.

For centuries, the czars exiled their enemies to wretched villages hidden in this bitter wasteland; the Soviets continued the

tradition for decades more, incarcerating hundreds of thousands of people in isolated gulags. Few were ever heard from again. Today, no one can say for certain what secrets might be buried in the forests of Siberia.

In the mid-Soviet era, a small facility known as the Gagarin Science Village was built to facilitate contained, secret testing of ESP, remote viewing, mind control, and other mental powers. The results were kept secret, and many of the participants became part of a secret program of controlled breeding and training of psychics. Unfortunately, just about the time that the program began to see solid results, the Soviet empire collapsed. As a result, the first (and last) generation of participants was cast out into the world. Since then, many have been snatched up and put to work for new masters.

Kamchatka

The peninsula of Kamchatka in the Russian Far East is a sparsely settled region (less than one person per square kilometer), still rich with the promise of natural resources and largely unexplored, unsettled, and unreachable by road. Most travel, like that in Alaska, is done by air or by boat, and only the native reindeer herders ever see much of the remote wilderness. The entire region was off limits to Westerners until 1991. Even after the new Russian openness allowed them in, few Westerners choose to visit the backward villages, many of which have changed little in the last hundred years.

Magnitogorsk

Founded in 1929 by Stalin, this industrial city in the Russian heartland was deliberately built on the eastern slope of the Southern Urals to prevent its capture by any invading army from Western Europe. A set of metallurgical, metalworking, and machine plants comprise its core, and its population stands at over half a million, many of the people working in heavy industry. Its steel and iron production are colossal, but Magnitogorsk has long been haunted by a secret history of human sacrifices made during the city's founding, and dark powers invoked to grant strength to its furnaces. A few investigators point to strange, non-Cyrillic inscriptions on the inside of the blast furnaces, but the flames make these "inscriptions" very hard to see, and the furnaces are never shut down. Many dissidents were incinerated in these furnaces during Stalin's great purges. Their ghosts are said to still haunt the ovens and are infused into every steel girder and every roll of sheet metal that comes off the factory lines.

In addition to the tales of hauntings, occasional reports surface of children deliberately thrown into the 24-hour fires. These sacrifices in many ways resemble those made to the deity Baal in ancient times by the Phoenicians and other people of Judea. It may well be that a fire spirit of some kind commands the sacrifices in Magnitogorsk, or it may be that Baal itself has resurfaced.

The steel mills here are said to be as antiquated as the fires of hell; indeed, every account of conditions in the city makes it sound like an utterly polluted hellhole, complete with children deformed at birth, mutants, and cancers running rampant through the population. What is the source of so much biological destruction? Arsenic, lead, PCBs, petroleum in the water, soot everywhere, uranium and plutonium dust, and air that verges on the toxic—the better question might well be, why don't the inhabitants die even sooner than they do? The average life expectancy in Magnitogorsk is just 31 years for men, 35 for women. Most visitors require days to adjust to the noxious atmosphere.

According to reports from the Russian Ministry of Industry, Magnitogorsk is among the most efficient and productive of all the Stalin-era cities. Of course, this same ministry claims the Five-Year Plans were being met during the Communist era, so perhaps its figures are best viewed with extreme skepticism.

Recently, Magnitogorsk has been revealed to be a center of sandman activity (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

Trinity Chapterhouse

This small enclave of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory is located in a forest near Vladivostok, far from the prying eyes that sometimes plague the order in Moscow, Cyprus, Rome, and St. Petersburg.

Tunguska

The swampy, mosquito-infested taiga near the Tunguska River in Siberia is a sorry, soggy remnant of an important Grey settlement: the former site of the station-ship *Znutirj*. The site fell prey to the Grey obsession with secrecy, and when the czar's cartographers came a little too close in 1906, Issi ba Aan—the commander of the station-ship—decided to vacate the site in 1907. Following standard Grey policy for an abandoned settlement, the station-ship searched out and found a small comet, then changed the comet's trajectory to annihilate the former site of the settlement. As at many previous Grey sites, the comet was intended to blast any remnants of its presence into dust.

On June 30, 1908, the explosion hit the earth at 60 degrees 55 minutes north, 101 degrees 57 minutes east, and the result was quite impressive. It flattened about 2,000 square kilometers of pine forest, releasing energy estimated at roughly that of a 15-megaton bomb. The comet was moving at about 100,000 kph at the time, and probably weighed about a million tons.

Unfortunately, the comet the Greys chose to cover their tracks was primarily ice rather than stone or nickel-iron, and the explosion at Tunguska was atmospheric rather than an asteroid impact with the ground. (Whether this was accidental or intentional has never been proven definitively.) The trees were knocked down in a blast pattern for between 15 and 30 kilometers in all directions, but there was no crater at the center of the event zone. Knowing that the site was remote and rarely traveled, the Grey captain decided to let time and the swampy ground finish the work the comet had started. But human persistence almost intervened. The site lay undisturbed for nineteen years before a scientific expedition led by Leonid Alekseyevich Kulik arrived and surveyed the site.

Rumors from the USSR after 1930 claimed that small bits of metal had been found, but nothing more was heard from the participants in that expedition; all evidence was either suppressed or simply stolen. A single report from an Institute double agent among the ranks of the Order of St. Gregory claims that a valuable sealed metal or stone cylinder has recently been detected by radar at the center of the site. Since this object lies beneath the permafrost and the water table, getting to it would pose quite a challenge. Perhaps the Order of St. Gregory knows more, but it certainly isn't telling.

Australia: The Island Continent

Settled in prehistoric times by small tribes island-hopping through the South Pacific, Australia was brought into the modern industrial world by British settlers, many of them convicted felons deported from England. These unwilling colonists were sent to Australia to tame the wilderness or die. Since that time, Australia has joined the ranks of industrialized, developed nations, but it still retains traces of its roots: a fierce loyalty to one's friends, a certain stubbornness, and a relaxed attitude toward booze, sex, and the great outdoors.

Ayers Rock

Called the "Navel of the World" by the Australian aborigines, this large red stone formation in the middle of the continent has become a familiar tourist destination and the site of much New Age worship. In actuality, Ayers Rock is a powerful nexus of telluric currents and arcane energy and has, in times past, been the site of a doorway to another world.

Over the past several thousand years, the aborigines of Australia have been in direct contact with alien creatures called the Wandi (known today as the mothmen), a species with great powers of Shamanistic Faith FX. The Wandi visited the aborigines through one or more doorways (such as the one at Ayers Rock) many times over the centuries, so much so that some aboriginal shamans can speak a pidgin form of the mothman language.

In the 1700s, many members of the Final Church (see *Chapter 6: Illuminati*) were deported from England to Australia. Soon after their arrival, they discovered the power inherent in Ayers Rock. For almost two hundred years, they had the site all to themselves. However, as tourism at the rock has increased, the members of the Final Church have had to be more careful about making their blood sacrifices and calling down their dark powers. Bloody knives or human remains have sometimes been found near Ayers Rock; the local authorities have helped cover these up to avoid frightening off the trekkers coming to the rock for spiritual reasons. The Murdoch News Corp flunkies have been trying to obtain footage to turn these "Mystery Beast" attacks into a TV special, so far without success.

News Corp

Rupert Murdoch, a wealthy media baron, is Australia's best-known citizen and a suspected member of the Bilderbergers (see *Chapter 6: Illuminati*). His holdings include TV networks, sports teams, and tabloid newspapers by the dozen.

As with William Hearst in an earlier generation, News Corp's Sydney-based news organization has branches all over the world, and it isn't above making a newsworthy event happen if necessary. Primarily, News Corp reporters provide sensationalist coverage for tabloid papers and shock TV. Footage from a Hoffmann Institute investigation could end up as a "When Aliens Attack" sweeps special, and News Corp reporters might well be more persistent than government agents are. When it comes to gutter journalism, most roads lead back to Murdoch.

The Pine Gap Facility

This secretive U.S. military installation near the center of the Australian continent is run with the full cooperation and approval of the Australian government. Indeed, the Australian Department of Transport lists an 8-kilometer radius around Pine Gap as "R233 Restricted Air Space" and uses this designation to prevent unauthorized overflights or observation. Officially, the base is referred to as the Joint Defense Space Research Facility, but it is more commonly known as the Pine Gap Facility for its location in a shallow valley at the southern end of the MacDonnel mountain range, near 23 degrees south latitude. It was established in 1966, under the control of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Administration (DARPA), a branch of the U.S. Department of Defense.

While Pine Gap does have its own airfield, it is primarily a research installation. In fact, very little of its size is revealed from the surface: Only a few hangars, a flight control tower, a perimeter fence, and a small set of barracks, warehouses, and bunkers are visible aboveground. Below ground is where the Pine Gap base's real work takes place, in dozens of tunnels, labs, and large experimental halls. It's said to have a water bore underneath it 8.5 kilometers deep. All sorts of strange experiments are rumored to go on there, from UFO-like aircraft tests to electromagnetic pulse (EMP) tests, both into the earth and into the atmosphere.

The Pine Gap base was built to fabricate, test, and ultimately deploy weapons that harness geomagnetic forces, such as telluric currents, earthquakes, magma, and EMP weapons. In some cases, these weapons are already in the prototype stages, and the base tests them every few months in remote areas. In a few instances, the weapons have been used against hostile nations without their knowledge. The beauty of this earthquake weapon system is that it permits attacks without reprisal or consequences—but this is only true as long as no one else knows that such weapons exist. Security is correspondingly tight.

Europe and the Near East: Architects of the Modern World

As the home of four great religions that shaped the modern world—Christianity, Islam, capitalism, and communism—Europe and the Near East have always stood at the forefront of philosophy, arts, and sciences. During the huge push outward during the Age of Exploration, European attitudes were exported to the New World and imposed on the natives by their colonial masters. Origins of discoveries both mechanical and spiritual have deep roots here, and many of the oldest conspiracies have their home in Europe or the Mediterranean countries as well.

The British Isles

The British Isles have a great tradition of paranormal or occult stories, from the Sidhe of Celtic myths to Merlin and King Arthur to the crop circles of the late twentieth century. Fairies, druids, giants, UFOs, and more are commonplace in tales of this region.

In addition, as one of the preeminent powers for much of the last several hundred years, Great Britain is inextricably linked to many conspiracies and secret groups, such as the Templars and the Freemasons.

Avebury

Stonehenge is overrun with tourists, but it's hardly the only set of *menhir* (standing stones) in the British Isles, or in Europe for that matter. Almost as large and far more accessible to tourists are the standing stones of Avebury, in the county of Wiltshire. The stones themselves stand out in the countryside and attract just enough tourists to support a single small restaurant and gift shop. The 421-meter-diameter circle is large enough to include part of the village of Avebury within it.

A ditch and bank surround the Outer Circle; within it are two inner circles, the Northern Circle and the Southern Circle. The Northern Circle still has the remains of two massive stones called "the Cove" at its heart, while the Southern Circle once contained an obelisk, now gone. In general, the Avebury stones consist of two different styles: pillars and diamonds, in alternating placement. Their meaning isn't entirely clear, but the pillars are thought to be symbols of male power, the diamonds of the female principle.

In prehistoric times, Avebury stood at the center of a large complex of ritual sites. About 1.5 kilometers south stands the mysterious Silbury Hill. On a hilltop not far away from Silbury is West Kennet Long Barrow. To the northwest, the round barrows of the Windmill Hill encampment overlook the village of Avebury and the stone circles. An avenue of megaliths leads out of the southern entrance to the Avebury circles and probably once went all the way to the stone circle on Overton Hill, long since demolished. And Stonehenge itself is just 32 kilometers to the south.

To date, druids and other neopagan groups have not made a great show of worshiping at Avebury as they do at Stonehenge, but it may just be a matter of time. What secrets does the site hold? Like all the sites of standing stones, they may have been constructed to serve as timepieces in order to measure the solstices and equinoxes and regulate planting and harvest times—or they may have a deeper meaning. Certainly setting multiton stones on end was no easy task for the technology of the time, so the people who built these sites all over Europe must have been powerfully motivated to do so. Furthermore, such stones are not restricted to Europe; similar sites have also been found in North America, such as at "America's Stonehenge" in North Salem, New Hampshire.

Institute researchers theorize that the stones mark locations where dark matter collects and can be used for powerful Arcane Magic or Faith FX, or places where those FX can be generated even in times of low background levels of dark matter. A competing theory claims that the stones simply mark doorways. The two theories are not mutually exclusive: Sites where dark matter gathers might well be the best sites to open interdimensional doorways.

In recent years, Avebury has been home to a number of sightings involving small white men carrying silver wands. Though the eyewitness reports are contradictory, it's clear that sheep—and possibly a backpacker—have gone missing in the area. Whether these small men are Greys or something else is unclear.



Rosslyn Chapel

Near Edinburgh in Scotland lies this strange Gothic church, built in the fifteenth century and long a site with Templar and Masonic connections. However, even its origins are obscure: It is variously attributed to Earl William Sinclair and Prince Henry St. Clair, the third lord of Rosslyn. Regardless of who established it, it was built with the help of the Templars themselves. Not surprisingly, it has hundreds of Templar, Masonic, and Grail symbols etched into its stonework, including St. Clair's tombstone.

The St. Clair family still exists in the present day (as the Sinclairs), and members of the family claim that their ancestors attempted to found a new Jerusalem in Nova Scotia and in New England. Indeed, some of the carvings within the chapel are said to be encoded or symbolic representations of where the Templar treasure may be found. That treasure is thought to be a hoard of gold spirited away from King Phillip's looting, or perhaps even the treasure of King Herod, taken from Solomon's Temple during the founding years of the Templar order.

In Scotland, the Templars were the guardians of a portion of the True Cross, sacred scrolls, a holy stone, and other items, all of which are said to be hidden somewhere inside Rosslyn Chapel. It has been said that the chapel is a rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon, or that it was built as a chapel to the Holy Grail, which the Templars (and particularly the St. Clairs) were traditionally entrusted with guarding. Some people still believe that the Grail itself is hidden within the Apprentice Pillar, a richly carved pillar built especially to house it. Others claim that the chapel contains

the severed head of Christ beneath an inscription that reads, "Here beneath this pillar lies the head of God." Still others maintain the chapel contains the Holy Rood of Scotland, a fragment of the True Cross supposedly brought to Scotland in 1086 by Queen Margaret and turned over to the Knights Templar. These relics are said to have fueled the Templars' remarkable ascent to power in Europe—and perhaps their loss was intertwined with the knights' even more rapid decline.

Finally, some of Rosslyn Chapel's tombstones are marked with the rosy cross, among the first instances of this symbol's use in Europe. The symbol may indicate a connection to the Rosicrucians (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

The Shetlands

North of Scotland lie a number of small islands, including the Orkney, Faroe, and Shetland Islands. While the Shetlands are technically part of Great Britain, culturally they belong just as much to Scandinavia as they do to Britain. The islanders are a hardy breed, used to cold winters, gray skies, and difficult weather. The islands' economy is primarily based on tourism now, though they still produce wool, and fishermen and oilmen alike set sail from the Shetland ports.

On an abandoned rock on the Shetlands lies one of the sites mentioned in the sagas written in Old Norse in the seventh century: the grave of Magnus Gromdahl, a notorious Norwegian sorcerer who briefly held the islands as his fiefdom in the late fifth century. Few records survive from that time, but the gravesite is said to be haunted, and the locals never visit the place. Oddly enough, it isn't even mentioned in the glossy tourist brochures available at the ubiquitous B&Bs.

Cyprus

Cyprus has long been a site of contention and destruction. Long ago, its northern coast was washed by the tidal wave that destroyed Thera, later waves and earthquakes in A.D. 332 and 342 destroyed its cities of Paphos and Salamis, and both the Knights of Malta and the Templars retreated here after the fall of Jerusalem. It is justly famous for its beautifully painted Byzantine churches and for the Troodos Mountains in the south and southwest (topped by Mt. Troodos, 1,951 meters high). For many years the island was a possession of the Byzantine Empire, which gradually converted its people from paganism to Orthodox Christianity. Today, Cyprus remains a stronghold of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, and the island has legends that can be tracked back to the days of Grey settlement in the Mediterranean.

Stronghold of the Church

Overseen by a synod of the Archbishop of Nicosia and the bishops of Citium, Kyrenia, and Paphos, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus is a strange beast indeed from an ecclesiastical standpoint. It is one of the oldest autocephalous (ecclesiastically independent) churches of Eastern Christianity. Ecumenical councils confirmed those rights in 431 and 692. Though Roman Catholics occupied the island at various points in its history, the Church of Cyprus has never lost its right to chart an independent course. What it does with that independence is of little concern to most of those outside Cyprus proper. Secretly, it keeps close contact with the Hidden Order, the Patriarch of Venice, and monks of the more distant east, and only a few theologians and occultists know many of its High Gospels.

Of unknown relationship to the church is the island's Islamic history. The lady Umm-Haram, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammed, died at Tekke near Larnaca in 649. Unconfirmed rumors after her death claimed that she sought knowledge held by the Cypriot monks.

Kykkos Monastery

As the most famous and the richest monastery in Cyprus, Kykkos Monastery is first among equals. Among its treasures is one of three surviving icons said to have been painted by Saint Luke. Less spiritual but no less important is the monastery's interest in Cypriot nationalism.

The bishops of Cyprus have long had secular as well as religious goals; for instance, they led the resistance during the Greek War of Independence from 1821 to 1832. During Crusader times and under Turkish rule alike, whenever a rebellion was brewing on Cyprus, local governors would hang the bishops and abbots. Under British rule in the 1950s, Archbishop Makarios and the Bishop of Kyrenia were exiled. The Archbishop was later voted in as the new president of the independent republic, and Cyprus remains theocratic even today.

But nationalism is only part of the story of why Kykkos was persecuted over the course of centuries. Other reasons for eradicating the Cypriot monks include their suspected but never confirmed ties to the Order of St. Gregory. Parish clergy are educated in seminary; they learn finer theological points at the University of Athens or at a "special retreat" in Orenburg, Russia.

Stavrovouni Monastery

This monastery near Larnaca is perched on a rocky peak whose name it bears. It is said to have been founded around A.D. 330 by Saint Helena, who left a fragment of the Holy Cross to the monastery. Even today, women are barred from visiting the place.

Istanbul

Though the city was founded by Greeks and ruled by Persians as well as Romans, Istanbul's modern history begins in A.D. 1453, when Sultan Mehmet II and his Ottoman Turks captured it and killed the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI. Since that time it has variously been a crossroads of trade, the capital of the most powerful empire of the Islamic world, the maritime rival of the Republic of Venice, the greatest sea power of the Mediterranean, a decaying city called the "Sick Man of Europe," and a reinvigorated, modern, secular metropolis.

Old Istanbul proper lies within the ninety-six towers and the long kilometers of walls built in the fifth century by Emperor Theodosius, but the larger city now spills out much farther in every direction. The old city is home to architectural marvels such as Topkapi Palace, the Hagia Sophia, and the Blue Mosque. It is also a crucial link between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as well as between Europe and the Middle East. Finally, the city acts as a bridge between the science and religion of the Arabs and the mysticism and conspiracies of Europe.

The Grand Bazaar and Street of Exports

The Grand Bazaar is a vast collection of thousands of shops in dome-vaulted halls, and it has been operating since 1461. It has been built and rebuilt many times because of fires, the most recent in 1954.

Anything and everything is for sale here, from rugs and coffee to books and cutlery. The entire complex is organized into streets (often enclosed) such as the Street of Rugs, Street of Jeans, Street of Jewelers, and even the Street of Knives. Many of these streets or sections of the bazaar have iron gates and guards who lock up the premises at night. Other subsidiary businesses operate near the bazaar in a series of surrounding buildings loosely connected to the bazaar itself, such as the courtyard of books that serves bibliophiles in the famed Sahaflar Çarsisi. Here, ancient volumes are sold next to paperback potboilers. Some of these businesses are legitimate, but just as many are suspect.

The Street of Exports (once the Street of Slaves) is technically a subsidiary market street unconnected to the bazaar. However, its proximity to the bazaar makes it appear as part of the same complex to most visitors, even though the goods for sale here are markedly different. The Street of Exports is home to three unsavory trades: illegal drugs and narcotics, weapons and poison gas, and exotic materials.

First and foremost, heroin passes through Istanbul in great quantities, and much of the commerce happens here. The trade is a huge industry that the Turkish government would like to ignore, but the extensive money involved guarantees its survival. How much of that money funnels into the pockets of government and police officials depends on just how brazenly the dealers move their shipments. Most organized crime in Turkey is involved in the heroin trade one way or another, and Kurdish separatists traffic in it as well.

Second, deals for mustard gas, tear gas, sarin, nerve gas, and even less savory materials take place here over the cups of tea ubiquitous throughout the merchant district. The Street of Exports is an arms dealer's dream: Russian, Iraqi, Israeli, and other weapons are all for sale, though never publicly. Most dealers only show catalogues in their shops; the actual weapons appear when the buyer has been carefully vetted and his ability to buy has been confirmed. Many of these weapons are funneled to the rebellions brewing in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Muslim countries, and Africa.

Finally, the street houses a few merchants whose sole business is the acquisition and sale of exotic objects. Their stock includes religious icons and artifacts, precious objects stolen from archaeological sites, stolen statuary and paintings, human and animal mummies, books forbidden by mullahs and bishops alike, cadavers and bones taken from graveyards, and even records stolen from churches or government files. The three firms supposedly involved include the Silver Owl, the House of Athena, and the House of Ancient Lights.

The Starry House of the Companions

A secret passage from the Blue Mosque leads underground several hundred meters to a garden built around a splashing fountain. Named for its elaborately inlaid alien astronomical designs,



this quiet retreat is the home of the Companions of Horus in Istanbul, a small group devoted to working with Muslim, Jewish, and Christian groups in the city against Strangers and rogue Grey Mindwalkers in Europe and the Middle East. Negotiations between rogues and ship-Greys often take place here.

While some reports on the site claim that the Starry House doubles as a training site for the Companions to teach their followers psionic tricks, it is rather small for housing more than a dozen people at a time. The only explanation that accommodates both training and diplomacy speculates that the underground passage also leads to hidden chambers in the undercity.

Jerusalem

As a holy place for three major world religions (the primary center for Christians and Jews, a tertiary but still holy site for Muslims), every centimeter of Jerusalem is contested ground.

Solomon's Temple

The Templars are said to have unearthed an ancient treasure beneath the stables that the Muslims had made of this ancient temple. The treasures buried here may have included the Ark of the Covenant and other Judaic relics of great antiquity. Even if the treasures were simply mundane hoards of gold and precious stones, it's a well-known fact that the Templars quickly showed their wealth after their founding in the late 1100s.

According to the Talmud, King Solomon built the temple with the help of a demon, Asmodeus, whom the king had captured and pressed into slave labor. Indeed, some traditions maintain that the demon was friendly, and served Solomon willingly as a guardian and adviser. Other legends of Asmodeus present a much less beneficent figure (see "Bering Demon" in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*).

Malta

Called Melita in ancient days, this small 425-square-kilometer island was ruled from A.D. 1530 to 1798 by the Knights Hospitaller, now called the Knights of Malta. Charles V granted it to them in 1530 as a gift in exchange for a yearly tribute of a trained falcon.

During World War II, Malta was a crucial way station between British airfields at Gibraltar and Egypt; it supplied the British campaign against Rommel in North Africa. Not surprisingly, the island became the target of thousands of air raids by the Axis powers, beginning with two waves of bombers sent against it by Mussolini on June 11, 1940.

Order of Knights Hospitaller

Though the knights no longer rule Malta (it has an independent, democratically elected government), they still have considerable influence. Their holdings include many houses, an armory, and the Grand Magisterial Palace of Sant Angelo, restored to their use in the late twentieth century. Meetings of the entire order are held here annually.

Haunted Hospital

The Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem is a seventeenth-century structure, complete with well-kept gardens covering several acres of the island. Built near the shore, the facility has long served in both a teaching and a research role for the charitable works of the Knights of Malta. In recent years, the ghost of a young girl has haunted the hospital, crying out for her mother. Only a few of the nuns and doctors have heard her, but those who have are often quite upset after hearing the voice, as if she were their own child. Attempts to exorcise the ghost have been in vain.

Orenburg

The city of Orenburg, 600 kilometers east of Moscow just south of the Urals, has long been a stronghold of Orthodoxy and of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory. In the early 1800s, it was also the site of a series of strange UFO sightings.

The first sighting occurred in September 1824, when small pieces of metal fell from a clear blue sky onto the roof of the local church. The following January, another fall of symmetrical metal pieces hit the church. Made of rusted, sulfurous iron combined with organic matter, the bits of metal were sent to St. Petersburg for further analysis.

In St. Petersburg, the manufactured bits of metal drew the attention of a number of dignitaries, including Prince Pavel Dolgoruky, a member of the order of mystics called the Brotherhood of the Inner Order. The Brotherhood was an offshoot of the Lodge Harmonia, a well-known front for the Hidden Order that Nikolai Novikov founded as a recruitment tool in St. Petersburg in 1780. Both the lodge and the brotherhood were direct results of the suppression of the Masonic orders by Empress Catherine II in 1792. Novikov, Dolgoruky, and others jailed at the time founded the lodge as a gathering place for books and knowledge of all kinds; they quickly collected a valuable set of mystic and esoteric texts. Their collection of banned books included a first-edition *Originalschriften des Illuminatenordensekte* by Adam Weishaupt, pamphlets by Eastern and Muslim mystics, and copies of the sacred texts of obscure Buddhist sects. The addition of the metal artifacts from Orenburg was a natural extension of the brotherhood's existing interests.

Dolgoruky died in 1838, and all the books, pamphlets, and metal artifacts passed to his daughter, Nadyezhda de Fadeyev. Her niece, Elena Petrovna von Hahn—better known in later life as Madame Blavatsky—read her grandfather's books in 1846. Perhaps coincidentally, in January of that same year papers from the Czarist Ministry of the Interior document the occurrence of an intense burst of light in Orenburg. The white-light vision was seen by dozens of witnesses.

In later years, when Blavatsky had founded the Theosophical Society and become the leading mystic of her time, she hinted that the origins of her esoteric wisdom were gained in Orenburg and Tibet. Indeed, Russian mystics (including, presumably, many members of the Hidden Order) traveled from St. Petersburg to Tibet seeking that knowledge. Perhaps it is just a coincidence that the road leads straight through Orenburg.

The collection of Orenburg metal vanished in the 1890s after Madame de Fadeyev's death and has not been seen since.

Prague

Historically, golden Prague has been a center of alchemy, Jewish culture and religious tolerance, and religious reform. More than

that, it was a seat of power for the Hermetic and Enochian adepts of Europe. Finally and most notoriously, Prague is home to a particular Czech form of murder: defenestration, or assassination by throwing the victim out the nearest window.

The First Defenestration of Prague took place during the Reformation, when the reformers known as Hussites (followers of Jan Hus, a scholar at the university) rose up against the Church in the years after Hus had been burned at the stake in 1415. During the revolt of 1419, many of the city councilors were thrown from the windows of the New Town Hall. The following year the peasant rebels won an important victory over King Sigismund at Vitkov Hill, thus turning back the forces of Roman Catholicism.

The Second Defenestration of Prague began the Thirty Years War. In 1618, Roman Catholic officials closed Protestant churches, violating an agreement that had guaranteed religious freedom to the citizens. Rather than staging a revolt, the Protestants assembled in Prague and tried the Imperial regents responsible. Both they and their secretary were thrown from the windows of the Hradcany (a Prague castle) on May 23, 1618—and all of them survived relatively unscathed. This incident sparked the revolt against the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand II, and the ensuing war continued for decades.

The Third Defenestration of Prague took place in the closing days of the transitional government, just before the elections scheduled for 1948. Jan Masaryk, the foreign minister of the coalition government and an illustrious and tireless supporter of Czech causes, remained at his post when the Communist members of the government staged a violent coup. In March he either threw himself out a window of the Foreign Office or was murdered. In either case, the cause of Czech democracy would not recover for more than forty years.

The fourth and most mysterious defenestration of Prague occurred just a few months ago. A Hungarian priest named Janos Sarkany seems to have been thrown from an upper gallery window of St. Vitus Cathedral. While the Protestant Church had recovered a great deal of ground since the restoration of self-rule in the Czech Republic in 1989, it rarely got involved in politics. According to rumor, however, Sarkany learned something about the Catholic Church in Prague that led to his death. Since he was a popular priest, his death has caused some unrest, and theories circulate throughout the city that his murderers are planning further attacks or that their plot continues to unfold. Sarkany's last words, "the black angels," are widely considered to be a clue to either his murderers' identity or the nature of their scheme, but people cannot agree on exactly what he meant.

Rome

With thousands of years of history, plots, and counterplots, it's impossible to summarize the many-layered intrigues of Rome. The most recent gossip includes a banking scandal involving the Vatican, the theft of seemingly unimportant statuary from St. Peter's Basilica, and a murder in the Vatican library. The Hidden Order, the Knights of Malta, the Bilderbergers, and the P2 branch of the Freemasons are all known to be active in Rome.

Monastery of St. Cyril

A small compound at the outskirts of Rome, this monastery is one stronghold of the militant branch of the Knights of Malta and is closed to the public. It includes a gun range, an armory, and a small jail/interrogation chamber. The weapons stored at the monastery are believed to include an armored personnel carrier, anti-tank missiles, automatic assault rifles, and smoke grenades. Armed guards watch over the entire compound from the bell tower and the chapel's steeple.

P2

This inner circle of the Freemasons is known to be active only in Italy, and it seems to be especially interested in two topics: money and the Catholic Church. Its membership includes many members of Italy's banking community, highly placed Vatican officials, and a few archbishops. Whispered stories in Rome claim that the Pope himself is a member.

The Grand Lodge of the Capitoline Hill seems to function as P2's base, though private homes and even lodges on Church property have been verified. Nonmembers and even fellow Masons are excluded from P2 meetings and property. The lodge's records are likewise encoded and sealed.

The Vatican

This tiny patch of land is an independent ecclesiastical state, with authority over the souls and spiritual welfare of hundreds of millions of Catholics worldwide. In early 2001, a Church cardinal was found ritually murdered in the Vatican library, setting off a firestorm of rumor and speculation. According to the suppressed police reports, Cardinal Albertini was strangled with a garrote and found with the wafers of the Host in his mouth, his back mutilated with Latin scripture, and his eyes removed from their sockets. Traces of sulfurous iron were sprinkled around the scene. No suspects have been apprehended, and no motives have been put forward for the bizarre murder.

St. Petersburg

Originally the site of a Swedish fortress, this settlement between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga has often changed hands between Swedes and Russians. Peter the Great founded the last Russian fortress here in 1703, and it grew into a great city that tied Russia more tightly to Europe. In the twenty-first century, St. Petersburg lies on dozens of islands astride the Neva River and commands a vital strategic position as Russia's only port to the Baltic Sea. Though many of its architectural treasures were destroyed or fell into neglect during World War II and the communist era, it is still a place of great charm. It is also the site of the headquarters of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory.

As a city of islands, St. Petersburg is a very appealing place for European tourists and artists. It was also a traditional place of espionage between East and West before the October Revolution in 1917, and the city is slowly regaining that status.

Palaces

The city is home to many palaces, including the Winter Palace (where the Revolution of 1917 finally undertook mob action), the Mikhailovsky Palace (full of secret passageways, now the Russian Museum), and of course the Hermitage. This last is perhaps the greatest museum in Europe, filled with art and occult treas-

ures first collected by Catherine the Great and later looted from the burnt-out husk that was the corpse of the Third Reich. In addition, the city is home to the Russian Admiralty building, which is topped with the distinctive frigate-shaped weathervane that serves as the city's emblem. Gorky Park lies next to it.

The Onion House

Built originally as an Orthodox monastery and church, the Church of St. Basil was abandoned by the faith from 1917 to 1991, during which time open worship was either discouraged or forbidden. But it was not deserted by the group of scholars who occupied it from 1952 to the present: Members of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory have turned the *dom luki* ("house of onions") into a repository of documents, books, and relics gathered over the preceding centuries. The fragments recovered from the Tunguska event are said to be stored here, as are a few important sutras recovered from Tibet (or stolen from the Chinese). It is likely that the micromachines and other metal fragments recovered from the Orenburg skyfall can be found here as well.

Tomar

Gualdim Pais, the master of the Temple in Portugal, built the castle of Tomar in Portugal in 1160. Here the Templars reformed themselves as the Knights of Christ and prospered for centuries, eventually finding their way to the Americas and making Portugal's fortune. Tomar served as their headquarters during the period when the exploration of the New World was at its most active.

The castle stands in several parts, each built in a different architectural period: Tomar's round chapel first served as a fortress in the twelfth century. The castle was rebuilt and extended throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Templar church at its center is octagonal like the Holy Sepulcher and is typical of churches and mosques built in Palestine.

Currently the castle is open to visitors, but a few sections are closed to public view. These areas are said to be the repository of materials from the Institute archives, ancient Kabbalist texts, medieval and Renaissance alchemical works, and many Templar records hidden from the Church. The degree to which any remnant of the Templars remains active in Portugal is unknown, but certainly this would be one place to find out.

Venice

Home to a republic that outlasted the great era of the Italian city-states and that extended its naval power from the Aegean Sea to the British Isles, the lagoon of Venice is now nothing more than a shell. The arsenal where the Republic's ships were built and the Doge's Palace where its plots were hatched both stand silent now. St. Mark's Square at the center of the town no longer bustles with trade, but only with tourists. The age of Venetian independence came to a crashing end in 1797, when the city was conquered by Napoleon. But the ghosts of Venice still have teeth.

St. Mark's Basilica

As the home of the remains of St. Mark (stolen from Egypt in A.D. 828), this cathedral is the spiritual heart of the city, next to the Doge's Palace and the famous bell tower. Built in the Byzantine style and topped by four bronze horses stolen from Constantinople during the Crusades, St. Mark's is an odd mix of Orthodox and Catholic elements of Christianity, with icons and mosaics overseeing masses conducted in a variation of the Roman style. Indeed, for many years the patriarch of St. Mark's refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. St. Mark's has always been close to heterodoxy.

Besides the saint's bones, what relics and other holy bones lie in its catacombs? Surely the Crusaders brought home other treasures. The priests aren't saying what the sacristy contains, but the ties between the cathedral, the Republic of Venice, and the Venetian merchant fleets were always very close. At the height of its power, the city-state traded throughout the Mediterranean and north to the British Isles and the Netherlands. Perhaps its treasures were looted by Napoleon when the Republic was conquered and dissolved; perhaps they were hidden away on one of the many smaller islands of the lagoon.

Since it is a major tourist destination, few secret activities can be expected at the basilica. Yet stories circulate of midnight masses on perfectly ordinary weekdays, of "closed for repairs" signs that stay up for weeks in the winter off-season, and of chanting that certainly isn't Latin. St. Mark's may well be the oldest part of the city, and it also keeps the city's oldest secrets. It still celebrates Carnival in the old style each February, complete with robes and masks; recent investigations by arcanists and adepts suspect that the night covers some greater ritual. Perhaps the glory of the Republic may yet somehow be restored.

Palazzo del Nozerri

Long abandoned by the Church, this palazzo began its life as a chapel. Its interior bears some resemblance to Rosslyn Chapel, but is far better hidden from public scrutiny. Built by a nobleman in fulfillment of a promise to the Virgin Mary, the Chapel of the Virgin was later deeded to the Templars, then reverted to the Church's possession after the dissolution of that order in 1312. The Chapel was granted to the Doge in 1404 in partial payment of debts incurred by Pope Clement VII, during the time when two popes ruled the Church. The Chapel of the Virgin became known as haunted ground soon thereafter and was withdrawn from use as consecrated ground sometime in the early 1500s.

It has served as a brothel, a warehouse, and as a private residence since 1798, when it was granted to one Citizen St.-Germain by Napoleon for "services rendered the Republic." Since that period, it has been home to the Comte St.-Germain (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*), an immortal being who claims to have learned the secrets of eternal life in Egypt. Indeed, even now he still spends the spring and autumn months here, and resides other months in Brazil, New Orleans, and elsewhere. Every so often he fakes his own death and returns as a son and heir, or he skips the visits for a generation.

The household attendants of the palazzo live in the servant's quarters, and though they speak fluent Italian, they rarely mingle with the Venetians. Most are involved to some degree in the comte's schemes and hope to curry enough favor with him to be granted access to his secrets of immortality.

The Poles: Lands of Desolation

The greatest geographical extremes above water exist at the poles, where survival itself becomes an unlikely proposition. Nevertheless, the very harshness and isolation of these regions attracts a certain breed of explorers, human and otherwise.

Antarctica

This polar continent was not discovered by Europeans until 1818 and hardly explored until 1911, when Roald Amundsen led a Norwegian party of explorers to the pole. However, Antarctica shows up on maps as early as the fifteenth century (such as the Piri Reis map, which is based on much older documents), clearly indicating that some ancient civilization knew about it. Today, Antarctica contains over 90% of the world's permanent ice and snow, and average winter temperatures can drop below –21° C (–70° F). Summer temperatures rise above freezing, but only along the coasts; during the summer, icebergs frequently detach from the many ice sheets that run down into the ocean.

Antarctica hasn't always been a frozen hell. Given the fossils and even the frozen plant materials found on the continent, it evidently enjoyed relatively temperate periods before the continental drift.

The Greys occasionally construct atmospheric and heavy metal mining stations here; the atmospheric and water miners ship their cargoes to the Moon, while the metal miners send processed ore to Mars. These mines are always buried under hundreds of meters of ice or are hidden high in the mountains near the Vinson Massif (the highest Antarctic peak at 4,869 meters).

Station-Ship *Uulangti*

Atop 3,373-meter-high Blizzard Peak in the Queen Maud Mountains, sealed within an almost immobile glacier, a Grey station-ship watches over human activity. The site is so remote that it has never been visited by humans; the nearest settlements are Russian and American science stations at McMurdo, Amundsen-Scott, and Vostok stations. Even so, a small squad of twenty sasquatch armed with crossbows guards the ship's perimeter, though the weather alone would deter all but the most fanatical from visiting the trans-Antarctic mountains.

The 200-meter-diameter station-ship *Uulangti* keeps tabs on human ham radio traffic and atmospheric changes, and sends out agents to the various cities and towns that the Greys monitor. The ship's reports are filed every twenty years and contain comprehensive documentation of the changes humankind has wrought over the face of the Earth. Recently the aliens have had a great deal of trouble keeping up with the volume of data being generated, and the station-ship teems with almost six hundred overworked Greys.

According to long-standing Grey practice, every so often a few humans are brought aboard the station ship and dissected, to determine what genetic changes have taken place over the last human generation. These are the only humans permitted on the *Uulangti*; all others are gently steered away through the use of psionic suggestions and illusions.

The North Pole

The North Pole was not explored until 1909, when Robert Peary claims to have reached the top of the world. Only a few cold-adapted creatures have carved out a place for themselves within the Arctic Circle, soaking in the eternal summer sun or lurking in the months-long winter night. These include polar bears, caribou, arctic foxes, seals, a few species of gulls, and a scattering of Inuit and sasquatch. Few other animals can survive for long in the brutal chill.

In addition, the pole is occasionally the site of Grey water mining. Grey scout craft carve out chunks of ice to refresh the water supplies of the settlements on the Moon and Mars.

The Oceans: Two-Thirds of the World

Under the water and waves that cover most of the Earth lie the plankton and algae that cycle biomass from carbon dioxide to the top of the food chain. But what else waits buried beneath the oceans? Recent archaeological work has taken advantage of the fact that during the most recent Ice Age, human (or other) inhabitants had settled much of the Mediterranean and other coastal regions; the water that now covers those areas was locked into the polar ice caps of the period. So exactly what does lie under the water and behind the myths of cities-under-wave? Only dedicated and extensive surveying and exploration can answer the question with any certainty, but two great finds are likely: a lost culture, and creatures adapted to the depths.

Atlantis

Somewhere under the waves rests the remnants of a third culture—in addition to the proto-Egyptians and Olmecs—that benefited from Grey contact ten thousand years ago: the lost continent of Atlantis. The Greys are completely unwilling to discuss it; the whole episode is regarded as an embarrassing period from their past, a mistake they would just as soon forget.

Proposed sites for this sunken island include Bimini, the rocks of St. Peter and Paul (more properly, the Penedos de Sao Pedro e Paulo) between Brazil and West Africa, the Bahamas, the Azores, Greenland, the Canary Islands, Antarctica, and many others. However, the most likely site is Thera, a small volcanic island in the Aegean Sea about 120 kilometers north of Crete. This island shows clear traces of a volcanic eruption around 1470 B.C. that crippled the advanced Minoan civilization that existed there.

Ironically, this hypothesized location is correct, but not for the reasons stated. As described in *Chapter 5: History of the World*, the Atlantean culture flourished on and around the Aegean island of Thera for several thousand years after the most recent Ice Age retreated. However, this culture was destroyed in 2150 B.C. by a cataclysmic explosion, perhaps linked to advanced alien technology being used on the island.

Marianas Trench

Far below the Pacific Ocean, south of Japan and north of New Guinea, lies the Marianas Trench, the lowest point on the globe. Its deepest point lies near Guam at a place called Challenger

Deep, a full 11,022 meters deep. The trench is thousands of kilometers long, eventually joining up with the Kuril-Kamohatka Trench north of Hokkaido. What sort of creatures can survive at that depth? What lifeforms might thrive on a diet of hydrogen sulfides and waters heated by the earth's volcanic magma? No one knows: No human vessel has ever dived that deep, though sensors have been lowered to the bottom.

The Greys are reluctant to sink a scout ship into the depths; their ships are built to withstand the pressures of vacuum, not the external pressures of thousands of atmospheres of water pressing in on the hull. The mysteries at the bottom of the sea may remain mysteries for many years to come.

Extraterrestrial Sites

Humanity has been reaching out beyond the atmosphere for decades, ever since the first *Sputnik* achieved orbit in 1957. In 1961, Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space, orbiting the Earth in a six-ton space capsule, soon followed by Alan Shepard's suborbital flight. By 1969, humans were on the Moon, and soon robotic rovers visited Mars and Venus and deep-space probes flew past Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond—there was plenty of the solar system to explore. But the solar system was already inhabited: The Greys mapped it out eight thousand years ago and chose Earth as their primary colony, followed by Mars.

Earth Orbit

Though once home to projects such as the long-vanished *Skylab* and the recently abandoned *Mir*, low-earth orbit and geosynchronous orbit currently have no active human-inhabited stations. Thousands of satellites circle the globe, but this still leaves space nearly empty.

The most prominent human-controlled object in orbital space is the partially constructed International Space Station, or ISS. The ISS is the product of cooperation between the European Space Agency (ESA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Air and Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA), Russia, Canada, and Brazil. Three years into its construction, the station has no permanent inhabitants yet—at least any known to the general public.

Finally, a permanent Grey observation platform sits high above the North Pole, observing all that occurs below it and picking up information from every satellite in orbit. This station, called the *Haavisto*, is in constant contact with both the lunar colony and the city-ship on Mars. It often dispatches smaller craft to the planet below.

Luna

The Moon in 2001 is still largely uninhabited, though two significant settlements exist: the UN's Hammarskjöld Base (nicknamed Moonbase Plato) and the Grey station-ship *Caluya*.

Moonbase Plato

Part of the United Nations' Project Glacier (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*), this secret human settlement is within the Plato crater, near the lunar north pole at the edge of Mare Imbrium. It has several agricultural and power-station domes (usually retracted when in view of Earth) and releases occasional clouds of water haze. These come from the small but important water deposits that the settlers mine from the lunar pole. The farms are kept under camouflaging domes, though at the height of the growing season a faint image of greenish growth can sometimes be seen from Earth. Fortunately, in 2001 not many people are watching the Moon; astronomers are far more interested in what the Hubble telescope and other advanced research projects can tell them about distant stars and galaxies than they are in the comparatively mundane events in their own backyard.

Established in 1988, the colony has depended on the goodwill of a few friendly Greys from the start; Iltan engineers set up the dome using human blueprints (to assure that humans would feel comfortable with the architecture), and the colonists have access to a Grey scout ship to transport personnel from the surface to Earth-orbiting space shuttles.

In many ways, life on the Moon is highly regimented. Radio, laser, and other forms of communication are all jammed by the aliens or simply not available to the residents. The moonbase depends on supplies from secret shipments from Earth, as the base's own hydroponic gardens, algaculture, and aquaculture provide only enough fish, grain, and other foodstuffs to feed about half the station personnel.

Currently, the Plato base is inhabited by 287 settlers: 190 working colonists, 78 scientists and doctors working on human adaptation to space and other UN-mandated research, and 19 children. All the residents serve as test subjects to a certain degree, with frequent blood and urine tests, treadmill tests of lung capacity, bone mass measurements, and tests of neurological function. All are experts in the use of vacuum suits and have some degree of zero-g training. At the same time, they all suffer the equivalent of the moderate High Gravity Environmental Sensitivity drawback (see *Chapter 13: Mutants* in the *Player's Handbook*). As a result, they suffer a +3 step penalty to all skill checks and action checks made in Earth-normal or higher gravity. However, those born on Earth can be rehabilitated by physical therapy, eliminating the drawback completely within about six months.

In addition, it has been discovered that humans born on the Moon are more likely to show traces of psychic ability than those born on Earth are. Admittedly, the sample size of the population is very small, so it may just be a statistical aberration; nevertheless, two of the nineteen children born on the moon display a mindwalking talent. By comparison, knowledgeable parapsychologists claim at least some psionic sensitivity in about one in every two hundred earthbound children.

Of course, more than most on Earth, residents of the moonbase are well aware of the fact that humanity is not alone in the Universe. The presence of both races in the same small airless environment has led to interesting (but so far nonviolent) situations. The Greys have contacted the colonists, and some want to work with them and the UN as a whole. What this might have to do with the agreement reached between the Greys and the U.S. government back in the 1960s, or the reported cold welcome the aliens might have given NASA's moon landing, is unknown. The Plato base may be the reason that NASA no longer visits the Moon, although that might be because they know about it (and possibly have cooperated in secret), or because UN agents have successfully convinced or coerced the agency to look the other way.

The crater itself is about 100 kilometers in diameter, with crater walls extending 1,000 to 1,500 meters above the crater floor.

Station-Ship *Caluya*

After their interaction with Mesoamerican cultures and until the early days of the space race, the Grey city-ship resided on the Moon. But then, as humanity took its first steps out into the solar system, the Greys moved the great spacecraft to Mars (see below). Now, only a station-ship remains on Luna, serving primarily as a staging and observation point for their surveillance and monitoring of conditions and activities on Earth. The station ship *Caluya* houses a small population of Greys and has a few human prisoners/lab experiments. Kal ri Ulan, the captain of the station-ship, is a member of the Iltan faction and thus is more inclined to interact peacefully with humans (such as those of Moonbase Plato). Some Ahotti even whisper quietly that Ulan has a bit of the rogue in him.

Aristarchus

Bright lights, blue flashes, bright pulsations, strange lights and glows of Aristarchus: Fluorescence due to electronic bombardment? Solar-induced luminescence? Or something else? Astronauts and observatories both report this phenomenon, but the source of the lunar lights remains a mystery.

In addition, the settlers of both moonbases have found numerous spires, obelisks, and small pyramids built in the lunar vacuum. Too small to be seen from Earth or even from lunar explorer satellites, they are clearly the work of intelligent, spacefaring creatures. The only question is who built them: No species has claimed responsibility.

Mars

Mars has been the center of an enormous effort by the Greys to mine enough metal ore, oxygen, water, and other resources to support their ships and their civilization. But the period of Martian industrialization may be nearing its end, for several reasons. One problem is the growing ability of humans to visit the red planet. However, that isn't the whole story.

A few Greys still cling to the story that the Speaker has put forward: The Grey efforts to terraform Mars are faltering, and the Greys must conserve their resources for a greater struggle against humanity, which is rapidly evolving both technological sophistication and a taste for mass destruction. Worse, the Greys may have to take on the fight against the invading Strangers personally, before they are in a position to take over Earth entirely. As a result, goes the official line, the Greys have scaled back their operations drastically in the past few years. In fact, other reasons have been just as influential in bringing about the shift in Grey efforts, though only the Speaker and a few residents of the highest echelons of Grey society are privy to these secrets.

Rumors and legends have rushed to fill the void. One story tells of the discovery of alien remains among the City of Spires (see below). Oddly, these stories have circulated among the Greys for centuries, and something unidentifiable—possibly the remains of an inhabitant of the city—was found during the first century B.C. It was dismissed at the time as inconsequential. The new stories claim that the inhabitants didn't die out, as has long been believed, but simply abandoned a colony here and have now returned to claim it. Though this conjecture sounds unlikely, it is enough to worry the Greys who hear it. It's a big universe, and the Greys know perfectly well that other species could easily come visiting the solar system at any time.

Despite the rumors and the continuing threat of human observers, the Greys need access to the rich red soils of Mars for everything from batteries to mass pistols. The Greys can't do much to change the troubles at Olympus Mons, but they can do something about the threat of human discovery. To keep their access to Mars, the Greys have made sure that human efforts to visit locations near their bases and near the City of Spires have been stymied.

As a result of this policy of obscuring the true face of Mars, many space probes have not functioned as well as their human creators have hoped. Indeed, the satellites orbiting Mars have an abysmal performance record. Every time a satellite approaches the north or south pole it encounters what NASA calls the "Galactic Ghost." Every early pole satellite failed; by the time later satellites got there, the Greys had found ways to send false signals, thus preventing the discovery of their mine pits and tailings, their terraforming stations, and their city-ship.

Valles Marineris and the City Ship

This rift valley is incredibly deep, typically 4 kilometers or so, with unconfirmed areas thought to be up to 10 kilometers deep below the rim. The rift itself is up to 200 kilometers wide and about 4,000 kilometers long, roughly as long from end to end as the distance from New York to Los Angeles and as wide as New York to Boston. Its depths are as deep as Mount McKinley is high. It lies near the Martian equator.

At the bottom of the rift canyon the atmosphere of Mars is almost heavy enough to breathe, around 5% that of Earth. But the air is more than 95% carbon dioxide, and thus provides no benefit to oxygen-breathing lungs. Most of Mars has an atmospheric pressure equal to about 1% of that on Earth, but the Valles is deep enough to collect more air and water than most places, and the rift itself provides shelter from the ferocious Martian sandstorms.

All of these factors make Marineris an almost perfect location for oxygen-breathing life to settle, and so it has. At the bottom of the Valles Marineris lie the Grey city-ship and an accompanying settlement. The ship has no parallel in the solar system; its population numbers nearly half a million, and it is capable of carrying more than half this number for generations with only occasional stops to replenish supplies.

The settlement contains an entire functioning society, including farms, factories, ships, data centers, hospitals, and entertainment complexes. It also carries the vast Grey gene banks, which contain ten of thousands of species from the Grey homeworld, thousands more from life-bearing planets the Greys have visited, and hundreds created through genetic experimentation.

The ship's interior architecture is smooth: all sharp edges and many of its metal surfaces have been polished by centuries of hands touching and wearing away the city-ship's metal core. Everything seems well used, ancient but not shabby. Pressure is maintained at about 890 millibars, equivalent to about 1,400 meters above sea level on Earth. Interior temperature is 13 ° C.

Outside the ship the Greys use a series of zeolite air filters to liquefy the atmosphere and distill a breathable collection of oxygen and nitrogen. These filters maintain a region supporting an oxygen/nitrogen atmosphere for their farms, factories, and settlements. While the air pressure is still low—around 27% of Earth normal—it is sufficient for the Greys' needs. In fact, the high proportion of carbon dioxide is very helpful to the plants they grow, and those plants fix carbon in foodstuffs and release oxygen for respiration.

The settlement in Marineris now resembles a part of the natural landscape, and finding it is as difficult as finding any small settlement in a shadowy region as large as a small continent: in other words, nearly impossible without physically searching the planet on foot or by air. The Greys are secure in their valley city and continue to expand their tunnels, fields, and farms.

In addition to its contingent of Greys, the settlement is home to several thousand sasquatch and a few dozen human prisoners and test subjects. All non-Greys are kept in separate quarters with appropriate environmental conditions.

Olympus Mons

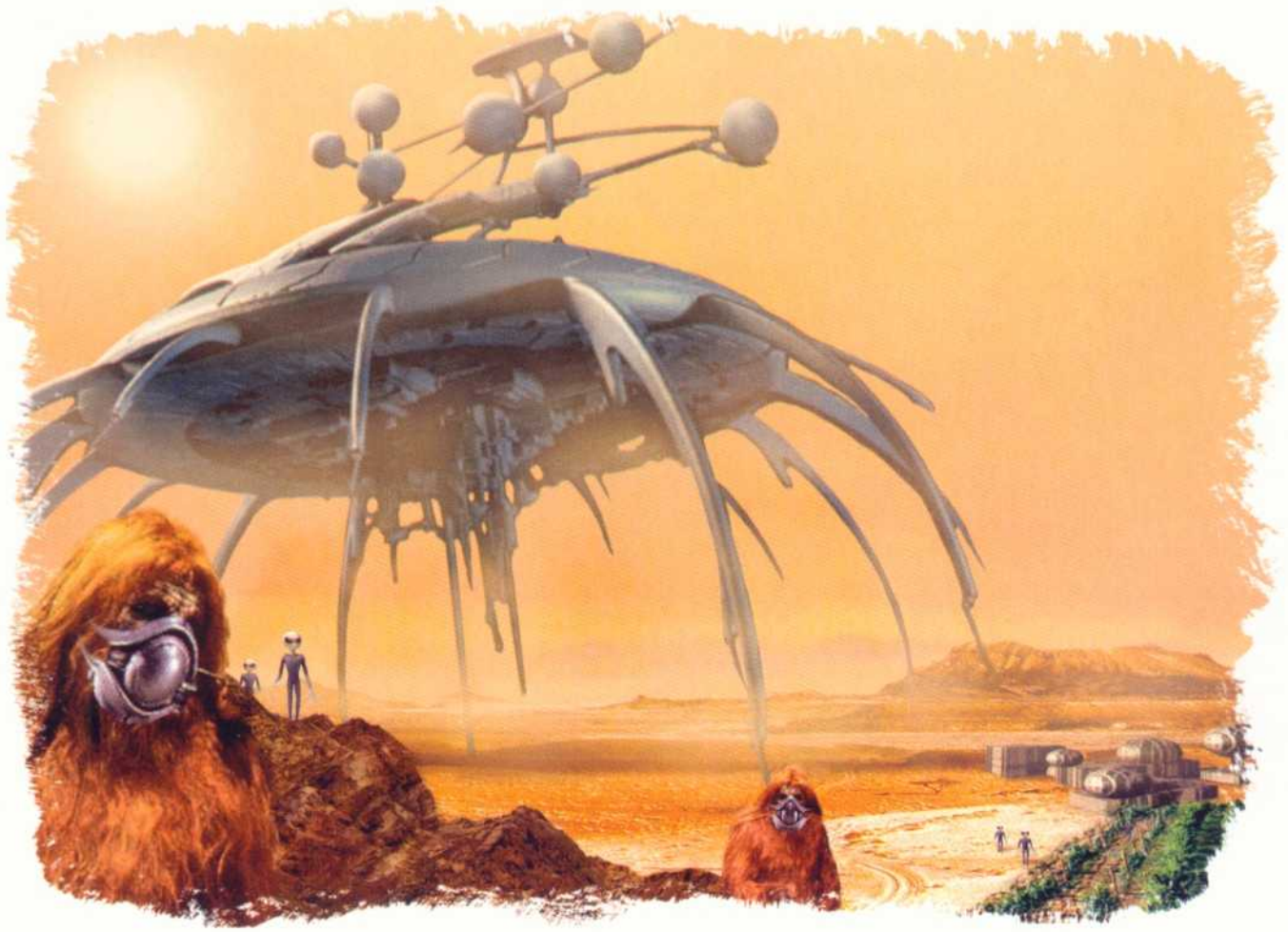
This mountain is the highest not just on Mars or Earth—it is the highest peak in the solar system, fully 26.4 kilometers tall. Volcanic in origin, it has long been dormant and shows no sign of ever becoming active again.

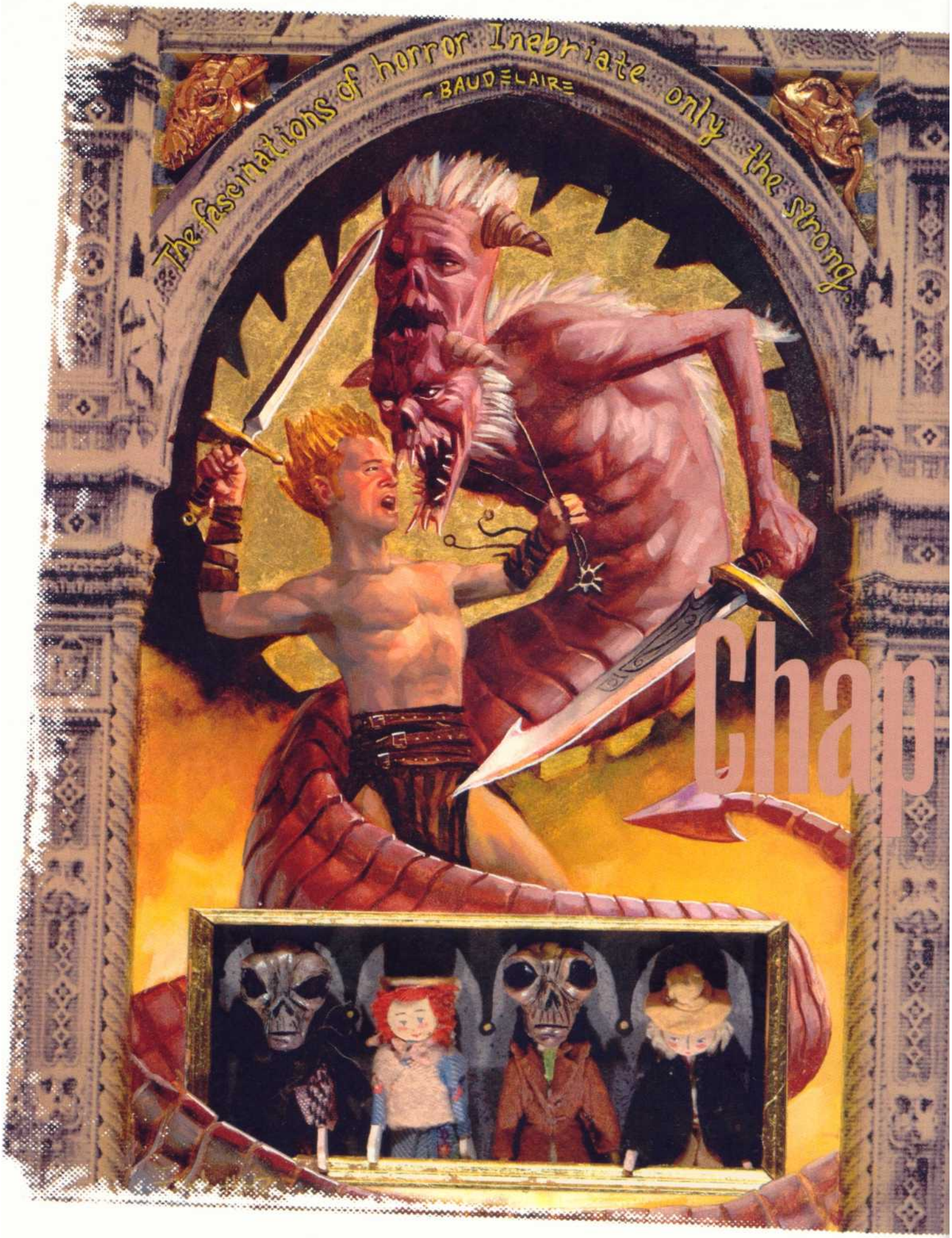
Informed sources speculate that the ruins within Olympus Mons have grown active in the last two hundred years. The sculpture and machinery of the ancient Martians have somehow come alive, long-disused doorways to other dimensions have opened, and the Greys are as spooked by the reappearance of a culture long thought dead as humans would be by the sudden return of a tribe of ancient Neanderthals carrying superior technology.

More current rumors from the Grey city ship claim that several of the creatures have walked through the gates on Mars and wreaked great havoc in their mining operations. Other whispered stories say that the Greys annihilated the last of a dying race on Mars when they first arrived there millennia ago, and that they fear the ghosts of those their ancestors displaced.

City of Spires

The Martian region of Cydonia—site of the "face" and "pyramids" seen by robot missions sent from Earth during the twentieth century—is home to long roads, a clearly artificial dam on a dry riverbed, and a strangely sculpted city of stone. Though it lies on fine land for irrigation and farming, sheltered from dust storms by a range of hills, it is shunned by the Greys and their scout craft. The City of Spires, which conservative estimates place at over 15,000 years old, is a haunting reminder that the Greys were not the first to visit Mars. The city is built of thousands of relatively small, 20-meter-tall spires, each a dwelling of some kind, long abandoned.




The fascinations of horror Inebriate only the strong.
-BAUDELAIRE
Chap

chapter 8 xenoforms

To combat our fear of the unknown, we must go forth and shed light in the darkness. Soon the strange wonders of one decade become the familiar companions of the next, and once again we go in search of novelty. So far, Nature has not disappointed us.

Cryptozoology

The study of unknown or paranormal lifeforms is the field known as cryptozoology (and is encompassed by the Life Science–*xenology* skill). Once confined to the analysis of a few marine specimens and the cataloguing of innumerable eyewitness reports, the field is now booming, with unusual sightings on the rise and even a few tantalizing glimpses of living beings once only thought creatures of legend.

Xenoforms are lifeforms of unknown or alien origin. Currently, the Hoffmann Institute is aware of at least eight species of fauna that are not native to Earth, or at least that are not the product of natural evolution: the armodonts, the Bering demons, the etoile, the elohim, the Greys, the kinori, the luciferans, and the mothmen. (At this time, it is unclear whether the sasquatch and yeti are natives of Earth or were brought to this planet by the Greys, or if the truth lies somewhere between those extremes.) Of those species, most are sentient, sapient, tool-using cultures; the others are harder to quantify. As if that weren't enough, many human subspecies remain beyond the realm of conventional science. Though the Institute tries to assemble a more complete picture of all these species and subspecies, many of them are expert at avoiding attention, and a few are simply beyond human ability to capture, much less study. Nevertheless, research continues, slowly driving back the boundaries of ignorance.

Origin of Alien Species

The Institute has identified several primary sources for the appearance of previously unknown species on Earth, including aliens, mutants, and species of unknown provenance. In many cases, an exact origin can't be determined, and we are forced to rely on best estimates. Each of the species currently active on Earth belongs in one of the following categories of origin.

Interstellar Travel

The most intriguing origin for a species, is, of course, the arrival of that alien species via interstellar travel. The presence of the Greys proves the possibility of such travel, but it seems unlikely in the extreme that so many extrasolar species should all appear at once. As far as can be determined—and according to the Greys themselves—the Greys are the only local species known to be capable of interstellar flight. The lack of vehicles conforming to anything but the Greys' type, and the Greys' denial that any other spacefaring species is operating gravitic induction engines within the solar system, both confirm that assertion. Lacking the ability to investigate that claim for itself, humanity must rely on Grey observations.

Doorways

A number of Institute investigators believe that interstellar or interdimensional gates (called "doorways," for lack of a better term) are the point of origin for at least some of the species currently being encountered in the field. While physics offers only a few sketchy hypotheses to explain how such portals may occur, some cryptozoologists claim that many xenoforms are actually not natives of this universe at all, but inhabitants of parallel dimensions. Certainly the creatures known as Bering demons hail from somewhere with wholly different physical laws. Others, such as the elohim, luciferans, etoile, and kinori, are known to have arrived on Earth through doorways, though whether these gates lead to other dimensions or other worlds within our own universe is unknown (and perhaps unprovable).

The exact nature of these doorways is unclear, as are their mode of operation, the ultimate purpose behind their construction, and indeed the identity of their makers. This theory also suffers from a lack of verification; unless we discover a way to visit such a parallel dimension and return, this remains merely an intriguing hypothesis that we cannot test.

Creation

The existence of the sasquatch suggests that the Greys can generate species from whole cloth or from genetic reserves. How many other species are stored in Grey gene banks? The Greys themselves refuse to discuss the topic, but some speculate that many or all of the nonnative species currently extant in Earth's biosphere are of Grey origin. However, two factors argue against this premise. First of all, the Greys themselves have asserted that the sasquatch are the only sapient species they have created during their stay on Earth, and even then, the total population of the sasquatch has always been quite low. Second, many of these species work against Grey interests and against Grey policies with respect to humans. If they ever were brought from the Greys' gene banks, they have long since rebelled against their makers.

One factor does argue that the Greys may have something to do with the tide of strange species. Xenoform autopsies show that the genetic material in most species follows one of two basic templates (DNA or TPA; see below). This suggests similar origins for these species. However, the lack of genetic testing of many species (and the purely inorganic nature of others, such as the mechanical etoile) somewhat weakens this argument.

In addition to scientific methods, magical practices hold the possibility for the creation of living beings. However, such creations (such as the homunculus) appear to be limited in intelligence.

Spontaneous Reversion, Possession, and Parasitism

It is possible that certain "alien" lifeforms are nothing more than humans who have undergone severe morphological changes. Whether these changes are due to genetic reversion to a more primitive state (as may be true of the ghouls or mole people), spiritual possession (such as with demons or Voodoo ceremonies that create zombis), or infection by a parasite or symbiote of some kind (as demonstrated by the ekimmu and the sandmen), the end result is the same: a humanoid species that comes seemingly from nowhere and shares many superficial traits with humans.

Bioengineering

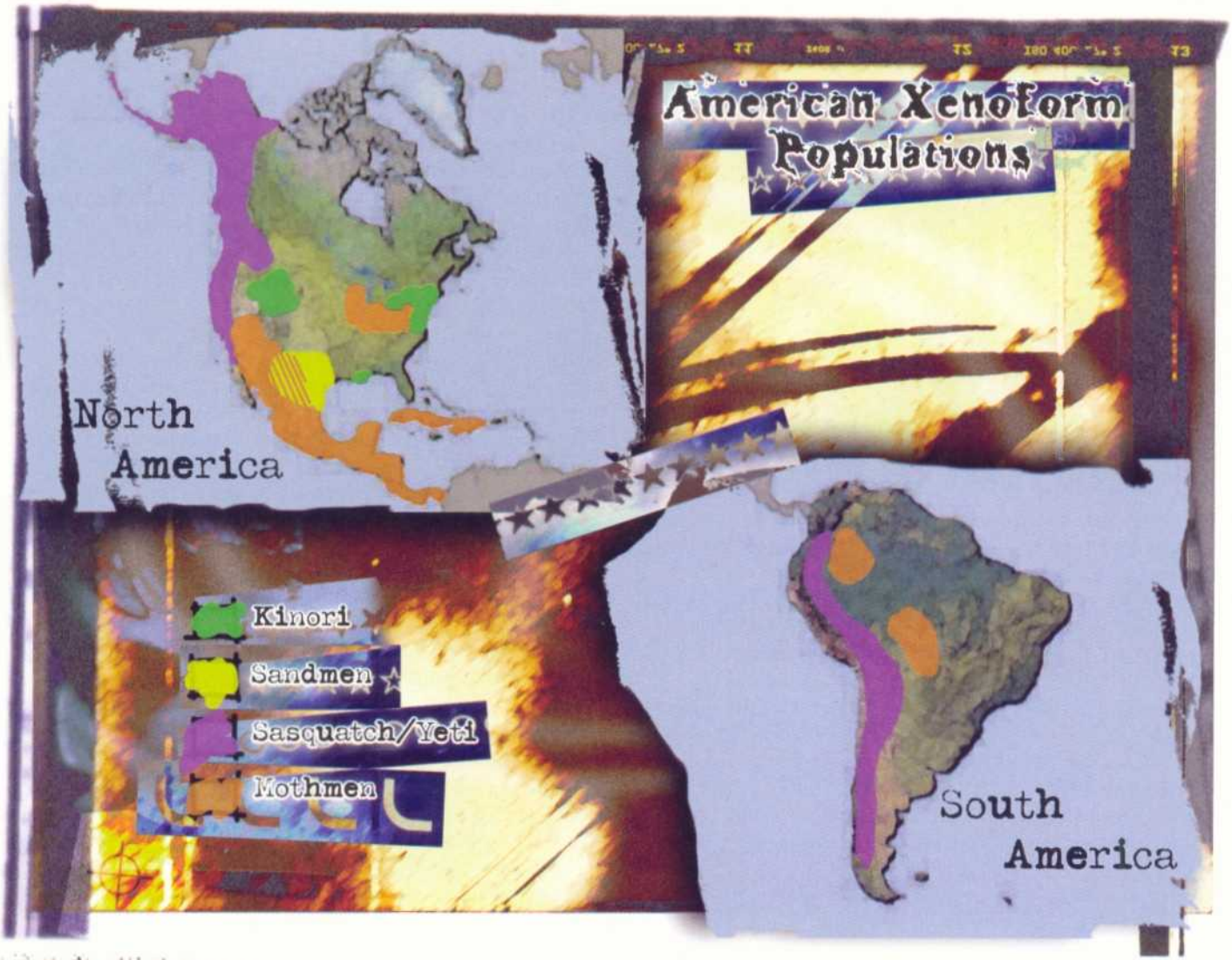
There is a simpler explanation for the existence of altered humans: their deliberate creation. Distasteful as it is to consider, intentional genetic tampering by humans on humans—perhaps in the wake of the Human Genome Project—seems likely. Corporate and military interests may have their own goals for modifying human genetics. Additionally, evidence points to conjecture that the Greys may be attempting to "perfect" the human form. Without appropriate samples, it's impossible to know just how many species are in fact modified humans.

Discovery

The discovery of previously unknown species provides another likely source for some of these creatures. The worlds of zoology and taxonomy are not nearly as well mapped as many would like to believe. New species of large animals have been discovered around the globe in recent times: Witness the mountain gorilla (1901), Chinese giant panda (1937), megamouth shark (1976), giant jellyfish (1989), Nepalese elephant (1992), and several species of Vietnamese muntjac or barking deer (1997), to name just a few. Even with evidence of gateways through space and aliens living within the solar system, what else might we have missed on our own planet?

The Theory of Universal Mimicry vs. Modified Dual Panspermia

Dr. Rudolph Sigmeier of the Bethesda Naval Hospital has postulated (and published, in the scholastic journal *Annals of Xenomedicine*) a theory to explain the remarkable convergence found in Stranger species. Under the theory of universal mimicry, Dr. Sigmeier suggests that visitors are perpetual mimics. They gain an



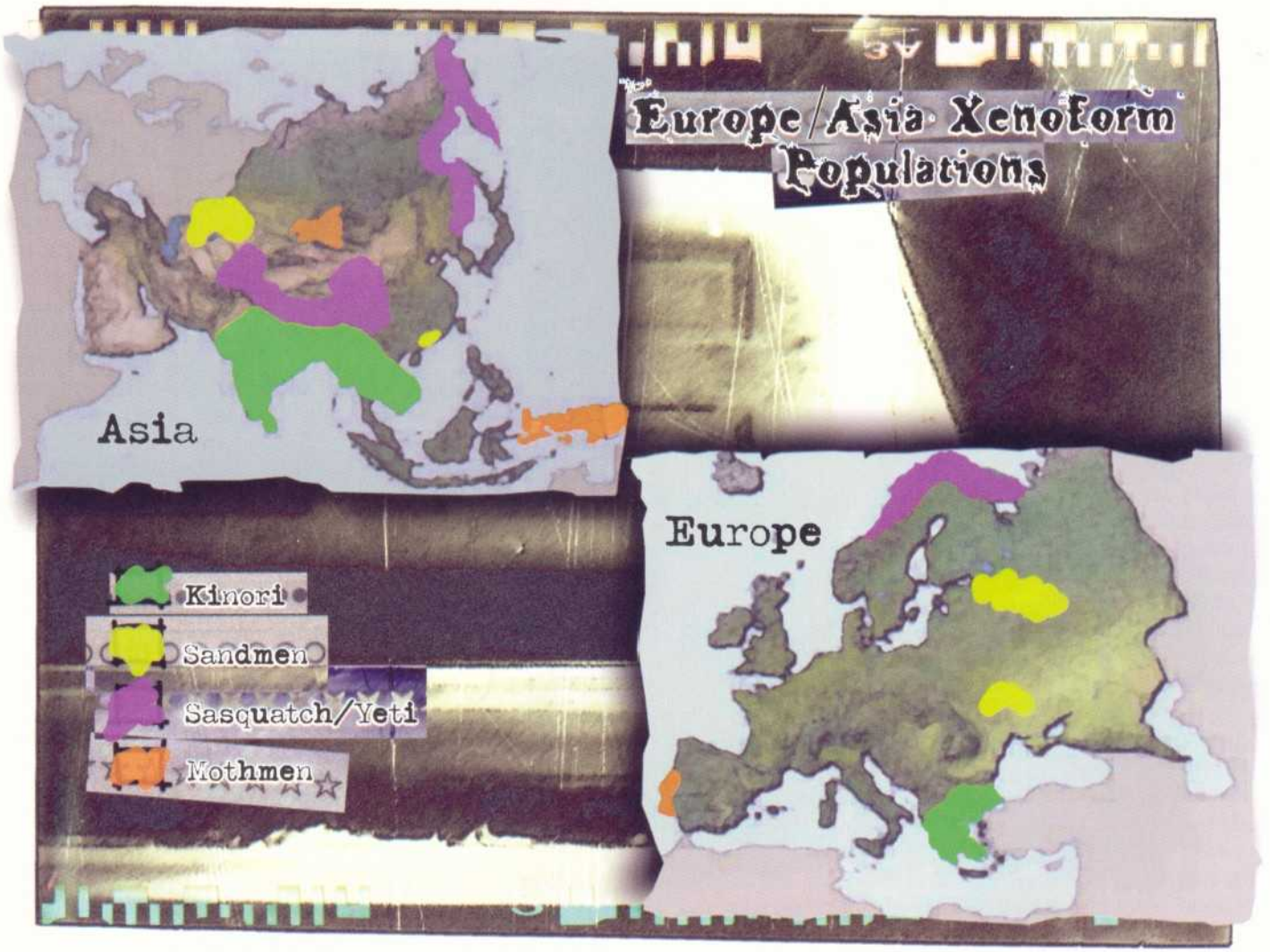
evolutionary advantage because they move from world to world or dimension to dimension through some unknown mechanism. While it sounds far-fetched, this theory explains why a number of recently catalogued species appear capable of mimicking the human form. Their real adaptation isn't mimicking humans; it's mimicking a common form, because they must be able to hide themselves from the dominant species of each planet or dimension until such time as they are ready to assume control, reproduce, and move on.

Dr. Elizabeth B. Milliken of the Center for Xenological Studies in Washington, D.C., champions an alternative explanation. In essence, Milliken's hypothesis is a modified form of the long-neglected theory of panspermia, first promulgated by the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras in the fifth century B.C. and later restated by Arrhenius, Fred Hoyle, and Francis Crick. The theory holds that all life in the universe comes from a common source, perhaps spores carried (or deliberately dispersed) from planet to planet by interstellar winds. Milliken's version of the theory claims that life originated not necessarily by interstellar travel, but by interdimensional travel. Life forms capable of shifting between worlds or traveling along a sort of gate network between planets carry life to new worlds when they come to explore, just as the *Surveyor 3* lander carried streptococcus bacteria to the surface of the moon.

The theory has another wrinkle, in that scientists know of not one but two main forms of carbon-based life. These two types of organic life use different long-chain acids as their genetic material. The DNA lifeforms all appear to have spread from a distant common ancestor; they are related to each other, but have drifted far from their roots. The other genetic foundation for life is based on teroic pseudonucleic acid (TPA). The TPA forms are all much more closely related to one another genetically. This could mean that they are all more recently evolved (and thus have had less time to drift from their common ancestors), or it could mean that they are simply more tightly engineered to meet some universal genetic standard.

Extant, Nonnative, and Remnant Populations

The established and preferred ranges of the various nonnative species described here are not well determined; in fact, they are sketchy at best. The ranges in the following descriptions have been put forward as first approximations, subject to further field research and revision. Individual specimens may well be found outside the ranges given, but these habitat approximations are based on existing sightings correlated with what is known of each species' eating habits, environmental needs, and ability to withstand temperature and climate variation. In the case of sentient species, these factors may be overcome by technological fixes that allow the species to adapt more easily to an otherwise hostile environment.



Armodont

A species created from the Greys' gene banks, the armodont serves a very specific function: to destroy enemies among the Greys' own kind. To that end, the armodont is highly resistant to all forms of psionic attack. As with the Greys, the armodont's genetic structure is composed of TPA (teroic pseudonucleic acid) rather than DNA.



Description: Physically, the armodont looks like a bear-sized relative of the Greys; it is hairless, with large eyes and an outer layer of protective fat, a little bit like the blubber layer in a whale. This layer of fat gives the armodont a strangely smooth, even rounded appearance. However, the armodont also has strong hind legs and claws that—once fastened onto an opponent—do not release until either it or the victim dies. It is about as intelligent as a highly trained dog, but its vocal cords can form a few strangled words when required.

Encounter: Armodonts are generally encountered singly or in pairs as they hunt enemies among the Greys. While on a hunt, they seek to destroy anything that crosses their path.

Despite its fearsome combat prowess, its remarkable ability to withstand fatigue, and its legendary ability to track its prey, the armodont is ultimately quite fragile in combat. Many Grey stories tell of an armodont that ignored minor wounds only to be felled by a single lucky shot. Any armodont injured enough to be captured is likely to be killed by the wound that brings it down. The beast's low number of mortal points (3) reflects this weakness.

Habitat/Society: Armodonts have no true habitat or society. They are used as hunting beasts by Greys (and by the enemies of the Greys, when they can get their hands on one).



Armodont Game Data

STR	12	(d6+9)	INT	5	(Animal 10 or d4+7)
DEX	12	(d4+9)	WIL	13	(d8+8)
CON	13	(d4+11)	PER	5	(Animal 8 or d4+5)

Durability: 18/18/3/9 Action check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: sprint 26, run 16, walk 6 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Good/2

Attacks

Claws*	18/9/4	d4+1w/d4+2w/d6+2w	LI/O
Bite	18/9/4	d4w/d6w/d4m	LI/O

* Death grip: Once an armodont makes a successful claw attack, no further attack rolls are required for its claws. Roll each round only to determine how much damage the beast inflicts (treating all Marginal rolls as d4–1w, to a minimum of 1). Bite attacks are made with a –1 step bonus.

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+4 resistance modifier vs. all mindwalking skills
Armor (Ordinary): d6 (LI), d6–2 (HI), d4–1 (En)

Skills
Athletics [12]–*jump [14];* Unarmed [12]–*brawl [18];* Stealth [12]–*shadow [14];* Stamina [13]–*endurance [16], resist pain [14];* Awareness [13]–*perception [15];* Investigate [13]–*track [20].*

Bering Demon

Virtually every form of folklore, mythology, and religious scripture around the world describes some form of traditional demons, usually as malign powers or principles that dwell between the material and the spiritual worlds. Whether or not the Bering demons (named for the sea where they were encountered in 1953, the first sighting in the modern era) are truly these same ancient foes, they are clearly creatures of dark malevolence from outside the known universe, relentlessly hostile to human life.

Bering demons enjoy corrupting the human spirit. Armed with powerful Arcane Magic FX and a great resistance to human weapons, they are beyond the ability of most humans to comprehend, much less cope with on a battlefield. However, adepts and other humans skilled in Arcane Magic or Faith FX can entrap, command, or even destroy demons. See *Chapter 4: Arcana* for details.

Description: Bering demons resemble their ancient counterparts in only a few aspects; perhaps our more advanced technology allows modern humans to see them in a different light. These creatures appear in many different forms. Three of the most common are described here: the yrglings (a type of least demon), the nali (a sort of lesser demon), and the greater demons, sometimes called demon princes.

Yrglings are small humanoid creatures, no more than 1 meter in height, with sharp claws and greenish-gray skin. Descriptions usually include mention of small leathery wings like a bat's.

The nali are larger than the yrglings, standing just over 2 meters in height. Their skin is dark brown or black. They have nasty claws but are wingless. They often smell of sulfur.

Resembling lesser demons but up to an additional half meter tall, greater demons widely vary in appearance. Reports have described them variously as having insectoid eyes, fur, a black carapace, cloven hooves, and white or red skin. The Hoffmann Institute has been unable to recover a corpse for further study; the only successful combat between Institute White Section agents and a greater demon left the demon as nothing more than a smoking husk.

Encounter: Yrglings are most often encountered while in the service of more powerful beings (such as Arcane Magic FX wielders or mightier demons). They prefer ambush techniques, though their limited intelligence prevents elaborate planning. If forced into combat, they attempt to swarm opponents.

The nali may command up to a dozen of their petty brethren; they are also slightly more intelligent, able to maintain concentration for more than a minute, and are capable of Arcane Magic FX. They do not hesitate to engage in combat, relying on their superior physical and magical abilities to crush their opponents.

Demon princes are capable of commanding or subverting humans in a number of ways, primarily through Arcane Magic FX, telepathic possession, or the slow corruption of Diabolism. In addition, a greater demon can often simply persuade a person to act in accordance with its wishes. The demon's Interaction–*seduce* skill can be used literally to seduce a victim or can be a more general attempt to entice someone into acting diabolically. If a demon prince speaks for a full minute without significant interruption, any listening hero may be swayed. If the demon succeeds in its *seduce* skill check (including the hero's Will resistance modifier), the hero accedes to the demon's plans, at least as long as the demon remains in sight. The influence ends as soon as the demon leaves.

Habitat/Society: Bering demons are most definitely not native to Earth. While they generally disdain the use of technology, they are quite familiar with even the most highly advanced devices present on Earth. Historically, most Bering demons have traveled to this world only in response to a diabolic summoning (which requires specific sacrifices; see "Diabolism" in *Chapter 4: Arcana*). Recently, they have also demonstrated the ability to cross the dimensional boundary in the aftermath of a nuclear explosion, which apparently distorts the fabric of space in a manner they can exploit. Demons can also summon others of their ilk to Earth using diabolic rituals; however, such summonings are limited to demons below their own status. Thus, nali can summon only least demons, while demon princes can summon either least or lesser demons.

The Bering demons may be linked to the elohim (and perhaps even the luciferans) somehow, though the details are unclear—sometimes they act as rivals or enemies, while at other times they seem to be working toward similarly apocalyptic goals.

The greatest of the demons are their kings and princes. Traditionally, the demons have been ruled by Asmodeus (Hebrew, "Ashmedai"), the king of demons, custodian of secrets, and keeper of hidden treasures (and, in Masonic and Jewish legends, the builder of Solomon's Temple). As described in the Book of Tobit (from the Apocrypha of the Old Testament), Asmodeus fell in love with Sarah, the daughter of Rachel, and killed seven of



Yrgling Game Data

STR	7	(d6+4)	INT	7	(d8+2)
DEX	9	(2d4+4)	WIL	6	(d6+3)
CON	12	(2d4+7)	PER	7	(d6+4)

Durability: 16/16/8/8 — Action check: 9+/8/4/2
Move: sprint 16, run 12, walk 4, fly 32 — #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Marginal/1 — Last resorts: 0

Attacks

Claws	10/5/2	d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w	LI/O

Defenses
–1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

Skills
Athletics [7]; Melee [7]–*bludgeon [8];* Unarmed [7]–*brawl [10];* Acrobatics [9]–*flight [12],* Stamina [12]–*endurance [13];* Knowledge [7]–*language (specific human) [9];* Awareness [6]; Resolve [6]; Interaction [7].

Nali Game Data

STR	11	(d6+8)	INT	11	(d8+7)
DEX	10	(d6+7)	WIL	8	(d6+5)
CON	14	(2d4+9)	PER	10	(d6+7)

Durability: 18/18/9/9 — Action check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 — #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 — Last resorts: 1
FX energy points: 10

Attacks

Claws	14/7/3	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O
Spear*	14/7/3	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O
Hellfire	14/7/3	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m	En/O

*Can be thrown with Athletics–*throw* skill.

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Armor (Ordinary): d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)

Skills
Athletics [11]–*jump [14], throw [12];* Melee [11]–*blade [14];* Unarmed [11]–*brawl [14];* Stamina [14]–*endurance [15];* Knowledge [11]–*language (specific human) [14];* Awareness [8]; Resolve [8]; Culture [10]–*etiquette (human) [12];* Interaction [10]–*intimidate* [12].

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Diabolism)–*hellfire [14], rend the weave [12], summoning (least demon only) [13].*

her husbands. In the end, though, Tobias followed instructions from the archangel Raphael that allowed him to overcome the king of demons and marry Sarah.

Other major demons referred to in diabolists' books and rituals include Dispater (the "Father of Dis," a city said to be the home of some or all of the Bering demons), Baalzebub (the "Lord of Lies" or "Flies"), Armilus, Azazel, Behemoth, and Lilith.

Demons in Folklore

Demons have plagued humans from the very earliest times, and have been an element of both Arcane Magic FX (as servants) and Faith FX (as adversaries) for almost as long. Indeed, some believe that all Arcane Magic (particularly Diabolism) can ultimately be traced back to demonic tutors of one kind or another. Regardless of their source, the perceptions of demons by different people in different times have varied widely. Here are just a few examples of the references heroes might discover when they seek to learn about and defeat demons.

Greeks. The ancient Greeks saw demons as supernatural but not necessarily malign; in fact, Homer used the Greek term *daimon* ("demon") more or less interchangeably with *theos* ("a god"). Demons served as a catch-all category of the supernatural when an event couldn't be traced back to a particular god of the Greek pantheon. However, the two terms held subtle differences. Theos referred to the personality or character of a god, and daimon referred to his actions. Furthermore, a person could have a guardian demon, responsible for his activity. This emphasis on demons as sources of action was later incorporated into the Christian idea of pagan gods actually being demons or fallen angels—these demons were responsible, then, only for evil actions.

Judaism. Jewish tradition has a number of names for the forces that beset its people; collectively they are the *shedim* (Hebrew, "demons"), perhaps derived from the term *se'irim* used for foreign gods and meaning "hairy demons." These creatures inhabit deserts, wastelands, and cemeteries. Individual demons include Satan (the Antagonist) and Belial (the demon of darkness, perversion, and destruction). Interestingly, Satan is described in the Old Testament (Zech. 3 and Job 1–2) and tradition as the prosecutor of God's celestial court. The huge hierarchy of demons and devils serving under Satan is a later addition contributed by folklore, intertestamental literature, and subsequent Christian doctrines. Many Satanists prefer this prosecuting but not malign view of their deity as well.

Christianity. Christian demonology is based on many earlier versions, including Hellenistic, Zoroastrian, Gnostic, Judaic, and many pagan sources. In the Middle Ages, particular demons were given ranks and titles that matched those of medieval lords and kings. Furthermore, they were associated with particular sins. Lucifer was equated with pride, Mammon with greed, Asmodeus with lechery, Satan with anger, and so on.

Islam. As in the Christian hierarchy, Islam sees demons as led by Shaytan (Satan), more commonly called Iblis or 'aduw Allah ("Enemy of God") among Muslims. Iblis is the leader and commander of the jinn, spirits that wish humanity ill.

Buddhism. All Buddhist demons are creatures that interfere with the believer's ability to achieve Nirvana (the extinction of desire). Four related demons attempted to prevent Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, from achieving enlightenment: Mara the tempter and his three daughters Raga (pleasure), Rati (desire), and Tanha (restlessness). Just as Christianity absorbed the demons described by pagan religions of Europe, as Buddhism spread it also adopted the demons of the areas it was transplanted to, such as the oni of Japan and the kuei-sen of China.

Greys. The Greys have relatively few tales of demons; those stories generally present demons as psionic forces rather than as physical creatures. The most common are those of the Uula (the spirits of darkness in space) and Iscii ba Fan (the demon of silence). Most sasquatch believe in both these demons and in the Christian or Muslim demonic hierarchy.

Kinori. These reptilian beings presumably have their own legends of demonic beings, though records of such stories are unavailable.

Greater Demon Game Data

Baphomet (Bering demon prince)

STR	15	[+3]	INT	13	[+2]
DEX	14	[+2]	WIL	11	[+1]
CON	16		PER	13	

Durability: 21/21/11/11 — Action check: 17+/16/8/4
Move: sprint 28, run 18, walk 6, fly 56 — #Actions: 3
Reaction score: Good/3 — Last resorts: 3
FX energy points: 15

Attacks

Claws	21/10/5	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/0
Greatsword	13/6/3	d4+3w/d6+3w/d4+2m	LI/0
Hellfire	19/9/4	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m	En/G

Defenses
Armor (Good): d6+2 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6 (En)

Skills
Athletics [15]–*jump [17];* Melee [15]–*blade [18];* Unarmed [15]–*brawl [21];* Acrobatics [14]–*fly [16];* Stamina [16]–*endurance [19];* Knowledge [13]–*language (English) [17], language (Latin) [16], language (German) [16];* Awareness [11]–*perception [13];* Culture [13]–*etiquette (human) [19];* Interaction [13]–*charm [16], seduce [17], taunt [15].*

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Diabolism)–*binding [19], black warding [18], command [19], hellfire [19], rend the weave [20], summoning [18].*

Baphomet is the demonic figure said to have been worshiped by the Templars (see *Chapter 5: History of the World*). He is generally depicted with the body of a man, the head of a goat, wings, and cloven feet.

Other greater demons vary from these statistics, though all display great powers, including Arcane Magic FX (Diabolism) and even psionic abilities.

Ekimmu

As a parasitic species, the ekimmu survive by infecting human hosts, thus attaining a physical body. These humans provide the ekimmu with mobility, a voice, and a source of life energy. Once one of these creatures possesses a human, the ekimmu radically alters the body chemistry of its host. It uses a simple mechanism: The ekimmu seizes control of the victim's brain stem and immune system, then regulates the host's behavior through the careful adjustment of various natural hormones, neurotransmitters, and other metabolic chemicals. The influence it attains over the victim's body and mental state is nothing short of absolute. In some poorly understood way, the ekimmu can also perform genetic engineering on the fly, adapting the host body to become a more comfortable host for its controlling spirit. This has the side effect of increasing the host body's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution by 3 points each and dramatically extending the host's life span (see below).

Description: A human infected or possessed by an ekimmu exhibits only a few obvious symptoms, primarily pale skin, bloodshot eyes, a receding gumline, exceptionally sharp teeth, and clawlike fingers. Many become bald but compensate by wearing wigs. In some cases, the human host displays markedly antique speech patterns and manners, and a few prefer to wear somewhat antiquated clothes as well. Because these eccentricities generally raise their profile in human communities, these ekimmu are among those most easily discovered and rooted out by governmental or Institute agents.

In most other respects, ekimmu-possessed individuals physically resemble normal humans. Mentally, however, ekimmu are entirely unlike humans: They are predators who require large amounts of flesh and blood to maintain themselves. In a few cases, they are simply gluttonous. Others, falling prey to the vampire legend popular among humans, restrict their diet to blood.

The actual parasite that contains the essence of the ekimmu is microscopic, contained in a yellowish-gray fluid that moves from one human body to another when the ekimmu shifts hosts. This fluid produces glandular and even bone-matter changes in its host. These changes take different forms for various strains of the species; for instance, many ekimmu avoid water because their host body's density becomes higher than the human norm, and they sink like stones.

Encounter: Humans generally meet ekimmu while the blood-eaters hunt for prey. In these cases, the ekimmu generally attempts a seduction before drinking a victim's blood, or (more frequently) before sipping enough to make the victim lightheaded and mildly fatigued. Afterward, the victim's memories of the incident tend to be very cloudy and incoherent. In those cases where an ekimmu chooses a new human as its host, the body retains its age at the time that the ekimmu moves in. (Evidence of ekimmu infections in nonhuman species has yet to be discovered, but this may simply be due to the relative rarity of such species on Earth.)

Many ekimmu understand human fears on a very direct and personal level because they lived through the Inquisition and the Pogroms, and they know just how dangerous a human mob can be. Those clever enough to adjust to changing social mores and fashions work at keeping a low profile and avoiding positions that subject them to intense scrutiny. They travel the world, taking lowly jobs on occasion and grabbing high-paying jobs that allow them to work behind the scenes, such as a private scientist, a contract programmer, or even a reclusive financial analyst.

The ekimmu take great steps to avoid detection, preferring to stay hidden in the shadows, feeding from blood banks, working in hospitals, and making sure their victims have no real memories of their feedings.

No known method—scientific or arcane—exists for purging an ekimmu from its host body, though the sandmen, with their advanced biotechnical knowledge, might be able to achieve this feat.

Habitat/Society: Ekimmu are by nature solitary; they do not enjoy the company of others of their own kind and do not seek it out. When ekimmu meet, they often shun each other or come to some mutual agreement about a division of territory. An ekimmu takes a new body when it feels its life energies weakening, thus

Ekimmu Game Data

STR	12	(2d6+5)	INT	11	(2d6+4)
DEX	12	(2d6+5)	WIL	11	(2d6+4)
CON	12	(2d6+5)	PER	12	(d8+7)

Durability: 12/12/6/6 — Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 — #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 — Last resorts: 2
Psionic energy points: 11

Attacks

Claws	14/7/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w	LI/0
Drink blood*	—	special	—

* The ekimmu may drink the blood of an unconscious or unresisting victim. This attack automatically inflicts d4s per round of draining.

Defenses

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT, WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills

Athletics [12]; Unarmed [12]–*brawl [14];* Vehicle Operation [12]; Stamina [12]–*endurance [13];* Knowledge [11]–*language (specific) [14];* Awareness [11]–*perception [12];* Deception [12]; Interaction [12]–*charm [14], seduce [14].*

Psionic Skills

Biokinesis [12]–*control metabolism [17], rejuvenate [14];* Telepathy [12]–*suggest [15].*

This description represents an ekimmu that has possessed a relatively ordinary human being. Those that infect more exceptional beings (or have been active for long periods of time) may have greatly improved skills. In addition, psionic skills can vary among ekimmu, though most possess at least those noted here.

For an extraordinary example of an ekimmu, see "Comte Claude-Louis de Saint-Germain" in *Chapter 6: The Illuminati.*

creating a new "self" and gaining access to a newer, more current set of skills and memories.

The ekimmu forage widely in between hibernations, and this may in fact be the source of the vampire myth. Ekimmu host bodies hibernate every ten years or so, for up to a decade at a time. During this time, their metabolism slows to such a low level that detecting life signs is nearly impossible without diagnostic equipment (it requires a successful Medical Science–*treatment* check with a +4 step penalty to determine that the "body" is really still alive). In this state they have an extremely low body temperature, but the years- or decades-long sleep allows the host body an extremely long life span, often as much as four or six hundred years.

Ekimmu on Earth are extremely rare; fewer than five hundred live among a population of over six billion humans. They don't live extravagantly, but quietly and well. Most wander the world for a time, then settle into their hibernation in a well-secured retreat, after which time they wake again and explore a different part of the world.



Elohim

The elohim, or "Shining Ones," are powerful beings that occasionally visit Earth from an alternate dimension. Ancient stories suggest that they are a race that has transcended the earthly plane; they may have lived on Earth eons ago, but long ago abandoned it as their home. They view other species living here as inferior beings.

Description: The elohim resemble perfectly formed humans, averaging about 1.9 meters tall and often dressed in clothes of shining silver or an opaque but glassy sheen. They carry weapons that superficially resemble human arms, but these differ in important ways: Their rifles fire bursts of plasma energy, and their swords burn. They invariably glow with an inner light.

A simple theory regarding the elohim's remarkably humanlike appearance holds that they are not humanoid at all, but they project a familiar image into a receptive viewer's mind to make themselves less terrifying; exactly how the elohim extract such an image and then project it is unknown. However, some eyewitness accounts describe their true forms as fiery flying wheels, pillars of shifting fire, or even just voices from the air. It's unclear if any of these are their true form, or if these are merely the images that a disturbed psyche might project onto the elohim.

Encounter: The elohim don't have a lot of patience with humans or even Greys; they seem to adopt a superior attitude out of habit, as if all other species were just

Elohim Game Data

STR	10	(d6+7)	INT	14	(d4+12)
DEX	13	(d6+10)	WIL	12	(d4+10)
CON	16	(d6+12)	PER	12	(d4+10)

Durability: 16/16/8/8 — Action check: 18+/17/8/4
Move: run 30, walk 6 — #Actions: 3
Reaction score: Good/3 — Last resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 12

Attacks

Fiery Sword	16/8/4	d6+1w/2d6w/d4+3m	En/G
Plasma Rifle*	18/9/4	d8+1w/d12w/d6+1m	En/G

Luminous Aura: Opponents within 10 meters must make Resolve–*mental resolve* checks at the beginning of every round or lose their first action during the round. This aura is always active and functions in addition to any other actions taken by the elohim.

* This weapon's accuracy grants a –1 step bonus to attack rolls.

Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Elohim Armor (Good): d6+3 (LI), d6+2 (HI), d6 (En)
Elohim Force Field: When activated, adds +3 to the wearer's Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers (lasts 10 rounds, then requires 1 hour to recharge).

Skills

Acrobatics [10]–*flight [12];* Athletics [10]–*jump [12];* Melee [10]–*powered [16];* Modern [13]–*rifle [18];* Movement [16]; Stamina [16]–*endurance [17];* Knowledge [14]; Awareness [12]–*perception [13];* Interaction [12]–*intimidate [20];* Leadership [12]–*inspire [18].*

Psionic Skills

ESP [14]–*mind reading [18];* Telepathy [12]–*contact [special*], illusion [20], mind shield [20].*

* As noted above, the elohim's *contact* ability exceeds the commonly known parameters of this power. No skill check is necessary to communicate, and the elohim expend no psionic energy points to use this skill. In reality, this may be some new telepathic skill not yet discovered by Mindwalkers of other species.

children. They expect obedience or even worship from those lucky few they approach. Annoying as this is, their superior technology validates the attitude.

When the elohim speak, the audience understands every word spoken, no matter the species of the audience members or what languages they speak. The Institute believes that this is simply a superior form of Telepathy–*contact*, as the ability to speak telepathically to a large number of nonpsionic creatures has been recorded among the Greys. However, among the Greys, this ability—called psychic broadcasting—is considered legendary and wondrous. Among the elohim, it is commonplace.

Habitat/Society: Little is known about the society of the elohim, since they rarely deign to interact with humans on any but the most imperious level. They are thought to be organized into seven great orders, though the nature of these orders and their internal structure and hierarchy is only a matter of speculation.

The elohim command technology of PL 8 or greater. Their body armor resembles clothing, and they display a decidedly inhuman ability to manipulate matter and energy. They understand how to utilize interdimensional doorways and have displayed the ability to open and close them seemingly at will. However, the elohim rarely communicate with humans and may be more interested in issues of spiritual salvation than physical existence. Their aid to humanity is tangential at best, and they tend to avoid the Greys (despite that species' occasional attempts at an alliance).

Some link exists between the elohim and the luciferans; a few researchers believe that the two species share the same home universe. If the elohim become aware of the presence of a luciferan, they will stop at nothing to eliminate it, sometimes going as far as destroying an entire town to ensure its annihilation. This hatred apparently extends to other users of Arcane Magic FX as well, as the elohim reputedly single out such individuals for "purification."

Etoile

The etoile (pronounced EH-twal) were named in 1797 by the Monks of St. Gregory of the Monastery of the Blessed Heart in the high Pyrenees in France. At first, the monks thought they had found a star fallen from the heavens, and thus they gave the species its name. For a species with such a lyrical name, the etoile are anything but friendly.

Small and delicate confections of dark matter and exotic metals, the etoile are a mechanical species of great strangeness and indecipherable goals. With hundreds or even thousands of tendrillike appendages, they bear a faint resemblance to metallic starfish or jellyfish, though they are not aquatic and cannot swim. One of the earliest Institute reports, from the Walker North Africa expedition of 1981, described them as "the most dangerous-looking shrubs you can imagine. Their tendrils were working simultaneously at dissecting a dead camel. At one end of the beast you saw a camel; at the other end, the camel abruptly stopped, and nothing but dust and metal was on the other side. Apparently, the etoile was taking the carcass apart atom by atom."

Description: An etoile resembles a mass of writhing wires when standing still and a rolling tumbleweed when moving. They are remarkably fast and nimble, given their small size and unusual shape; reports of their dodging bullets and out-turning motorcycles are only slight exaggerations.

Encounter: Etoile rarely seek out interaction with other species; they far prefer to work through their servants, the sandmen. When they do meet humans or Greys in person, they usually retreat to some safe haven or command their servants to put the trespassers to flight.

In combat, etoile use the tips of their tendrils as remarkably sharp, needlelike probes or pincers, able to pierce layers of thick cloth or even armor. If this fails to dissuade an attacker, they resort to creating a static charge between two tendrils and sparking the voltage across a foe, especially one wearing metal or carrying metal objects. It's still not clear how they avoid short-circuiting themselves, given their own metallic structures.

Habitat/Society: Very little is known about etoile society; they are rarely seen in large groups and seem to operate autonomously most of the time. However, on rare occasions they have swarmed together for days at a time, in a huge jumble of snaking metal, hissing and sparking electricity. The purpose of these "etoile clusters" is not entirely clear, though a number of theories offer possible explanations: that they gather to collaborate on crafting pieces of technology too difficult to assemble independently, that these are political conclaves that build, assess, and disassemble various simulations of future events, or even simply



Etoile Game Data

STR	5	(d4+3)	INT	12	(d4+10)
DEX	13	(d4+10)	WIL	11	(d4+8)
CON	9	(d4+6)	PER	8	(d4+5)

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: sprint 30, run 22, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

Attacks

Pincers	7/3/1	d4+2w/d6+2w/2d4+2w	LI/0
Shock	14/7/3	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4+1m	En/0

Light field: If attacked, an etoile can spontaneously generate a strobelike EMP effect that blinds night-vision goggles, shorts out radio communications, and destroys all solid-state electronics such as computers, car engines, and cell phones within 30 meters. The field, which lasts for 5 rounds, also adds +2 to the etoile's resistance modifier against melee or ranged attacks.

Defenses

–1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT, WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Armor: d6+2 (LI), d8 (HI), d6-1 (En)

Skills

Unarmed [5]–*brawl [7];* Acrobatics [13]–*dodge [16];* Stealth [13]–*hide [14], sneak [14];* Movement [9]–*race [15];* Stamina [9]–*resist pain [12];* Computer [12]–*hacking [13];* Knowledge [12]–*deduce [15];* Awareness [11]–*perception [14].*

that these are mating periods, when new etoile are built using extra resources from dozens of parents. Until xenologists can better understand their metallosilicate life cycle, such activities will remain a mystery.

The etoile habit of necrophagy (devouring one's dead) is well documented, but its purpose is the subject of wild speculation at both the Center for Xenological Studies and the Chicago Specimen Collection. The most recent theory claims that this behavior involves a sort of absorption or download of the dead etoile's memories, skills, and perhaps even behaviors; this speculation is based on the fact that an etoile that consumes one of its dead comrades exhibits behavior similar to that of the deceased. However, the Institute researchers in Chicago argue persuasively that this same knowledge be transferred during a dying etoile's "static burst," a flash of radio noise that each such creature makes as it dies. If this is a transmission of data rather than just noise, then the purpose of the necrophagy might well just be to optimize the eater's own mechanical systems by absorbing spare components and preparing for reproduction by using "excess parts" to build a successor. In one unusual case, an etoile was witnessed sifting through and devouring the dust left by a sandman; researchers have no plausible theory to offer for this behavior.

Ghost

In accordance with the classic definition, most ghosts are the restless spirits of the dead. Such spirits almost always result from wrongful or violent death, and they haunt the world of the living in an effort to set right some injustice. More rarely, ghosts are the separated spirits of bodies that are technically still living. The trauma done to soldiers, murder victims, souls bound by Arcane Magic, coma patients, and cryogenically frozen corpses may generate ghosts.

Description: Grayish and transparent (when they are visible at all), ghosts cannot be seen in full sunlight, but only in fog, at night, or in other conditions that favor unfocused, scattered light and that allow their own dim glow to be seen.

A typical ghost can make an electrical light blink, cause a candle to flicker, or produce rapping or other noises. Ghosts can be detected by animals and sometimes by children or mentally challenged humans, who can see past what they expect to what really is.

Encounter: Ghostly encounters often result in a frustrating and confusing scene. Difficult to see and even more difficult to communicate with, ghosts can be perceived with a successful Aware-



ness–*intuition* roll; otherwise, they cannot be seen at all except through their actions. Those actions include manipulation of light, air, and physical objects. Some ghosts reportedly have the power to generate telepathic illusions as well. Note that a hero with the Psionic Awareness perk or ESP–*sensitivity* can detect a ghost's use of mindwalking powers.

Also, ghosts are protected by the fact that they don't exist in tune with the rest of the physical universe. Because they exist slightly "out of phase" with the world, few physical weapons harm them, passing right through them to no effect. Weapons made of silver are more effective, as noted below.

Ghosts use last resort points differently from living creatures; they can spend last resort points to re-form themselves after they are dissipated by violence or magic. Last resort points spent in this way take a year to be restored.

Habitat/Society: Ghosts live among humans near the places where they died or where their bodies are located, but they are rarely seen by anyone. They have little or no society of their own.

While ghosts can linger for hundreds or even thousands of years, they tend to fade in and out of existence during periods of extremely high or extremely low dark matter levels. With the rise of the Dark Tide, ghost sightings have increased dramatically.

Ghost Game Data

STR	4	(d4+2)	INT	9	(2d6+2)
DEX	10	(2d4+5)	WIL	11	(2d6+4)
CON	8	(d4+6)	PER	8	(2d6+1)

Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: fly 28, sprint 14, run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 6*
* Add 1 psionic energy point per 10 years of the ghost's existence.

Attacks

Psychokinetics	14/7/3	special	LI/O

Defenses
Intangibility: +5 resistance modifier to melee and ranged attacks (only +2 vs. silver weapons)
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills
Acrobatics [10]–*flight [15]*, Stealth [10]–*hide [20], sneak [20], shadow [20]*; Stamina [8]–*endurance [20], resist pain [20]*; Awareness [11]–*perception [14]*; Interaction [8]–*intimidate [12]*.

Psionic Skills
Telekinesis [11]–*photokinetics [14], psychokinetics [14]*; Telepathy [8]–*contact [10]*.

Ghoul

Small groups of humans who devour flesh sink gradually into barbarism, evil, and decay over a few generations. These are the ghouls, sad cults of cannibals who live in loosely affiliated groups of up to twenty individuals and occasionally feed their sick compulsions with meals from the morgue.

Description: Ghouls appear human, though they tend to have a foul stench of blood and decay about them. Their fingernails are unnaturally sharp, serving as claws.

Encounter: Ghouls always attack with numbers; if their opponents outnumber them, they usually flee to seek food elsewhere. However, once a ghoul has tasted blood, it only breaks off combat if its existence is in serious danger.

Habitat/Society: Ghouls are found only in isolated pockets, usually in small rural communities that can prey on strangers who pass through. Ghouls found in urban environments are generally restricted to cities large enough so that a considerable number of missing persons goes unremarked. The Institute has tracked such cases in New York, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro.



Ghoul Game Data

STR	12	(d6+9)	INT	9	(d6+6)
DEX	10	(d4+8)	WIL	8	(d6+5)
CON	13	(d4+11)	PER	7	(d4+5)

Durability: 13/13/7/7 Action check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 22, run 14, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

Attacks

Claws	15/7/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d6+2w	LI/0
Weapon, ranged*	10/5/2	varies	HI/0

Disease: Opponents who suffer even a single point of primary damage from a ghoul's claws become exposed to a disease of Ordinary strength and incubation. See *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide* for details.
* +d4 base situation die.

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills
Athletics [12]; Unarmed [12]–*brawl [15],* Modern Ranged Weapons [10]; Stealth [10]; Vehicle Operation [10]; Stamina [13]–*endurance [16], resist pain [14];* Knowledge [9]–*language (specific) [12];* Awareness [8]–*perception [12];* Interaction [7].

Grey

Travelers from a distant world, the Greys (as humanity has dubbed them) have walked secretly among us throughout history. Despite their mysterious nature, most Greys seem to have humanity's best interests at heart, though we might not necessarily agree with their version of our best interests.

Description: Superficially, the Greys all look alike to humans: short, thin creatures with enormous black eyes. Their skin tones vary from light gray to charcoal. They stand about 1.5 meters tall, weigh about 55 kilograms, and have very long fingers and toes.

Both female and male Greys wear skirtlike robes and sashlike tops on formal occasions; in many less formal roles, they wear little more than loincloths. Greys in positions of authority often wear specific head coverings, much as a human might wear a particular crown or uniform.

Encounter: Greys are physically weak and dislike Earth's gravity, which is heavier than that on Mars or in their city-ship. However, they are perfectly capable of moving around and even fighting when threatened. In general, they prefer to defend themselves with their mindwalking powers or with ranged weapons. Very few Greys learn to use melee weapons.

Habitat/Society: Grey culture is both very ancient and very set in its ways. It could not be otherwise, for the stresses and difficulties of carrying thousands of Greys aboard a city-ship required a careful, conservative code of behavior, because any mistake, any violence, or any risk could kill everyone aboard. The conservative,



Grey Game Data

STR	7	(d8+3)	INT	11	(d8+7)
DEX	9	(2d6+2)	WIL	12	(d8+8)
CON	6	(d8+2)	PER	9	(d12+3)

Durability: 6/6/3/3 Action check: 11+/10/5/2
Move: run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/1 Last resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 12

Attacks

Ranged weapon	8/4/2	varies	varies
Unarmed	3/1/0	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Defenses
+1 INT, WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
–2 step bonus to CON feat checks to resist poisons

Skills
Modern [7]–*pistol [8];* Vehicle Operation [7]; Computer [11]–*programming* [13]; Knowledge [11]–*deduce* [14], *language (Grey) [14];* System [11]–*communications* [12]; Awareness [12]–*intuition* [14]; Resolve [12]–*mental* [14]; Interaction [9]–*interview* [11].

Psionic Skills
Telepathy [9]–*contact* [12], *datalink* [10].

NOTE: These statistics reflect a nonprofessional Grey, perhaps employed as a low-level functionary in a branch of one of the science divisions or a laborer aboard a Grey station-ship. Just as with humans, most Greys are not hero-class characters.

Grey Scout Ship

Grey scout ships are sleek, unarmed vessels about 17 meters in diameter. These circular (or saucer-shaped) craft are made of a silvery alloy that resists corrosion and can self-seal against micrometeor impacts when in deep space. Inside scout ships are four small chairs with gel-like padding and a console covered in a collection of smoothly rounded surfaces.

When ascending, the ships release a brief corona discharge, with a sound similar to the hum of high-tension power lines. When hovering or descending, they are completely silent, though the bottom surface still glows an electric blue. The hiss and the glow result from the enormous electrogravitic pulses generated by the craft's engine.

Grey ships use gravitic induction engines without electromagnetic shielding; this releases a strong electromagnetic pulse into the surrounding neighborhood. Since Grey computers are psi-crystal based, the EMP has little or no effect on their operation. However, it disables most conventional electronics, including cars that use computer chips to fine-tune their engine performance (all unshielded vehicles suffer immediate but temporary damage of 4d6s). Radios near such an unshielded gravitic engine are jammed and receive only static.

Grey scout ships are radar-absorbing vehicles capable of speeds in excess of 5,000 kph in atmosphere and of sudden changes in direction. Constructed primarily of special lightweight aluminum lithium alloy, a scout ship has little ability to withstand structural damage.

Grey Scout Ship

Compartments: 4 Durability: 20
Maneuver Rating: 0 Acc: 2 Mpp
Cruise Speed: 1.5 AU/hour Berthing: 6 crew, 4 prisoners

Armament: Tractor beam
Defenses: Jammer
Armor: Moderate alloy (2 dur) d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4 (En)
Computer: Good computer core
Engines: Induction engine
Power: 1 grav-fusion cell rated for 10 power factors total

Roll	Comp't	Systems (Dur/Pow)	Dur
1–4	Command	Command deck	8/8/4
		Airlock (0/0)	
		Ordinary computer core (1/0)	
		Reentry capsules (2) (1/0)	
		Air/space radar (0/0)	
		Laser transceiver (0/1)	
		Radio transceiver (0/1)	
		Jammer (0/1)	
		Tractor beam (2/*)	
5-7	Engineering	Induction engine (2/2)	16/16/8
		Life support (1/1)	
		Grav-fusion cell (5/*)	
8–13	Crew	Crew quarters (1/0)	6/6/3
		Lab section (1/0)	
		Brig (1/0)	
14–20	Cargo	Cargo space (3/0)	6/6/3

cautious culture required by the demands of ship life allowed generations of Greys to survive intact over untold years as the Greys wandered hundreds or perhaps even thousands of light-years from their homeworld. But what was first done for survival became a habit and then a tradition. Though the Greys have been free to roam the planets of the solar system for millennia, Grey culture remains inherently conservative. Suspicion and misgivings accompany any new endeavor or experiment. In addition, the Greys prefer isolation to contact; since privacy is difficult to obtain on the city-ship, it remains highly prized. Greys who retire to meditate and think in solitude are always left in peace, and those who interrupt these meditation sessions are severely punished.

Despite this apparent unity, three distinct political factions exist aboard the Grey city-ship (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*). Interestingly enough, the Greys have no "species name" for themselves. Instead, any individual refers to himself as a member of his political faction. The primary struggle between these factions centers on the appropriate interaction policies between their species and the humans of Earth. The current ruling faction, the Ahotti, favors a quiet, subtle course of action, manipulating human events and politics from behind the scenes. The small Ziljir faction lobbies for a more aggressive approach, while the Iltan support an open alliance and sharing of technology and information with the humans.

Of course, radical factions exist in all groups. Some push for a renewal of the Greys' pilgrimage to find a better, preferably uninhabited planet, while others secretly build power bases among the humans. Greys who go rogue—those who experiment with new technology, espouse new political ideas, attempt to freely interact with humans, or, worst of all, dabble in the forbidden arcane arts—are called "hesai" and are driven out of the company of other Greys.

Lack of numbers makes it very difficult for the Greys to undertake large-scale technological projects (such as new stationships), let alone maintain the machines, weapons, and ships they already have. The Grey population of the solar system is a little more than half a million; their long lives mean that they don't reproduce quickly. Because of this, Greys have no great industrial centers—even their city-ship pales in comparison to a mid-sized human city—and often must steal materials from humans. At the same time, they fear being overrun by the vastly more numerous human species should their presence become widely known.

Any missing item of technology is a serious loss; any lost scout ship is a catastrophe, potentially irreplaceable. As a result, the Greys make remarkably thorough efforts to keep their technology—generally equivalent to PL 6 and 7—out of human hands. They do so not out of any great conspiracy in conjunction with humankind, but simply because it's extremely difficult to replace a mass rifle, lanthanide battery, or gravitic anomaly inducer. They either get the item back, or they take back both the item and the thief who took it from them. Leaving their scarce technology in human hands is simply not an option.

The genetic structure of the Greys is based on teroic pseudonucleic acid (TPA), rather than DNA. A number of informed sources have commented that evidence points to some form of

self-engineering by or on the Greys to better suit the terrestrial climate. Unlike other TPA-based life forms, they are well suited to Earth's conditions of gravity, temperature, and foodstuffs. They are also highly resistant to toxins that affect humans, such as cyanide or arsenic. In addition, they have a remarkable resistance to mutation through radiation.

The biological source of Grey psionics has not yet been identified, but all indications suggest it is most likely a feature or structure within their considerable brain matter. Dissections of Grey brain samples have so far met with little success, as the brain matter liquefies to a gelatinous consistency within minutes of contact with air and no workable method of preparing specimens for microscopy has yet been developed.

Homunculus

Created through an alchemical ritual (see "Hermeticism" in *Chapter 4: Arcana*), a homunculus is a small artificial lifeform that obeys its creator's commands.

Description: A homunculus usually appears as a small ugly humanoid (about .5 meters in height) with batlike wings (though it is capable of only gliding flight).

Encounter: A homunculus is usually encountered with its master, though it is occasionally sent out to perform tasks. If its task does not involve interaction, it flees any encounter with a person. The creator of a homunculus can spend last resort points on behalf of his creation.

Rare encounters involve homunculi who have broken free of their master's control. In such instances, the rogue homunculus seeks to sabotage its creator's plans, sometimes even working directly with the alchemist's enemies.

Homunculus Game Data

STR	5	(d4+2)	INT	7	(d6+3)
DEX	15	(d4+12)	WIL	7	(d6+3)
CON	6	(d4+3)	PER	6	(d6+2)

Durability: 6/6/3/3 Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: glide 20, sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 1
Reaction score: Ordinary/1 Last resorts: 0

Attacks

Bite	9/4/2	d4–1s/d4s/d4w	LI/0

Defenses
–1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
Rubbery composition: d4 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d4–1 (En)

Skills
Athletics [5]–*climb [10], jump [10];* Unarmed [5]–*brawl [9];* Acrobatics [15]–*dodge [18], flight [16];* Manipulation [15]; Stealth [15]–*hide [18], shadow [18], sneak [21];* Stamina [6]; Knowledge [7]–*language (same as creator) [10];* Awareness [7]–*perception [10];* Interaction [6].



Habitat/Society: The homunculus has no society. It lives wherever its master tells it to live. The homunculus is effectively ageless, though it dies instantly upon the death of its creator.

Within a month of its creation, the homunculus speaks its maker's language and can act independently, though always in accordance with its creator's wishes.

Kinori

Throughout Arabia, Africa, and India live small enclaves of the kinori, the alien species that long ago had a falling-out with the Greys. With their ivory, scaly skin and black tongues, they seem like creatures from another world. This is perhaps appropriate, since most who know of them believe the kinori hail from a distant planet or an alternate dimension. Indeed, kinori are familiar with the concept of doorways, and most of their legends suggest they reached Earth by just such a method of travel (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

Description: Physically, the kinori are 1.4-meter-tall, bipedal, scaled creatures that appear reptilian, with a head resembling that of a small carnivorous dinosaur. Thousands of tiny ivory scales, each about 5 mm across, cover their skin with the same sorts of variation in tones of white as an alligator's belly. Their eyes are uniformly bluish-green. Kinori hands are three-fingered but dexterous, and their legs are splayed, giving them an awkward waddling gait. Despite this, they can move very quickly, and they swim well.

Kinori eyes are capable of excellent night vision and have a nictitating membrane that allows them to see underwater without difficulty.

Encounter: Kinori have no compunctions about killing and eating trespassers in their homes. In general, they first greet outsiders with a hostile attitude, subject to later flexibility if they run into a danger greater than they can handle. They have no interest in negotiating with humans (whom they view as their primary rivals for occupation of the planet), and they innately distrust all Greys.

If a combat goes against them, the kinori all retreat in remarkable synchrony; some signal that humans and Greys cannot detect tells them all to withdraw. A number of explanations may explain this behavior, including scent, ultrahigh- or ultralow-frequency sounds, and even an implanted series of signaling devices.

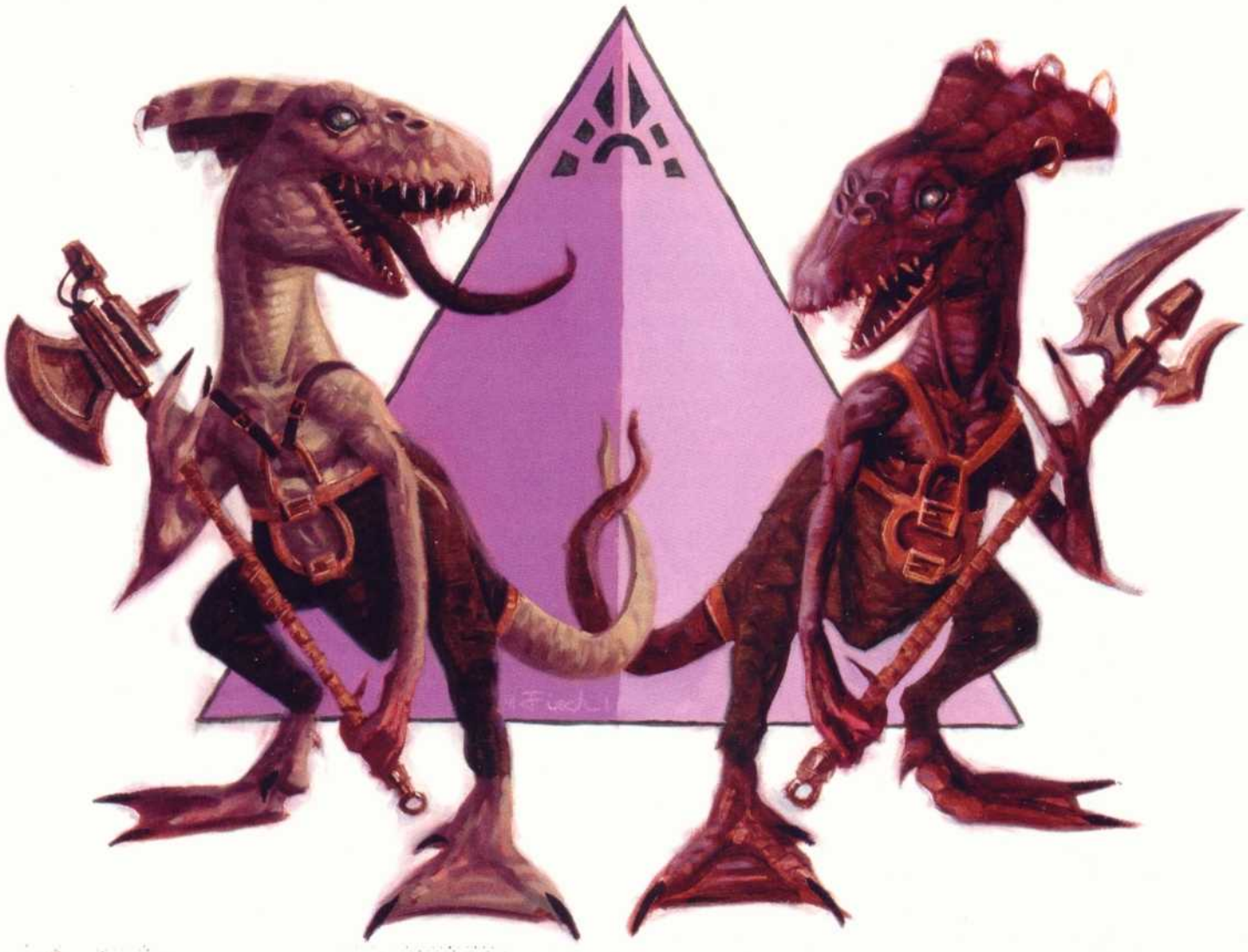
While most kinori use their claws in combat, recent encounters suggest that some enclaves have begun utilizing stolen firearms to help even the odds between humans and kinori.

Some kinori are rumored to possess Arcane Magic FX powers (most often, Hermetic magic), though examples in the normal kinori population are very rare.

Habitat/Society: Kinori prefer hot climates and are able to withstand heat up to about 65° Celsius without serious discomfort; moderate or extreme cold makes them irritable and then sluggish, as it induces a form of torpor normally seen in hibernating mammals. Despite their sensitivity to cold, they can operate normally in temperate zones throughout the spring, summer, and fall. During the winter, or whenever the temperature drops below about 3° C, they require heat lamps, special clothing, or heated rooms to function normally. Without these protections, they suffer a +1 step penalty to all actions in temperatures of about 3 to –5° C, a +2 step penalty for temperatures below –5° C, and a +3 step penalty for temperatures below –15° C.

Temperature also plays a role in determining the sex of kinori hatchlings. The gender of the eggs is not determined at the time they are laid. Instead, variations in the temperature of their environs before the eggs hatch decide the gender (hotter eggs produce females, eggs kept in a colder climate produce males).

The kinori—who have a lifespan of about 60 years—share with humans the basic genetic structure of DNA, and a number of traits (such as bone patterns, muscle anchor points, and metabolic similarities) with all terran organisms. Indeed, genetic sequence matching suggests that the two species may



Kinori Game Data

STR	8	(d8+3)	INT	11	(2d4+6)
DEX	11	(2d4+6)	WIL	9	(d8+4)
CON	9	(2d4+4)	PER	9	(d8+4)

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed	9/4/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
Spear*	8/4/2	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O

*Base situation die +d4. This weapon may be thrown using the Athletics–*throw* skill.

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Natural armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

Skills
Athletics [8]–*climb [11];* Melee Weapons [8]; Unarmed [8]–*brawl [9];* Stealth [11]; Movement [9]–*swim [11];* Stamina [9]; Survival [9]–*training (desert) [10];* Knowledge [11]–*deduce [12], language (kinori) [14], language (specific human) [13];* Awareness [9]–*perception [11];* Investigate [9]; Interaction [9].

NOTE: Like humans, exceptional kinori (particularly those engaged in scouting or warfare activities) have abilities and skills that exceed those noted here. See *Chapter 10: Gamemaster Options* for an example of a kinori nest guardian and scout.

have diverged from a common ancestor about 270 million years ago.

Kinori society mirrors the structure of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrial societies on Earth, with large working, military, and service classes supporting a much smaller technical and political elite. At the very top of the social pyramid stand the extremely rare blackscale kinori (see separate entry below), who—when present in a community—invariably lead it.

Just below the blackscales are the life engineers. These revered kinori have a twofold responsibility. On a day-to-day level, they treat the sick and injured and oversee funeral rites (including the revivification of those lower-ranking kinori chosen to serve as mummies; see below). On a larger scale, the life engineers are responsible for overseeing the buildup of the kinori armies in preparation for the day when they rise up from the underground and take the planet from the ignorant humans.

Below the life engineers are the scouts, nest guardians (soldiers who protect kinori warrens), and wadjets (who watch over the doorways between Earth and the kinori's home world). Finally, there are the breeding females, whose only responsibility is to maintain the kinori population.

In addition, kinori society contains a small but important minority, perhaps around 5% to 10% of the total population, consisting of reanimated corpses that serve as slave labor. These mummies (see separate entry below) are not treated with disdain but rather are roughly equivalent to robots: more appliances than people.

The kinori have a special hatred of the Greys that traces back to the days of ancient Egypt, and they won't hesitate to destroy any Grey they encounter. Most kinori see humans as pawns of the Greys and treat them accordingly; some, however, recognize the value of cooperation with humanity. In fact, the kinori have cultivated a number of human allies who seek to help the reptilians in exchange for knowledge, technology, or simply a reprieve from raiding one another. These allies include the Tuareg of North Africa, certain sects at the head of the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, and the Thuggee in India. The kinori also have contacts among the Freemasons (see *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*).

Kinori, Blackscale

A few specimens of all-black kinori have been reported; this change in scale color resembles a type of reverse albinism. The variation is related to changes in an important element of the kinori's scale chemistry. The black kinori are called, not too imaginatively, blackscale kinori.

Description: The blackscale kinori appear substantially similar to normal kinori except for the pigmentation of their scales.

Blackscale Kinori Game Data

STR	9	(d8+4)	INT	12	(2d4+7)
DEX	12	(2d4+7)	WIL	12	(2d4+7)
CON	9	(2d4+4)	PER	10	(d8+5)

Durability: 9/9/4/4 Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/1 Last resorts: 1
FX energy points: 6

Attacks

Unarmed	10/5/2	d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s	LI/O
Spear	10/5/2	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O

*Weapon can be thrown using the Athletics–*throw* skill.

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 INT, WIL resistance modifiers vs. encounter skills
Natural armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

Skills
Athletics [9]–*climb [12], throw [10];* Melee [9]–*blade [10];* Unarmed [9]–*brawl [10];* Stealth [12]; Movement [9]–*swim [12];* Stamina [9]; Survival [9]–*training (desert) [13];* Knowledge [12]–*deduce [14], language (kinori) [15]; language (specific human) [15];* Awareness [12]–*perception [14];* Investigate [12]; Resolve [12]; Interaction [10]; Leadership [10].

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Hermetic)–*glamour [15], sleep of Morpheus [15].*

Encounter: Blackscales are even more aggressive than standard kinori. They prefer using their FX abilities to physical combat, though they do not hesitate to engage in melee if necessary.

Habitat/Society: Within kinori society, the blackscales are considered supernaturally powerful, dangerous, and temperamental, and as a result usually end up spoiled with every comfort, the best education, and extreme deference. This sort of upbringing creates confident, even swaggering kinori leaders.

Tales that the blackscales are uniformly gifted with mighty Arcane FX powers seem to be unfounded, but the rate of arcane powers among the blackscales is much higher than among the general population. For whatever reason (a recessive gene?), the trait rarely breeds true and does not appear in the offspring.

Some particularly gifted blackscales are capable of the Hermetic ritual known as *revivification* (see "Mummy," below).

Luciferan

The luciferans are another species native to a dimension other than ours. They have been encountered on Earth throughout history, generally individually or in very small groups living quietly among humans. Their goals and efforts on Earth remain unknown, and their resemblance to creatures described as "devils" in many forms of folklore has made encounters with them difficult. On the other hand, their natural radiance has led to them being dubbed radiant ones, the angels of light, or even cherubim.



Luciferan Game Data

STR	9	(2d4+4)	INT	10	(2d6+3)
DEX	11	(2d4+6)	WIL	10	(2d6+3)
CON	12	(2d4+7)	PER	12	(2d4+7)

Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: fly 40, sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 2
FX energy points: 8

Attacks

Pistol	12/6/3	varies	varies
Claws	10/5/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
Immolate	15/7/3	special	En/G

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
Natural armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d6–2 (HI), d8 (En)

Skills
Athletics [9]; Unarmed [9]–*brawl [10]*, Acrobatics [11]–*flight [12]*; Modern [11]–*pistol [12]*; Stamina [12]; Knowledge [10]–*language (luciferan) [13], language (elohim) [12], language (specific human) [13]*; Technical [10]–*juryrig [14], repair [12], xenoengineering [14]*; Awareness [10]; Investigate [10]; Culture [12]; Interaction [12]–*charm [15]*.

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Enochian)–*immolate [15], lumen [12], white salamander [14]*.

Immolate

Transform spell [WIL]: 2 FX points
This unique Enochian spell allows a luciferan to increase its ordinary light into a blazing inferno. Those within 2 meters suffer d8+2w, those within 5 meters sustain d6+1w, and those within 10 meters suffer d4w. The damage is considered En/G. Highly flammable objects—such as paper, cloth, and fuel—within 10 meters are immediately set afire by the immolation. Less flammable wood, thick cloth, and even plastics may ignite if the fiery aura is maintained for several rounds.

The blaze also grants the luciferan a +2 to his resistance modifiers vs. melee and ranged attacks. The luciferan may maintain the spell for 1 round per FX energy point spent to do so after the initial round.

Description: Humans have difficulty remembering exactly what a luciferan looks like, but in general the species is perceived as humanoid, with dark ruddy skin and a gnarled set of horns or rigid tendrils covering their heads like the short arms of anemones. A few have purplish or even bluish skin. Their eyes are bright and their hands distinctly clawed, with long, almost bladelike fingers. Their legs and feet slightly resemble those of dogs or birds, with only a small footpad leading up to a backward-pointing joint.

The luciferans continually shine with a faint radiance, shedding light the way humans shed sweat (heavy clothing can mask

this). They are not winged but can fly at a good pace, perhaps under their own power, perhaps through some implanted device.

Encounter: Luciferans are curious about humans in the same way that people are curious about monkeys. While amused, they usually prefer to keep their distance. When luciferans do interfere in human affairs, they appear only to lone humans rather than to groups. In a few special cases luciferans are said to have taught Arcane Magic to willing individuals, but Institute efforts to track down the sources of these legends have proven unsuccessful.

Habitat/Society: Nothing is known about the structure of luciferan society, except that at some point it was in frequent contact with the elohim (who now hunt down the luciferans with a fanatical single-mindedness). Certain luciferans do command the respect and allegiance of others, but the nature of their hierarchy remains a mystery.

Luciferans generally possess several items of advanced technology. However, these items vary from individual to individual—some carry PL 7 weapons and pharmaceuticals, while others own only old and worn PL 6 tools and gear. It has been suggested that the luciferans scavenge technology, perhaps stealing from the elohim themselves.

The luciferans also demonstrate a knack for Arcane Magic, specifically Enochian—a fact that invariably surprises those who expect such creatures to be diabolic in nature. It is not known what beings or spirits the luciferans draw this magic from, nor what kinds of vows the luciferans find appropriate.

The Greys consider the luciferans, with their Arcane Magic FX, advanced technology, and occasional interference in human activities, a threat to watch closely.

Man In Black

Mysterious Men In Black have existed throughout Earth's history. Modern stories describe them as wearing dark overcoats, black hats, and sunglasses. While it is entirely likely that most of the Men In Black (or MIBs in the common parlance, despite the grammatical inaccuracy) encountered in recent years are government agents, some tales insist on granting these individuals superhuman faculties, strange powers of ESP, or the ability to disappear in shadows. This entry describes those extraordinary individuals. (For more typical Men In Black, use



Call Shadows

Conjure spell (WIL): 1 FX point
This spell gathers shadows in a 10-meter-diameter circle around the MIB, reducing the visibility to Moderate (equivalent to a dark building) or Extreme (total darkness) if the area is already darkened. This has effects on combat (see TABLE G12: VISIBILITY IN COMBAT in the *Gamemaster Guide*) and on other skill checks (particularly Awareness–*perception*). The shadows remain for 30 minutes.

Shadow Walk

Summon spell (WIL): 2 FX points
This spell allows the MIB to transport himself instantly and unerringly from one area of shadows to another. To the casual onlooker, it appears that he simply stepped into one shadow and out from another. The MIB can travel up to 30 meters in this fashion, though multiple castings can allow him to make repeated "walks."

Man In Black Game Data

STR	11	(d8+6)	INT	12	(2d4+7)
DEX	14	(d6+10)	WIL	12	(2d4+7)
CON	12	(2d4+7)	PER	9	(2d4+3)

Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 16+/15/7/3
Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 #Actions: 3
Reaction score: Good/3 Last resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 12 FX energy points: 10

Attacks

Unarmed	16/8/4	d4+4s/d6+4s/d4+2w	LI/0
9mm pistol	16/8/4	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI/0

Defenses
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Armor (bulletproof coat): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d6–2 (En)

Skills
Athletics [11]–*climb [14], jump [14];* Unarmed [11]–*power [16];* Manipulation [14]–*lockpick [16];* Modern [14]–*pistol [16];* Stealth [14]–*shadow [17], sneak [15];* Vehicle [14]–*land [16];* Stamina [12]–*endurance [15];* Knowledge [12]–*language (specific) [15];* Law [12]; Tactics [12]; Administration [12]; Awareness [12]–*intuition [14], perception [14];* Investigate [12]–*interrogate [14], search [13];* Resolve [12]–*mental [13];* Culture [9]–*diplomacy [13];* Deception [9]–*bluff [12], bribe [12];* Interaction [9]–*intimidate [14].*

Psionic Skills
Biokinesis [12]–*morph [14];* ESP [12]–*clairvoyance [14], mind reading [15], sensitivity [13];* Telepathy [9]–*obscure [15].*

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Shadow Magic)–*call shadows [15], shadow walk [15].*

one of the supporting cast templates in *Chapter 6: Supporting Cast* in the *Gamemaster Guide*.)

Description: The typical MIB wears a dark, full-length coat, black hat (often with a wide brim that shadows the face), and dark or reflective sunglasses. Some witnesses have described an MIB as having pale or sallow skin tone, while others have insisted that the MIB resembled a familiar, even famous, individual.

Encounter: Men In Black are most often encountered at scenes of suspected paranormal or alien activity. They typically appear singly or in pairs, though groups of up to four have been reported.

Once on the scene, the MIBs question witnesses or bystanders ruthlessly, often threatening physical harm should the individual not cooperate. Most interviews end with the MIBs promising retribution if the witnesses attempt to recount their experience to others. Though they are aware of local laws, they frequently ignore them, using bribery, intimidation, illegal entry, and other means to achieve their goals.

In the extremely rare instances when combat with Men In Black occurs, survivors report that the MIBs fight with great efficiency, dispatching foes with practiced ease. One witness swears that she saw an MIB shrug off repeated handgun shots before disappearing into the nearby shadows, but that report is unverified.

Habitat/Society: The Men In Black do not have any distinguishable society; in fact, it's not even clear that they aren't just a part of human society. Some conspiracy buffs insist that the MIBs are alien beings sent to observe us, while others believe they are instigators of fear and terror, attempting to weaken our trust of authority figures.

Mole Person

Deep under the city streets lives a group of homeless people pushed farther and farther underground. These are the mole people, a diverse group of outcasts, mutants, and devolved humans who eat "track rabbits" (rats) and food stolen from workers and restaurants in subway stations. More organized groups have runners who make brief expeditions to the surface each month to collect welfare checks.

The legends of the mole people include tales of children who have never seen the sun, a red-eyed "Dark Angel" with supernatural powers, and a connection between the human levels and a system of natural caverns, where mole people live in caves spray-painted with all the colors of the surface.

Description: Clothed in ragged layers of dark and often greasy clothing, with stubbly beards and long stringy hair, the mole people are hardly attractive specimens of humanity. Their clothes tend to be old and often don't fit very well. Their goods and weapons consist of the simplest sorts of tools: knives, clubs, and shopping carts.



Mole Person Game Data

STR	9	(d8+4)	INT	8	(d8+3)
DEX	10	(d8+5)	WIL	9	(d8+4)
CON	11	(d8+6)	PER	7	(d8+2)

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action check: 10+/9/4/2
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 0

Mutations (newts only): Hyper Healing, Night Vision, Vascular Control.

Mutation Drawbacks (newts only): Light Sensitivity.

Attacks

Unarmed	10/5/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
Club	12/6/3	d4+1s/d4w/d4+1w	LI/O

Defenses
None

Skills
Athletics [9]–*climb [13], jump [12];* Melee [9]–*bludgeon [12];* Unarmed [9]–*brawl [10];* Stealth [10]–*hide [14], sneak [13];* Vehicle [10]; Stamina [11]; Knowledge [8]–*language (specific) [11];* Awareness [9]–*intuition [12];* Interaction [7].

Encounter: Mole people avoid contact with "surface folk" when they can, and they venture onto the surface only during hours of darkness whenever possible. If they must go out in daylight, they wear several layers of clothes, gloves, and jackets, typically topped off with dark sunglasses and a hat or cap of some kind. Expeditions to the surface generally involve scavenging food and supplies from the refuse of mundane society. Occasionally they go on a "raid," which involves spray-painting graffiti, frightening pedestrians or subway riders, mugging passersby, and then vanishing back into the night.

Most of the time, though, mole people are encountered on a subway platform while panhandling, sometimes playing an instrument, sometimes sitting mutely behind a sign that tells a hard-luck story. At the end of their visit among human society, they take their earnings and purchase cigarettes or booze to take back into the warrens.

Once in a while, they find a sympathetic ear and linger on the surface a little longer. In these cases, they often take children or runaways with them (by force when necessary) to join the subterranean tribes. Children raised among the mole people adapt well to their way of life; runaways sometimes stay for a while and then move back to the surface world.

Habitat/Society: Finding the mole people is no easy task. They avoid contact with surface people and are often shunned as filthy, ragged beggars. Even on their surface expeditions, they are rarely noticed; most people simply write them off as homeless bums, never noticing that some of these bums do not appear to age. These are the elite of the mole people, generally referred to as "newts."

Newts

In addition to their other qualities, a few special mole people somehow become newts. Newts are known and respected for their incredible hardiness. They are susceptible to sunlight, but in return are much longer-lived than humans and can survive serious wounds much more readily. Just as many amphibian and reptilian species are able to regenerate entire limbs, the newts have taken this evolutionary strategy to an entirely new level. They reproduce by budding; tear a newt in two and it regenerates into two entire creatures. All newts are literally genetic copies of one another. In fact, they may all be descendants of a single mutated human.

Like any evolutionary advantage, the newt's regenerative ability carries some wider implications: This level of rebuilding requires time and sustenance. In order to regenerate a small wound, a newt needs a full meal, but regrowing a lost limb requires lots of fat and protein: usually a lot of meat.

Mothman

The mothmen are a species of flying, vaguely insectoid creatures most famously sighted in Point Pleasant, West Virginia in 1966 and 1967. While their haunting red eyes, huge wings, and antennalike ears leave quite an impression on eyewitnesses, those who have seen mothmen are curiously terrorized by the sightings, suffering recurrent nightmares, flashbacks, and even insect phobias for years thereafter. This has been the case even when the witnesses caught only brief or obscured glimpses of the mothman, and when they suffered no physical harm.

Mothman Game Data

STR	9	(2d4+4)	INT	8	(2d8+3)
DEX	11	(2d6+4)	WIL	12	(2d4+7)
CON	8	(2d4+3)	PER	8	(d8+3)

Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action check: 11+/10/5/2
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4, fly 40 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1
FX energy points: 5 (shamans only)

Attacks

Wing strike	5/2/1	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
Talons	11/5/2	d4s/d6w/d6+1w	LI/O

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Skills
Athletics [9]–*climb [10], throw [10];* Unarmed [9]–*brawl [11];* Acrobatics [11]–*fall [12], flight [14];* Stealth [11]; Stamina [8]; Knowledge [7]; Awareness [12]–*intuition [14];* Interaction [8].

FX Skills (shamans only)
Faith FX (Shamanism)–*dreamwalking [15], ghost dance [15], hunter's stare [14], trance visions [11].*

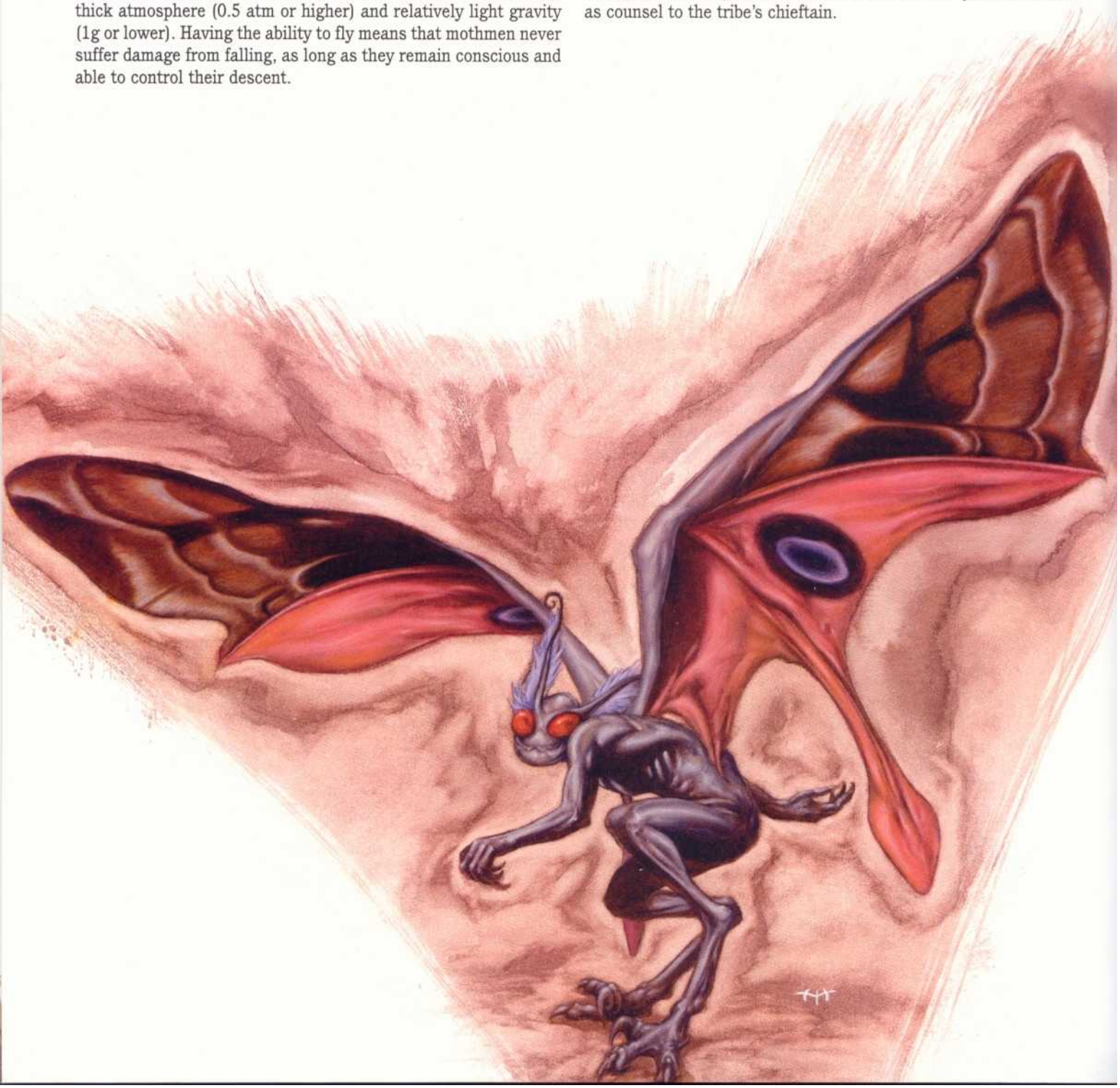
Description: Mothmen are bipedal flying humanoid creatures with a pair of small forelimbs, powerful sweeping wings, and complex, double-jointed legs that end in clawed feet. A typical mothman stands almost a meter taller than an average human but weighs in at only 40 to 50 kilograms—a mothman skeleton is mostly composed of light, strong cartilage. They bear the same genetic foundation as the Greys, namely teroic pseudonucleic acid (TPA).

The mothman head is wide and round, with large reddish compound eyes and crowned by two pointed ears. The lack of a snout or pronounced beak makes them seem rather owllike, but their hinged jaw is quite large enough to swallow small mammals whole. Their hearing is as keen as a cat's, and their night vision is superior—but bright daylight virtually blinds them.

Mothmen are capable fliers, able to launch themselves into the air and easily stay aloft in any environment with a reasonably thick atmosphere (0.5 atm or higher) and relatively light gravity (1g or lower). Having the ability to fly means that mothmen never suffer damage from falling, as long as they remain conscious and able to control their descent.

Encounter: Mothmen avoid physical confrontation. If violence becomes necessary, mothmen prefer to strike first and strike hard. In addition to their ability to fly, the mothmen's keen senses reduce darkness- or obscurement-based combat penalties by 2 steps (this cannot grant a bonus). However, their eyes are quite sensitive to bright light, and mothmen suffer a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to all actions undertaken in Ordinary, Good, or Amazing illumination. Though sunglasses, dark goggles, or visors could negate these penalties, most mothmen do not use such devices.

Habitat/Society: Mothman social organization is fairly simple. The mothmen are an extradimensional species of nomadic hunters, moving from place to place when humans (or other native species) force them deeper into wilderness. Family ties are quite strong, even to very distant relations, and the family leaders serve as counsel to the tribe's chieftain.



Mothman shamans are powerful adepts, able to manipulate the tide of dark matter to serve their needs (treat as Shamanism Faith FX). For generations, these shamans have told and retold the legends of the Dark Tide. Mothman legends and lore are invaluable in identifying and fighting paranormal creatures; in some cases, mothmen know more about Earth's "mythic" monsters than humans do.

The species' goals, origins, and relationship with other paranormal species are unknown. A few researchers at the Center for Xenological Studies have suggested that they are assassins for the Greys, based on their killing claws, stealthiness, and proximity to a few cases of cattle mutilation and abduction. Other, more theologically oriented investigators such as the Knights of Malta claim that they are fallen servants of the elohim. Still others, primarily at the Institute, believe that they are a mutant strain of the Greys themselves, built as a subspecies genetically adapted to the hot, heavy atmosphere of Earth.

Mothman sightings in the historical record include mentions among the Anasazi of the Southwest U.S., the aborigines of Australia (who call them the "Wandi"), and the Dogon of West Africa; all descriptions note the species' use of paranormal abilities resembling shamanistic magic. Given the archaeological similarity of Anasazi and Dogon (both tribes built cliff dwellings), it might be inferred that the mothmen competed with the human populations for preferred cliff dwelling or nesting sites.

The mothmen have avoided human contact for centuries, and their technology has hardly advanced in millennia. As a result, they are comfortable with PL 0–3 technologies but hopelessly inept with inventions of PL 4 and up (the equivalent of the 4-point Primitive flaw).

Mummy

Corpses resurrected from death by the arcane magic of the kinori life engineers, mummies are as much mechanical as biological. They somehow manage to retain most of the attributes of life without taking in food or water. Investigators have encountered mummified humans as well as kinori.

Description: With dry and withered flesh, mummies made from human corpses are thin and puckered-looking creatures. The scales of a mummified kinori, on the other hand, become strengthened by the mummifying process. The Gamemaster may determine the results of "mummifying" other species; note that Grey flesh is not susceptible to the workings of the life engineers.



Encounter: Kinori mummies have two basic modes of operation: under the direct control of their makers, and independently as guards or automata. When under the control of their makers, they are faster and more flexible in their responses, as the orders from the kinori keep the mummies on track and organized.

Kinori mummies operating independently have a limited ability to respond to new or unexpected changes in their environment; for the most part, they try to fulfill their last set of orders

Revivification

Arcane Magic (Hermetic) specialty skill (WIL, cost 5)
Transform spell: 2 FX points
The kinori practice a surprisingly effective method of restoring basic motor functions and sometimes even language skills to recently dead bodies. The basic process involves the removal of all bodily fluids (and most internal organs) from the corpse to be animated, and the use of materials such as silica gel, natron, and other salts to help desiccate the body. The process also requires the insertion of tiny metallic wires paralleling the corpse's major muscle groups. These wires help "conduct" nerve impulses along the dead muscles. In addition, special fluids of an unknown nature are injected as part of a kinori mummy's regular maintenance.

When the body has been properly prepared, the *revivification* ritual can be attempted. This is a complex skill check requiring 9 successes. If the skill check succeeds, the body revives, becoming a mummy. Performing the procedure on a species other than human or kinori inflicts a +3 step penalty to the attempt.

In particularly rare instances, mummies have retained scattered memories of their former lives as well as the ability to speak. This occurrence dramatically increases the Intelligence and Personality of the mummy and grants additional skills related to those two abilities.

Mummy Game Data

STR	12	(d6+9)	INT	5	(d4+3)
DEX	8	(d4+6)	WIL	12	(d6+9)
CON	13	(d6+10)	PER	5	(d4+3)

Durability: 16/16/8/8 Action check: 10+/9/4/2
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 3
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 0

Attacks

Unarmed	14/7/3	d6+2s/d6+2w/d6+4w	LI/0

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
–1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Kinori Scales: d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4 (En)
Leathery Human Skin: d4–1 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d4–2 (En)

Skills
Athletics [12]–*climb [13], jump [14];* Unarmed [12]–*brawl [14];* Stealth [8]–*sneak [12];* Stamina [13]–*endurance [20], resist pain [15];* Awareness [12].

without compensating for changes in a tactical position, architecture, or even their own body's ability to respond.

Habitat/Society: Kinori mummies have no society of their own and only appear where kinori make them. They can survive in any environment from deep space to tropical rain forest without difficulty, although wet and hot climates eventually bring about a state of decay that destroys the mummy over the course of a century or so.

Sandman

The sandmen found on Earth to date are all transformed humans, changed in both body and mind to become servants of the etoile. They operate as a military-computer order of warriors dedicated to serving their masters' will and "recruiting" additional warriors for their cybernetic army. They also conduct an extensive reconnaissance campaign against their highest-priority targets—human military centers and facilities—testing the range, training, and power of the greatest human armies.

Description: The typical sandman stands about 1.8 meters tall and weighs about 90 kilograms. The superficial similarity between humans and nanite-corrupted humans makes functioning in human society easy for a sandman; indeed, sandmen are able to pass for human. Only a closer inspection reveals some major differences. Veins of metal are interwoven with flesh and blood, and sandman hair often displays a metallic sheen, like hair that has been poorly dyed. Unlike humans who have undergone surgery to install an artificial limb, a sandman's form looks completely natural—the synthesis of flesh and biomechanics appears seamless.

Encounter: For the most part, sandmen use standard human weapons and tactics. However, they often are able to catch a foe by surprise due to their ability to pass as human. They are generally encountered on one of three missions: reconnaissance, military strikes, or infections. Regardless of their purpose, they work efficiently and thoroughly, eliminating any witnesses to their activities.

In addition to most human weapons, the sandmen have access to needler pistols that fire tranquilizer darts. These needlers are generally used to capture humans in a relatively intact condition. They fire hollow-dart ammunition filled with *morpheotoxin*, a paralytic poison that requires a successful Constitution feat check with a +2 step penalty to resist. It has an onset time of 1 round; the duration of the effect depends on the result of the victim's Constitution feat check (see TABLE G17: POISON in *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*).

Due to a modification to their vocal cords, the sandmen can incorporate low-frequency radio waves in their voices. This hypnotic quality grants them a –3 step bonus to the use of any Interaction specialty skills. This even allows them to affect characters with Hostile attitudes. In addition, when interacting with humans, sandmen ignore the +2 step penalty for using Interaction skills against targets of a different species.

Sandman Game Data

STR	10	(2d6+3)	INT	10	(2d6+3)
DEX	9	(2d6+2)	WIL	7	(2d6)
CON	11	(2d6+4)	PER	8	(2d6+1)

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1

Attacks

Unarmed	14/7/3	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0
Melee weapon	10/5/2	varies	varies
Needler pistol	13/6/3	special	special

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
–4 step bonus to CON feat checks made to resist toxins

Skills
Armor Operation* [10]; Athletics [10]; Melee* [10]; Unarmed [10]–*brawl [14];* Modern [9]–*pistol [13];* Vehicle [9]–*land [10];* Stamina [11]–*blood music [12];* Computer* [10]–*hacking [12], hardware [12], programming [14];* Knowledge [10]–*language (specific) [13];* Security [10]–*devices [12];* System* [10]; Tactics [10]; Technical [10]–*jury rig [13], repair [12];* Awareness [7]; Culture [8]; Interaction [8]–*charm [10].*

*The sandman's fusion ability grants a –1 step bonus to the use of this skill.

Sandman Needler Pistol: Skill Modern–*pistol*; Acc 0; Md F; Range 2/6/12; Type special; Damage special (see above); Actions 4; Clip 20; Hide +3; Mass 1; Avail sandmen only; Cost n/a.



Sandmen are nearly immune to poisons of all kinds. However, they are susceptible to electrical damage and short-circuiting due to immersion in liquid. If a sandman becomes submerged in a conducting solution (water, acid, or liquid hydrogen, for example), it must make a Stamina–*endurance* check each round of immersion or suffer d4s. On a Critical Failure, the sandman suffers d4w instead. Note that complete immersion is required to cause this damage; merely splashing water on a sandman has no effect.

The sandmen also possess the ability to reshape their bodies. This mimics the effect of the Biokinesis–*morph* psionic skill; treat sandmen as if they possessed all *morph* rank benefits through rank 7, though no skill check is required. In addition, they may fuse with inorganic objects, actually becoming one with the object. Among other effects, this grants the sandmen a –1 step bonus to Armor Operation, Melee Weapons, Computer Science, and System Operation skill checks when fused with such an object. Minor reshaping (including fusing with handheld objects) requires a single round, while major reshaping (including deforming to pass through narrow openings) takes d4+1 rounds.

Sandmen cannot fuse with organic materials such as wood or leather; attempting to do so disrupts the sandman's own organic systems (which attempt to feed nutrients to the dead organic matter through veins), inflicting d4–2 points of stun damage. Also, a sandman cannot fuse with objects covered in a film of water or oil.

Blood Music

Stamina specialty skill, 5 SP
This skill can't be used untrained.
Among the sandmen, the cult of technology is more than a religion: It's a way of living that includes particular implants, meditation, and the careful control of their body's nanites. The particular mental and physical ritual that the sandmen call *blood music* is the expression of those powers, including the ability to create boosts of energy and to see and act more quickly. In many ways, *blood music* resembles the mindwalking discipline of Biokinesis, but it requires no psionic ability, just training in the Zen-like arts of body/nanite integration. A sandman who hears the call of *blood music* (and this skill may only be learned by sandmen) can eventually learn all the abilities associated with that body of knowledge and self-programming as described below.

At its simplest level, the *blood music* specialty skill offers a sandman a way to reduce his core body temperature and emit a focused electromagnetic field, designed to fool IR and electronic sensors, respectively. As a result, the sandman gains a +2 resistance modifier against detection by such systems, and any sensor data of the sandman is often smeared or otherwise unclear.

At the same basic level, the ability grants anyone performing Knowledge–*first aid* or Medical Science–*surgery* or *treatment* on a conscious sandman a –1 step bonus, as the sandman can direct his internal systems to maximize their repair efficiency. This applies even if the sandman attempts to treat himself.

⊗ ***Hot Running:*** At rank 3, the sandman can set his nanites to create a powerful stimulant on demand. This stimulant offsets the effect of fatigue or stun damage (see "Pharmaceuticals" in *Chapter 9: Equipment* in the *Player's Handbook*).

⊗ ***Stasis:*** A sandman with rank 6 in this skill may reduce all metabolic processes to a crawl, inducing a condition resembling a deep coma or death. A skill check is required to fully enter the stasis state; on a Marginal result, the sandman hero appears to be in a coma and can heal wounds at 1 point per hour. An Ordinary or better success induces a state indistinguishable from death; in this state the sandman can heal wound damage at a rate of 1 per hour or mortal damage at 1 per day. In any case, the sandman remains aware of his surroundings and can exit stasis at a moment's notice.

⊗ ***Fugue State:*** At rank 9, the sandman gains a power generally used only as a last resort. When it is activated, the sandman immediately loses 1 stun point and loses an additional stun point each action round. This represents the energy devoted to putting his entire system into a fugue state, where time seems to slow down and his awareness of events is crystal clear. This grants the sandman a –2 step bonus to any actions he attempts, including action checks, and the sandman may take an additional action each round (maximum of four per round). However, when he runs out of stun points or chooses to stop using the ability, he must immediately make a Resolve–*physical resolve* skill check. If the check fails, he loses a number of fatigue points equal to the number of rounds he spent in the fugue state. Even if the roll succeeds, the sandman leaves his altered state and the step bonus ends.

Sandman Transformation

Sandman nanites are primarily meant to be helpful to their etoile and biological hosts; for instance, they can repair damaged DNA to prevent cancer and viral attacks. When they infect a human host, the sandman nanites first spread gradually throughout the infected body in small numbers, then begin to multiply geometrically. However, the nanites see human DNA as damaged, and naturally they try to fix it. When this happens, a human becomes infected with altered genes and literally becomes a sandman over the course of roughly a month of genetic reprogramming. During this period, the host human is reprogrammed at a cellular and subcellular level; human resistance to invasion by nanites is relatively weak, though some white blood cells do try to gather up and reject the invading material.

Treat the nanite infection as an Amazing-strength disease with an onset time of 3d4 hours (see *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). Nonhuman hosts are relatively resistant to the infection and gain a –4 step bonus to any Constitution feat checks to resist. If the check result is Good or Amazing, there is no effect. An Ordinary or worse result indicates that the infection takes hold of the body. In this case, the body enters a transformative state of high fever and constant fatigue, with Constitution feat checks required as described in the *Gamemaster Guide*. During this period, the nanites rearrange and rebuild the victim's body from the inside out. If the victim dies as a result of the nanite infection, the transformation fails and the nanites quickly dissolve in the body, leaving no trace of their presence.

A victim who successfully "recovers" from the infection has become a sandman, with all the abilities and characteristics of the species. His ability scores are modified as follows: STR +1, DEX +0, CON +2, INT +1, WIL –2, PER –1. He immediately gains the Computer Science broad skill (or a rank in Computer Science–*programming*, if he already has the broad skill).

Sandman neurowiring is compatible with most computer systems, and their hardware can access any human- or etoile-built computer. They carry communications protocols for all major hardware systems, updating these on a regular basis throughout their lives. When a sandman is confronted with a new machine—or a new operating system—it can write appropriate code and communication protocols by making a successful Computer Science–*programming* skill check, much as a human might adapt to the quirks of a new car.

Upon death, a sandman quickly dissolves, as the nanites disassemble both their host and themselves. Within a single round, nothing remains but carbon dust.

Habitat/Society: The sandmen are warlike, bloodthirsty, and able to control their physical reactions to function as optimally efficient killing machines. Indeed, they are one of the most effective warrior species on Earth.

The sandmen are products of centuries of inherited biomechanical engineering, but they are also the keepers of violent hearts. Their makers, the etoile, created them first and foremost as a warrior species, with technology serving simply to enable them to destroy their enemies more effectively. Sandmen society operates largely at the PL 5 of normal humans, but also has access to PL 6 cybergear (and the PL 7 reflex wiring that enables their enhance programs). At the Gamemaster's option, however, other sandman-specific materials and cyberware may be available to sandman characters.

The sandmen have a regimented society, working and living in communities that are often entirely inhabited by fellow sandmen. They function as a military force, answerable only to the etoile. All their knowledge and information about their operations is provided or verified for them by the etoile. The sandmen have long been watchful of both the Grey and the kinori presences on Earth, and open conflict sometimes breaks out.

A few sandman cyberneticists deliberately infect and transform selected humans through a casual pinprick, an aerosol spray, or the exchange of bodily fluids. These specialists in acquiring converts to the cause are called "recruitment doctors" and are highly trusted by the etoile. Any human infected with sandman nanites while under the supervision of a recruitment doctor gains a –3 step bonus to all Constitution feat checks after successful infection, as the doctor can tailor the metamorphosis nanites to suit the patient's metabolism.

Sandmen's life expectancy is about the same as that of humans, though they normally maintain good health and active lifestyles up until death.

Sasquatch

The origin of the sasquatch (literally, "forest people") is shrouded in mysteries. Some believe that the Greys created the sasquatch from DNA preserved from the last of the Neanderthals or the Pleistocene ape called *Gigantopithicus*, said to stand fully 3 meters tall and have a skull twice as large as a human's. (Of course, this would indicate that the Greys visited Earth well before their first known interaction with humanity.) Others suggest that the sasquatch are an alien species brought to Earth by the Greys in their gene banks.

Regardless of their origins, they are most certainly active in the twenty-first century. Whether brought to Earth by the Greys or remnants of the Ice Age, the sasquatch have been living along the Pacific Rim for a long time.

Description: Standing as much as 2.2 meters tall and weighing between 140 and 180 kilograms, the sasquatch have thick, reddish-brown fur (capable of camouflage) and powerful claws. Males have 7-centimeter-long tusks protruding from their lower jaw, though females (the gender most often encountered in the wild) have none.

Despite its clawed hands, the sasquatch leaves humanoid, unclawed footprints resembling those of an ape, suggesting a hinge point closer to the ankle than on a human foot. These tracks are usually the only sign of a sasquatch's presence in an area.

Encounter: Sasquatch avoid contact with humans and flee from most encounters in the wild. With their camouflage and long strides aiding a retreat, they usually manage to avoid a meeting they don't want to have. When forced to stand and fight, however, they are ferocious and generally leave no survivors.

Sasquatch Game Data

STR	13	(2d4+8)	INT	9	(d8+4)
DEX	8	(2d4+3)	WIL	9	(2d6+2)
CON	12	(2d4+7)	PER	7	(2d6)

Durability: 18/18/9/9* Action check: 8+/7/3/1
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 0
FX energy points: 5 (incantors only)

*Sasquatch have superior durability; multiply the sasquatch's Constitution by 1.5 to determine durability ratings.

Attacks

Claws	15/7/3	d4+2w/d4+4w/d4+2m	LI/0
Crossbow	9/4/2	d4+2w/d6+2w/d4+1m	HI/0

Defenses
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks (camouflage)

Skills
Athletics [13]; Melee Weapons [13]; Unarmed [13]–*brawl [15];* Primitive [8]–*crossbow [9];* Stamina [12]–*endurance [13];* Knowledge [9]–*language (Grey) [12], language (specific human) [10];* Creativity [9]; Awareness [9]–*intuition [10];* Culture [7]–*etiquette (Grey) [9];* Interaction [7].

Sasquatch prefer colder, alpine climates, living in high mountain basins and valleys far from human interference and surviving mountain winters without too much hardship. The sasquatch have learned to shun human contact from bitter past experience; they were hunted as monsters or even as werewolves in America and as big game in Tibet.

Sasquatch prefer to remain at higher altitudes during the summer, only coming down to lower altitudes in winter months. This explains the relative lack of sightings by human hikers and campers. In the summer, when outdoor recreation is at its peak, the sasquatch are absent; in winter, few travelers attempt to cross the mountain terrain that the sasquatch call home.

Many sasquatch work with the Greys, sharing transportation and labor duties and providing a greater measure of security on missions to Earth destinations. They sometimes venture near or into human settlements, but most of their work is done in the wilderness, tracking down Strangers that threaten the Grey's goals and destroying them.

A great church exists among the sasquatch, an institution that oversees the sasquatch high holy days, their sacred combats, and their purification rituals. This is the Church of Incantation, a strange mix of pseudo-Christian and shamanistic elements unique to the sasquatch.

Because of their size, sasquatch usually provoke fear in the humans they encounter. When seen, the sasquatch are often shot at—but they can survive gunshot wounds. Indeed, they commonly are said to vanish from sight when shot: This is just a function of their natural camouflage ability, which often protects them from observation in the wilderness (and grants a –1 step bonus to their Stealth–*hide* skill checks).This ability comes from the fur of a sasquatch, which contains clusters of pigmented cells, rather than being made entirely of dead tissue. These cells can change color nearly instantaneously, though the sasquatch has difficulty replicating patterns or extremely bright colors.

Despite their interaction with the Greys, sasquatch maintain a primitive culture. They suffer a +2 step penalty when using any technological item from Progress Level 4 or higher. This is most likely due to a desire on the part of the Greys to prevent their servitor species from gaining the expertise necessary to overthrow their creators.

Habitat/Society: Tribes of sasquatch exist in many regions, ranging from the Cascade mountain range of Oregon and Washington up into British Columbia, Alaska, throughout the Russian Far East, and down into the Himalayas (where they are called yeti; see separate entry below). The North American variety is detailed here.

The sasquatch earn a different name from almost every human group they encounter. For instance, many Northwesterners refer to the creature as "Bigfoot," while among the Red Pheasant tribe of Saskatchewan the sasquatch are called Mistysen (literally, "big man" or "big person") and are known for their shyness and desire to hide from humans.



Incantation Faith FX

Skill Name	Cost
Incantation	8
Battle Spirits (PER)	4
Calming Voice (PER)	3
Shatter (WIL)	5
Voice of Rage (WIL)	4

Battle Spirits

Transform spell: 1 FX point
Rage and might in battle are great and sacred traditions in all warrior cultures; among the sasquatch, the rousing of battle spirits is as common a ceremony as baptism or the ordination of priests is among humans. When a sasquatch priest calls on *battle spirits*, he must make a skill check; if successful, all creatures the incantor chooses to include in the miracle (who must be within 30 meters of the incantor) gain a –1 step bonus to their action checks for the next 4 hours. In addition, based on the result of the skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing), all targets gain a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus to Resolve–*mental resolve* checks during that time. If the check fails, the miracle simply does not occur and cannot be attempted again for a full 30 days.

The effort of summoning divine aid for others drains the sasquatch responsible for the ceremony; the incantor suffers a number of stun points equal to the number of creatures he affects with *battle spirits*.

Calming Voice

Transform spell: 1 FX point
With this spell, the incantor's voice takes on a hypnotic quality, lulling a target creature within 30 meters into a state of blissful trust. With an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success, the incantor adjusts a single creature's attitude one, two, or three categories toward Fanatic.

This spell lasts 1 full hour. Use of this spell against targets in combat suffers a +2 step penalty. Any attack by the incantor or his allies against a calmed target automatically dispels the effect.

Shatter

Transform spell: 2 FX points
An incantor can destroy an object within 30 meters through nothing more than the power of his voice. This requires a complex skill check with the number of successes required equal to the item's durability. (Items with a durability of greater than 10 can't be shattered with this spell.) In addition, items of Good toughness apply a +2 step penalty to the check, and items of Amazing toughness apply a +4 step penalty. One roll may be made per phase. If the incantor suffers any damage during the casting of this spell, he must make a Stamina–*endurance* skill check or the effect is ruined.

For example, an incantor wishing to *shatter* a light truck (Dur 7, Good toughness) would require 7 successes at a +2 step penalty. Destroying a pistol (Dur 2, Ordinary toughness) held in an opponent's hand would require only 2 successes, while bringing down a section of a steel wall (Dur 5, Amazing toughness) would take 5 successes with a +4 step penalty.

Penalties also apply for range. At a range of 5 meters or less, no modifier applies. Between 5 and 15 meters, apply a +1 step penalty, and between 15 and 30 meters, apply a +2 step penalty.

Anyone inside, holding, or within 3 meters of a shattered object may suffer damage; make a Constitution feat check and apply the result from TABLE P15: IMPACT DAMAGE in the *Player's Handbook* as if the character had taken an extremely short fall.

Voice of Rage

Transform spell: 1 FX point
This spell turns the incantor's voice into a powerful weapon that can inspire fear among his enemies. Any creature within 30 meters of the incantor must make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check (with a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty based on the success of the *voice of rage* skill check) or flee in terror for 2d8 rounds. Note that this even affects the incantor's allies (who gain a –3 step bonus to the *mental resolve* check), though sasquatch are immune to its effects.

The priestly hierarchy consists of a dozen layers and is encrusted with a thousand forms of theological minutiae, full of ornate philosophical details that the sasquatch love. At the apex of this edifice of faith stand the incantors, a group of mystics who forsake clan allegiances, previous names, and warrior instincts in favor of a religious calling and the pursuit of purity of voice. Above all else, the incantors sing. They are divided into what humans would call countertenor, tenor, baritone, bass, basso profundo, and the uniquely sasquatch grand bass, but in all cases their voices can create Faith FX effects. While the Greys are suspicious of the sasquatch church, their sociologists are certain that attempts to suppress it would backfire, so they do their best to ignore it.

Only sasquatch are capable of Incantation Faith FX. Even the most dedicated humans have proven incapable of duplicating its effects. See the sidebar for more information.

Yeti

Rare in the extreme, the yeti of the Himalayas are a relatively wild branch of sasquatch (see above). Taught mindwalking arts long ago by the Ascended Masters (see "Keepers of Knowledge: The Rosicrucians" in *Chapter 6: The Illuminati*), these creatures pass down their knowledge from generation to generation. Their name is derived from the Sherpa term "yeh-teh," which can be translated roughly as "that thing."

Yeti Game Data

STR	12	(2d4+7)	INT	9	(d8+3)
DEX	8	(2d4+3)	WIL	9	(2d6+2)
CON	12	(2d4+7)	PER	9	(2d6+2)

Durability: 18/18/9/9* Action check: 9+/8/4/2
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 4

*Yeti have superior durability; multiply the yeti's Constitution by 1.5 to determine durability ratings.

Attacks

Claws	14/7/3	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/0
Tire	11/5/2	special	special

Defenses
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks (camouflage)

Skills
Athletics [12]; Unarmed [12]–*brawl [14];* Stealth [8]–*hide [12];* Movement [12]–*trailblazing [14];* Stamina [12]–*endurance [14];* Survival [12]–*arctic [15];* Knowledge [9]–*language (Tibetan) [12], language (Grey) [11], language (Sherpa) [10];* Awareness [9]–*perception [10];* Investigate [9]–*track [12];* Resolve [9]–*mental resolve [10];* Interaction [9].

Psionic Skills
Telepathy [8]–*contact [9], tire [11].*

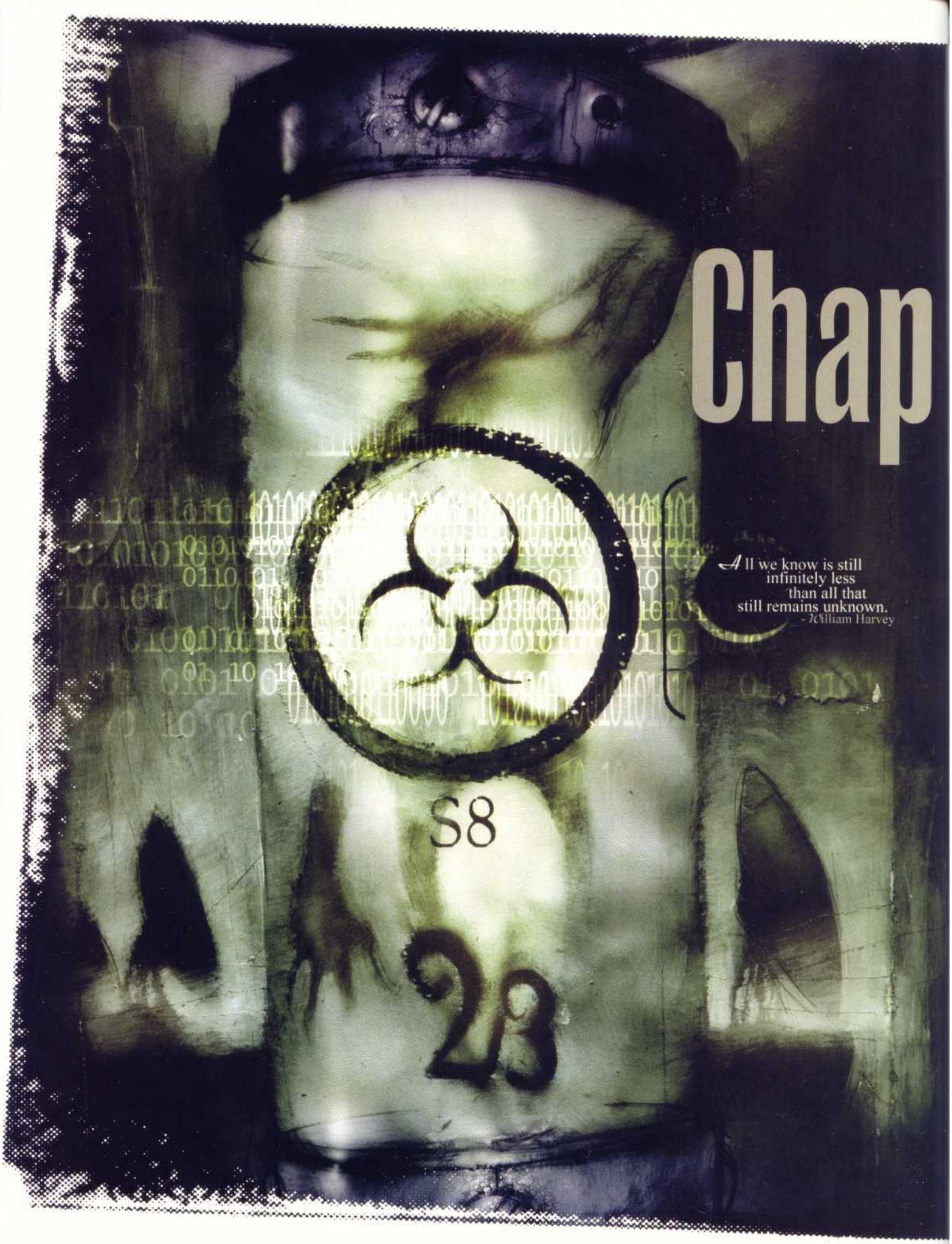
Description: The yeti is often described as having dark brown or gray fur, though their camouflage ability (as noted under "Sasquatch," above) allows them to blend with their surroundings as necessary. They are slightly smaller than typical sasquatch, though still much larger than humans.

Encounter: Most yeti avoid contact with humans, leaving behind only enormous footprints and a reputation as the biggest of the missing links. Those few humans they approach in the Himalayas are almost always natives, never tourists.

Their isolation has led to their having an even more primitive culture than most sasquatch. Yeti therefore suffer a +3 step penalty when using technology from Progress Level 4 or higher. Most disdain weapons entirely, instead relying on their claws and psionic powers.

Habitat/Society: The yeti have a somewhat predictable migration pattern first noted by Dr. Mark Adam Hutchins, a cryptozoologist working in the Himalayas in the 1990s. Rather than migrating across land, however, the yeti migrate between altitudes. During the summer months, they retreat to the high mountains, hunting goats, poaching yaks and mountain ponies, and teaching their young the survival skills they need at high altitudes. During the winter, they come down to the mountain valleys when they come out at all; the most extreme snowstorms discourage them, but anything less may be acceptable to them, even preferable when they attempt to take livestock from Tibetan or Nepalese villagers.




Chap
All we know is still
infinitely less
than all that
still remains unknown.
- William Harvey
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28

chapter 9 running a dark•matter campaign

THE GAMEMASTER HAS WHAT MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE IN any DARK•MATTER game session: He or she must be inventive, flexible, and creative enough to keep at least one step ahead of the players at all times. In slowly revealing a series of sinister mysteries, the Gamemaster must weave the puzzles together into an overarching plot, one clue at a time. Perhaps the most difficult part of the task involves determining where to draw the line between providing too much information and not providing enough. This chapter offers some guidelines, but in practice just how much you should reveal depends on your players, your plots, and the overall history of your campaign.

Using Conspiracies

A DARK•MATTER campaign can take a thousand different forms, depending on which conspiracies the heroes choose to investigate—and which ones choose to investigate (or even recruit) them. Though this book assumes that heroes begin play as members of the Hoffmann Institute, they may find their allegiances drifting during the course of the campaign as they interact with various groups. Styles of play can differ as well. One group might burn an action-filled trail of violence across the land and end it all in a cataclysmic firefight against the forces of oppression. Another might peel apart mysteries like the layers of an onion, always finding another layer beneath. In either case, those who learn too much may have to go on the run to avoid becoming the next victims of a global conspiracy.

Conspiracy Campaigns

The dozens of different conspiracies that exist within the campaign setting tend to fall into five broad categories: government, Institute insiders, alien, secret society, and loose cannon. The following paragraphs describe each of these in more detail. Feel free to choose the type of conspiracy you prefer for your campaign, or mix and match them to suit your purposes.

Government

This type of campaign focuses on the corruption inherent in government and military organizations, and on uncovering research, inventions, and discoveries hidden from the general public. A typical mission might involve retrieving technological tools from a government or joint alien-government base. Whether or not the heroes meet the Greys during such a mission is up to the Gamemaster, but hints of the aliens' presence should crop up as often as saucer sightings. The heroes in a campaign based on government conspiracies may never encounter Arcane Magic or Faith FX; instead they typically fight mutants spawned in test tubes, and elite strike forces trained by the military machine.

Institute Insiders

Weird events take place within the Institute itself, and the heroes must investigate an increasing number of bizarre mysteries. Researchers and records disappear without a trace, and contacts are suddenly recalled by their superiors while new ones arrive to take their places. Aliens within the Institute's ranks may or may not choose to make their presence known. Both technological and arcane challenges present themselves in this type of campaign. Ultimately, the heroes will likely discover Dr. Nakami's true nature and the Institute's links to the Greys.

Alien

Although any of the conspiracy types can involve aliens, this one focuses particularly on their activities and agendas. Heroes gain insight into plots from a perspective other than their own—perhaps members of an alien race are slowly transforming the world to make it more to their liking, or perhaps they are stealing important resources (even organic ones!) from the Earth. Those opposing the aliens may have trouble gaining help, as few humans are inclined to accept their story, and the insidious alien infiltrators already have nearly airtight cover stories. Therefore, the heroes must contend with advanced technology, otherworldly powers, and alien mind-sets on their own.

Secret Society

The heroes stumble across evidence linking the ancient origins of certain modern-day groups with the arrival of Strangers. Some of these groups possess arcane knowledge of dark matter rituals; others utilize alien power sources and technology to their benefit. The heroes must uncover the plots of these secret societies and determine how great a threat they pose.

Loose Cannon

The heroes investigate a person who represents a danger to particular factions or to world stability in general. This individual has no alliance with a government, alien race, or secret society; he or she acts purely for personal interests—though these interests may coincide with those of one or more conspiracy groups. Adventures in this type of campaign can be extremely dangerous, as multiple rival groups may be investigating the same individual!

The Nature of Conspiracies

Because of their diverse interests and activities, measuring the influence of secret societies is problematical at best. Often, a

member of one conspiracy actually works for another or is a member of two or more conspiratorial groups—either working for multiple organizations or using them all for his or her own ends.

An illuminati group may suddenly fade from view for years or even centuries, only to rise again to prominence. In fact, any secret society with a name and a creed is virtually assured of immortality. Somewhere, sometime, someone is bound to resurrect the name of the defunct group at the very least and perhaps even its agenda.

Consider the octopus as a useful analogy for understanding the dealings of secret societies and conspiracies. Each such group has several arms, reaching in many directions at once. At the same time that the illuminati manipulate the Federal Reserve, they also take control of a television network and build illegal weapons in a hidden base under a Native American reservation—and simultaneously pursue numerous other plots. The octopus almost always has hidden arms that no one (even those working on vital tasks) knows about, allowing for surprise moves or sudden recoveries in the course of a campaign.

Conspiracies tend to work from the inside out—infiltrating, manipulating, and fabricating. Most would rather bribe, blackmail, control, or convert than attack, kill, or destroy. They kill when they must and destroy as needed, but they do so in the same way that a virus attacks an organism—slowly, secretly, and in such a way as to root themselves deeply into whatever they attack. Once they are integrated with their targets, no force can ever completely expunge them.

Anyone can become the target of a conspiracy; the contacts selected depend on what the particular group seeks to accomplish. A secret society might bribe the security guard of a major corporate headquarters to allow illuminati agents inside. A middle manager of the same corporation might be blackmailed into disclosing secrets. Members of the conspiracy could approach a corporate board member and convince him to join their ranks, or simply try to control his mind.

But you don't have to work for a corporation to draw the attention of those trying to infiltrate it. Policemen, janitors, teachers, garbagemen (the trash of one's enemies holds many secrets), writers, accountants, military personnel, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists—all these people and more may have information, items, or influence that one of the conspiracies in this book might want to know, control, subvert, or destroy.

Although some conspiracies use force, others reach their aims by winning the hearts and minds of others. For example, discrediting a well-known leader (and thus turning public opinion against him) is much more effective than assassinating him. Building a device whose low-frequency electromagnetic waves can subtly manipulate a population is much easier than trying to control thousands of people through military force.

Conspiracy Tech

At some point in every DARK•MATTER campaign, the heroes must use or face technology on the cutting edge or beyond. Depending on the particular campaign's focus, high-tech items may appear in almost every session. A DARK•MATTER Gamemaster therefore needs a good feel for such technology.

Satellites

In the global communications age, satellite technology is as vital to secret organizations as it is to daily life. Orbital satellites spy upon and track foreign and domestic targets with ultrasophisticated cameras and monitoring equipment. They transmit and relay communications ranging from television signals to phone signals to computer data. They peer into near and deep space, monitoring all that their sensors can perceive. Some, at least in theory, have powerful energy weapons or mind-controlling frequency emitters as part of their onboard equipment.

Many DARK•MATTER adventures involve satellite networks in one way or another. Heroes may have to avoid detection by spy satellites, destroy a communications satellite that has been transmitting data to a hostile group, or retrieve a crashed satellite and the information it carries.

Monitoring Equipment

Electronic bugs are as much a part of conspiracy as assassination cover-ups. Careful organizations and individuals continually scan their environs for listening devices and similar technology.

With certain special devices, anyone can tap into and pick up phone conversions. Tracing calls is easy, although it takes anywhere from six to twenty seconds to accurately pinpoint a call's source. Sophisticated technobuffs know ways to foil traces by tapping into phone lines (a complex Technical Science–*juryrig* skill check; requires 5 successes, with one check per minute allowed).

Of course, cellular phone signals are easier to intercept, although the most sophisticated systems are capable of elaborate scrambling techniques. Tracing a cell phone call is simple; the investigator need only arrange to pick up the signal with multiple receivers and triangulate the source.

Anyone in the U.S. can legally purchase listening bugs, bug detectors, phone patches, and other such devices. Of course, certain special mechanisms (available only to the government and other groups with access to cutting-edge technology) prove much more effective than their open-market counterparts.

Computers

Most DARK•MATTER heroes may find it useful to carry laptop computers with them. Even those who don't choose to carry computers might occasionally find it necessary to break into one, as computer disks or hard drives can harbor a treasure trove of clues about the activities of secret societies. The modern-day illuminati—even those of an ancient, mystical bent—are all computer-literate.

Hacking into computer systems is a dangerous (but often efficient) way to gain information. Smart hackers approach systems through multiple steps to make tracing their intrusions difficult. If the enemy succeeds in tracking a hack, however, the perpetrators should expect the police, federal agents (most computer intrusion-related crime falls under federal jurisdiction), or the armed enforcers of their enemies to descend upon their location within minutes. Computers with no outside connections usually hold the best secrets.

Telephones are not the only devices vulnerable to outside monitoring. Systems experts and hackers can sometimes "bug" computers, secretly linking two units so that anything typed into one appears on the screens of both. Furthermore, the heroes should realize that they are not the only ones skilled in hacking; while they try to break into the computers of their foes, the latter may well be trying to do the same to theirs.

The Internet

Although obviously related to computers, the net is worthy of a discussion all its own. Computer-savvy heroes can research virtually any topic on the Internet—a laptop with a modem acts as a portable library that's open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Moreover, websites and discussion groups are often the fastest way to gain information not available via the standard media. The heroes may want to check sites and newsgroups relating to conspiracies or paranormal activity routinely. This can be a great impetus for adventures, as the information they find could lead them right into a scenario the Gamemaster has planned.

Sometimes secret societies use the modern era's widespread Internet access to their own advantage. Not only might they use email to discuss plans, but secure websites are good places to disseminate important information. The creators of these sites typically guard them with password-only access and potent encryption. The Hoffmann Institute has an extensive "open" website, but it also utilizes this technology to keep certain areas hidden.

Lastly, the CIA and the FBI monitor the same sites and newsgroups that the heroes do, and those organizations may attempt to trace sources of confidential information. Careful heroes should watch what they post.

Low-Frequency Transmissions

Since the time of Nikolai Tesla, electromagnetic (EM) radiation has been an important tool for conspiracies. Manipulating EM energies can be useful in many ways, but fringe science is most interested in the effects of low-frequency transmissions, which many believe can affect the human mind. Various theories hold that by transmitting appropriate low-frequency signals, one can induce minor effects such as irritation and sleeplessness in an unknowing victim or even achieve full-blown mind control. Conspiracy theorists claim that various agencies and groups routinely use EM broadcasts to manipulate society.

Protecting oneself from such transmissions commonly entails blocking them with a reflective material, such as aluminum foil. Often, conspiracy theorists line the walls of their homes (particularly the rooms where they sleep) with heavy-duty foil. Some even wrap it around their heads (either openly while in private or under hats in public). It may look foolish, but they claim the technique keeps them in control of their own thoughts.

Some researchers believe that various types of energy waves can affect matter as well as the mind. These theories link energy transmissions with effects ranging from the onset of cancer (arising from proximity to power lines, microwave ovens, or other seemingly innocuous sources) to actual movement or disruption of matter. Some researchers also hold that the interaction of otherwise harmless radiation with matter might be the true cause of apparent poltergeist activity.

Chemicals

Certain secret societies make extensive use of cutting-edge pharmaceuticals, either to attack their enemies or to enhance the physical or mental capabilities of their members. Chemicals can make a victim of poisoning appear to have had a heart attack or even mask traces of poison in a cadaver from autopsy tests.

A path of inquiry involving chemicals might very easily lead heroes into the counterculture. Some people believe that LSD and similar illegal drugs actually create a sort of doorway to a higher reality, capable of expanding consciousness and propelling the user into a new state of evolution. According to this theory, such drugs are not hallucinogens at all, nor are they dangerous and unhealthy like PCP and heroin. Some speculate that a government conspiracy created and initially distributed these so-called "hallucinogens" to placate an otherwise unruly youth movement in the late 1960s. Others believe the conspiracy was responsible for the government outlawing such substances. Either way, the Gamemaster should decide what role (if any) drugs will play in his or her game.

Fighting Against a Conspiracy

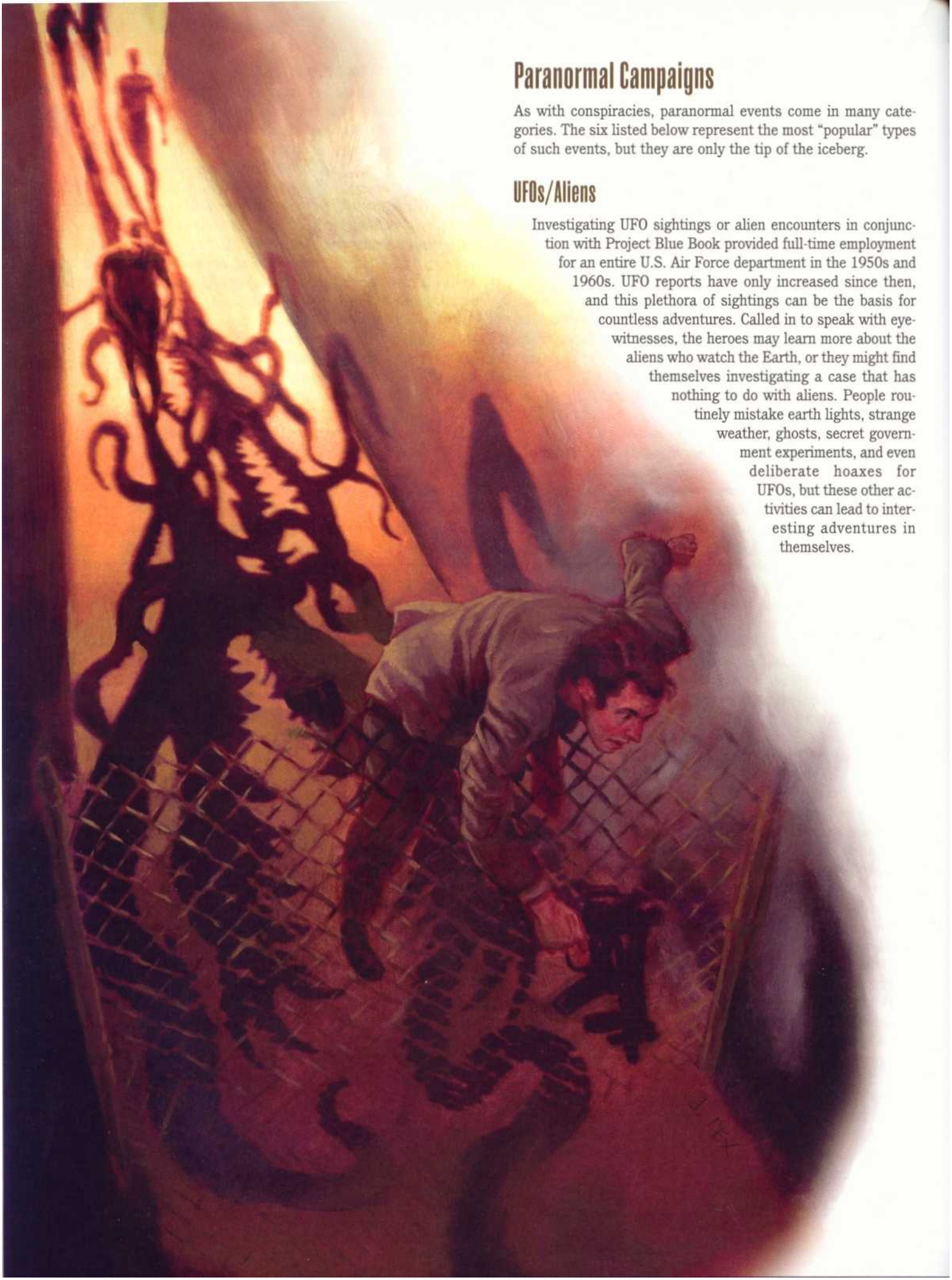
So, how do you stop a group whose goals include taking over the U.S. Supreme Court while bringing two other nations to war? The answer is in the details. No group of heroes, no matter how intelligent, powerful, or talented, has a chance against a conspiracy with billions of dollars, hundreds (if not thousands) of followers, and established inroads into organizations vital to its plans. However, through careful research they can discover how the conspiracy intends to achieve its goals and prevent those plans from coming to fruition.

For example, perhaps the secret society mentioned above schemes to take over the Supreme Court by assassinating one or more of its members. The heroes can foil the plan by preventing these assassinations. The conspiracy might attempt to use blackmail or even mind control to convince the president to appoint people of its choice to the cabinet. This again provides a concrete opportunity for the heroes to interfere constructively, this time by breaking the mind control.

In short, the goals of a DARK•MATTER adventure may look insurmountable at first, but if the players learn to break down their ultimate objectives into smaller, readily accomplishable tasks, the result can be a game that's exciting for everyone. A good Gamemaster never lets the players (or their heroes) give up hope just because their enemy is bigger than they are.

Using the Paranormal

A DARK•MATTER game can be run without conspiracies as well. Instead of (or in addition to) investigating secret societies, the heroes can explore the paranormal. This too is a source of endless adventures, because the world of the paranormal is as big as . . . well, the entire world.



Paranormal Campaigns

As with conspiracies, paranormal events come in many categories. The six listed below represent the most "popular" types of such events, but they are only the tip of the iceberg.

UFOs/Aliens

Investigating UFO sightings or alien encounters in conjunction with Project Blue Book provided full-time employment for an entire U.S. Air Force department in the 1950s and 1960s. UFO reports have only increased since then, and this plethora of sightings can be the basis for countless adventures. Called in to speak with eyewitnesses, the heroes may learn more about the aliens who watch the Earth, or they might find themselves investigating a case that has nothing to do with aliens. People routinely mistake earth lights, strange weather, ghosts, secret government experiments, and even deliberate hoaxes for UFOs, but these other activities can lead to interesting adventures in themselves.

UFO and alien adventures often involve abductions, lost time, crop circles, psychic communication, UFO nuts (and cults), and technology far beyond the realm of humankind. Unlike conspiracy-related alien adventures, paranormal-based scenarios should be strange and inexplicable. The aliens involved should remain at a distance, their motivations invisible or unfathomable. Often, the adventure lies in finding them, or in dealing with those who claim to have seen them.

Ghosts

The haunted house symbolizes the archetypal paranormal adventuring site. Poltergeists, mysterious sounds, possession, automatic writing, temperature changes, and psychic contact are only some of the phenomena reported when unquiet spirits walk the Earth.

In the modern day, ghosts manifest themselves in ways appropriate to the culture. DARK•MATTER ghosts should use up-to-date methodology, perhaps sending unsettling messages by radio, telephone, or even email. Ghostly images might show up on film, computer screens, or high-tech energy detectors.

Mutants

In theory, humankind is still an evolving animal, and the amount of radiation and pollution in our world today makes all sorts of strange evolutionary offshoots possible. The heroes might find themselves on the trail of a murderer who seems to feed upon his victims, or they might face an opponent stronger, faster, or smarter than any normal human should be. Sometimes mutations produce strange side effects, and the mutant may continue to develop and evolve as the adventure progresses, displaying additional or enhanced traits as time goes on. In any event, each such case should prove unique—and often quite bizarre. Mutant investigations work particularly well in urban settings.

Weather/(Un)natural Phenomena

Often called Fortean weather or phenomena, this category includes all manner of strange occurrences. Heroes might investigate crop circles, reports of strange events (such as fish, gelatinous blobs, frogs, or odd-colored liquids) falling from

Close Encounters

Although reports of encounters with Greys and other alien beings often differ wildly, witnesses and abduction victims frequently report and re-report certain common elements. Remember that the term "UFO" suggests that the object is unidentified and is not automatically synonymous with an alien craft.

Sightings: Probably the most common UFO sighting involves nothing more than a moving light in the sky. More detailed witness reports include the ever-popular flying saucers or cigar-shaped craft. These lights and craft sometimes travel very slowly, but much more often move impossibly fast, their speed and complex (sometimes seemingly impossible) maneuverings distinguishing them from normal aircraft. During many encounters, electrical devices operate strangely or not at all, radios play only static, and metal objects shudder as if affected by a powerful magnetic field. Alien vessels are usually very quiet but often leave marks on the ground betraying their passing or landing. Such evidence includes snapped tree branches and scorched grass. People close to alien craft sightings often find themselves tanned or burned as though they had been out in the sun. Animals behave strangely (and usually uneasily or fearfully) in the presence of what appears to be an alien craft. Sometimes mutilated animals are found after UFO sightings.

UFO encounters are often accompanied by Fortean events (named for the researcher Charles Fort) including strange vibrations, mysterious humming noises, and even bizarre weather such as fish, frogs, or unknown bits of goo falling from the sky. Paranormal events frequently occur together, so lights in the sky may occur in concert with a ghost sighting, a poltergeist haunting, or displays of mental powers.

Phony UFOs: Aside from just plain hoaxes, a number of occurrences are reported as UFOs that simply aren't. These include extremely low- or high-flying aircraft, satellites, ball lightning, and even, yes, the ever-popular government explanations: weather balloons, swamp gas, and the planet Venus. More controversially, some scientists blame the majority of UFO sightings on "earth lights" or "plasmas," which they claim are balls of energy created by geologic pressures deep within the earth. These earth lights occasionally discharge from the planet into the atmosphere and behave in what appears to be a very strange manner. Earth lights bob, move in erratic patterns, suddenly change course, and sometimes seem to be drawn to machines or even people.

Alien Abductions: Tens of thousands of people in the United States alone have reported that they believe they have been abducted by aliens. The archetypal case, that of Betty and Barney Hill in 1961, sets the standard for abduction stories that follow a remarkably similar pattern. Victims are overcome by a total paralysis as the aliens arrive. Alien abductors are cold and harsh, although sometimes they later become friendly. In either case, the aliens examine the abductees, performing unknown medical tests upon them. Some reports say that women are impregnated or have eggs removed for experimentation with alien crossbreeding. Sometimes male sperm is also harvested for similar reasons. A few abductees even report seeing alien-human hybrids, either as children or adults.

Returned abductees experience a loss of time. Usually, events during the abduction are not immediately remembered, so the time loss is inexplicable. While this could be just an alien ability to erase memory (at least temporarily), it could also have something to do with the otherworldly nature of the aliens or their technology creating fluctuations in time itself.

Aliens often abduct the same victims repeatedly, creating great fear and anxiety in the abductee throughout his or her life. Sometimes, however, the aliens become "friendly" with their victims and the abductions become calm, peaceful experiences. Many abductees claim that the aliens implant some small device in their bodies. While some say that the implant is a tracking device (perhaps for further abductions), others suggest that it may be a receiver of some sort (possibly a mind-control device) or something else entirely.

the sky like rain, unexplained sounds, temporal discrepancies, energy-field aberrations, odd plants, appearances of religious figures . . . the list goes on and on.

In these cases, determining the cause of the strange happening is the stated goal of the adventure—but that's not always possible. Sometimes the mystery should remain a mystery. Even so, the investigation can still lead to important (or at least interesting) information. The Gamemaster should set up such adventures so that the cause of the unusual occurrences is not immediately obvious and could in fact be any number of things. In a best-case scenario, each hero can develop his or her own theory as to the nature of the events.

For example, the heroes follow up a report of strange lights sighted in a remote area. Right away, some members of the group suspect alien spacecraft. After speaking with witnesses, one hero concludes that a ghost is responsible, since several people claim that the lights follow people around in an area of desolate hills. Upon checking out the site, the investigators catch a glimpse of the lights themselves. One of the more scientifically minded team members then insists that the phenomenon is nothing more than ball lightning, while another suspects this to be an example of the earth lights theoretically produced by tectonic friction. Although they never actually discover the real nature of the lights, their investigation does reveal a secret government base where scientists conduct strange experiments (which may be the source of the lights after all . . .).

Cryptozoology

Cryptozoology is the study and investigation of any animal or creature unknown to science. The category covers everything from out-of-place animals (big predatory cats outside London, for example) to near-mythical beasts such as Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster. Cryptozoologists commonly suspect that creatures labeled as extinct still walk (or swim or fly) upon the Earth. Mammals, birds, fish, dinosaurs, and other creatures long thought dead might still be living in remote areas. Heroes who discover any such beast have certainly accomplished something noteworthy.

Many DARK•MATTER cryptozoology adventures deal with a dangerous creature that preys upon cattle, pets, or even people. In such adventures, ending the beast's threat is a much greater accomplishment than simply discovering the true nature of the disturbance.

Magical/Psychic Powers

Throughout history, some individuals with arcane or psychic powers have openly used them to perform miracles, often becoming important religious or cult figures either during their lifetimes or afterward. In other cases, miracles have just seemed to occur around gifted individuals inexplicably. Still others with such powers have unquestionably been malevolent presences seeking to exploit their unusual abilities by harming others.

The heroes' job in an adventure based around such gifted individuals might involve investigating strange phenomena and isolating the person responsible after eliminating other possible causes. For example, they might have to stop an evil Mindwalker or arcanist from hurting or manipulating others. The gifted person might be the leader of a fanatic cult or a serial killer using paranormal abilities to commit crimes or to hide from authorities. Only those acquainted with such powers (such as the heroes) can really deal with such a villain.

Like mutant adventures, these cases should vary in scope and content. At least some should focus on the source of the powers, which could be a secret occult society, alien experimentation, or something else altogether. (It might even turn out to be completely unexplainable.)

High Strangeness

No one can really classify or categorize the paranormal—by definition, it's indefinable. The above categories provide some guidance, but the careful reader has already noted considerable crossover between them, as well as omissions. The truth of the matter is that no single method of categorization can cover every strange event that the heroes might investigate.

In a successful DARK•MATTER campaign, the strange and mysterious should remain exactly that—strange and mysterious. Sometimes the heroes should be able to discover the true cause of a paranormal phenomenon (and it might really be paranormal, or it might be mundane), but sometimes they shouldn't. And if they do discover some secret regarding the unknown, it should raise as many questions as it answers. For example, the source of unexplained sounds in the canyon is found to be simply the wind whistling through holes drilled into a huge rock—but who made those ancient-looking holes, and how, and why?

High strangeness is a concept with which every DARK•MATTER Gamemaster should be familiar. The concept is simple: Some things are just so peculiar that one can't really even try to explain them. For example, Joseph Simonton of Eagle River, Wisconsin, once claimed that a weird spacecraft landed in his yard and that the aliens inside gave him some pancakes. Dr. J. Allen Hynek investigated the case and even had the pancakes analyzed. (They contained nothing more unusual than wheat germ.) He concluded that Simonton was not perpetrating a hoax and that there was no reason to believe he had been hallucinating.

But pancakes?

Who can even begin to guess what this could mean, if it were true? High strangeness is just that—the highest level of the absurd that one can imagine—yet such absurdities really seem to happen on occasion. Another example of high strangeness: an eyewitness report that a chunk of ice fell from the sky in the middle of Iowa, and that two live frogs hopped out of it as it melted. The fact that Men In Black use out-of-date slang and drive brand-new cars from the early 1960s also counts as high strangeness.

Another aspect of high strangeness—one that applies directly to the DARK•MATTER campaign—is that many weird paranormal occurrences are somehow related. Bigfoot sightings match up with UFO reports, the display of psychic powers, and tales of ghostly voices emanating from unused channels on TV sets. Mothmen show up at the same time as fish fall from the sky, and these events coincide with appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And Men In Black show up during and after all of them. Coincidence? Are these events all linked in ways that we just don't yet understand? Or is some cosmic trickster just playing a huge joke?

More than anything else, a DARK•MATTER Gamemaster should take away from this discussion the concept that sometimes the

inexplicable is perfectly acceptable. As long as there is high strangeness, everything seems mysterious and unknown.

General Advice

The golden rule of all DARK•MATTER campaigns is simply this: Be very careful with information. Conspiracies and paranormal events work best when cloaked in an air of mystery. A secret society should remain unpredictable at some level; it's always more enjoyable to explore a mysterious membership and unknown plans. Hint at the danger and darkness surrounding those involved with a plot (see "The Information War" later in this chapter for more details).

At the same time, provide plenty of familiar elements and solid evidence of reality. Nothing seems strange or frightening if the heroes can't compare it with something normal. The Institute itself can provide such grounding, and modern technology may serve the same purpose. Weapons and gear should be safe, familiar, and reliable—at least most of the time. There's nothing mysterious about taking a plane across country or making a telephone call, and that's as it should be. If the heroes' phones act unpredictably once, they may become intrigued. If it happens regularly, chances are they'll just get irritated. Be careful about taking away one of a hero's favorite pieces of equipment—doing so at random or too frequently just annoys the players. Doing so rarely and as part of a larger plot, however, can be very effective in motivating the group to seek revenge against the thieves. Oddly enough, the idea that some of their best cutting-edge technology may have been stolen from someone else never seems to occur to heroes. An interesting scenario might revolve around a villain's attempt to recover personal property appropriated by the Institute—and currently in the heroes' possession.

Finally, keep something in reserve. A conspiracy that starts out mysterious and intriguing tends to grow stale (or at least familiar) as the players learn more about it. Even an ancient power group can come to seem mundane in time. To avoid this problem, make sure that some part of a conspiracy always remains unexplained, or that you have a second, new conspiracy already in place when the players' interest in the first one starts to flag.

Do Something!

Heroes in a DARK•MATTER campaign shouldn't be expected to spend all their time investigating conspiracies or strange phenomena. While that's always an important aspect, at some point they need to stop discovering and learning and *do* something, or boredom may ensue. Each adventure should be designed around some concrete task that the heroes must accomplish—be it retrieving the lost data disk from the crashed satellite, stopping the aliens from controlling the young pyrokinetic, or keeping the Masonic serial killer from striking again.

Getting into the Frying Pan

Most of the time, depositing heroes into serious trouble is easy. The first time the bad guys pull out guns and try to bully someone, the good guys usually find a way to resist violently—and at least one of the thugs winds up dead. Presto! The heroes have made an enemy, and the police may shortly be seeking them for questioning.

But this is kid stuff. Real heroes make much bigger enemies: rivals at the Institute, members of a secret society with a grudge, or even aliens harboring a special hatred for a hero who has foiled their plans in the past. Use these enemies to launch new adventures; after all, even when the heroes aren't thinking about their old nemesis, he or she may very well be thinking about *them*—and plotting revenge.

Finally, you can always consider beginning an adventure without a briefing scene (described below) and simply start *in media res* (in the middle of things).

Getting Out

Resist the urge to have supporting cast members save the heroes; if heroes get themselves into trouble, make them responsible for finding the way out. A little advice from tagalong characters such as sidekicks or guides may be appropriate if players are stuck for more than fifteen minutes of real time, but more interference than this can be detrimental to player enjoyment and game balance.

Humor

Conspiracies and gunplay are pretty serious topics, and a scenario in which the heroes must fight and shoot their way through a tangle of liars and traitors can be just as grim. The players may provide their own comic relief in a too-serious game session by cracking a few jokes. If not, the Gamemaster may be able to alleviate the tension and lighten the mood by introducing some crackpot supporting cast members or high strangeness.

Dealing with Psychopaths

The Hoffmann Institute utilizes batteries of profiling tests, well-honed interview techniques, and mind readers to prevent its recruiters from hiring psychopathic deviants. A typical Gamemaster doesn't have quite the same resources, so occasionally a player whose idea of fun involves widespread destruction may slip into the ranks of a game group. This type of player is primarily or exclusively interested in blowing stuff away and should probably be playing video games instead. What can you do about it?

The simplest option, if it's someone you don't mind offending, is to kick the individual out of the group. Often, though, that's not possible; the bloodthirsty player may be a friend or relative whose goodwill you value. So how can you encourage the player to adopt a more flexible gaming style (bloodthirsty, perhaps, but not constantly so)? This requires a little more work on your part as Gamemaster, but a successful effort can turn a one-note player into a really worthwhile contributor to the campaign.

The best solution forces the player to see the implications of his or her hero's actions within the game. Avoid simply putting the hero on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list; that's too obvious. (Besides, the Hoffmann Institute should be able to shield its agents from the law in all but the most extreme cases.) Instead, when the player says that his or her hero is about to try something nasty, ask for confirmation. If such is forthcoming, mention that the hero has a slight twinge of conscience while committing the evil act.

In addition, describe the action and its results in detail. If the hero shoots at bystanders, make sure you tell the group how the hero draws a bead on an innocent target, then slowly pulls the trigger several times. Then describe the victim's shocked look, the panic in the eyes of people nearby as they run away, and the efforts of mothers to shield their children.

Finally, use peer pressure whenever possible. When the heroes file their report with the Institute, ask how they explain the murders, the brutal interrogations, the breaches of protocol, and the flouting of policy. If members of the group continue to break the law in obvious ways without covering their tracks, the whole team may well find itself hunted—either by the law or by private investigators. While the Hoffmann Institute won't abandon its operatives just because they get into hot water, their superiors might send them on an especially dull assignment overseas until the heat is off—which may be a long time. If the whole playing group is held accountable for the misdeeds of one hero, the other players may begin to apply pressure on the serial killer wanna-be.

The Long Arm of the Law

No matter what they do, the heroes will eventually run afoul of the law. Perhaps they must break a law to accomplish their mission (jimmying the lock on the door of the Knights of Malta's headquarters is still breaking and entering, after all). Even if the heroes manage not to do anything illegal, their enemies may still frame them for a crime or manipulate the authorities into pursuing them.

This eventuality can be handled in two ways. The simplest is not to worry about it. Assume that the Hoffmann Institute can pull strings in the background and cover up whatever the heroes have (or haven't) done. This method allows Gamemasters to move the heroes into the next adventure without spending a lot of time on "real world" cleanup activities. Unfortunately, this can quickly destroy the players' ability to suspend disbelief. If heroes can run around and do whatever they want without suffering any realistic repercussions at all, the campaign setting begins to feel less and less like the real world.

The second method is a bit more realistic. This technique involves incorporating just enough contact with the law to convince the players that they must deal with the ramifications of their heroes' actions. For example, if they break into the home of a suspected secret society member, she calls the police. When the cops arrive (anywhere from five to forty-five minutes later), they arrest and jail any heroes still present. Sure, the Hoffmann Institute bails them out in the morning and arranges for charges involving minor crimes to be dropped, but the heroes have to endure the whole process: the reading of their rights, the ride downtown in a police cruiser, the fingerprinting and identification process, and a police interrogation. Investigating officers won't accept stories of UFOs, ghosts, or conspiracies very easily, and smart heroes won't say anything about such matters. (Those who do might expect psychiatric evaluations on top of everything else, assuming that their stories are strange enough—and given DARK•MATTER adventures, they probably will be.)

Even if charges are dropped, however, the heroes now have police records and fingerprints on file. If any members of the group were carrying illegal substances or weapons at the time of arrest, the police impound these as evidence. The Institute's intervention on the heroes' behalf may or may not extend to retrieving such items, depending upon their importance to the mission. But even the Hoffmann Institute might not be able to secure the release of an agent arrested for a particularly serious crime (such as murder or breaking into a federal govern-

Weapons Laws

As heroes travel the world on the Institute's behalf, they'll want to carry their weapons with them. Within the U.S., this is usually no big deal: a weapons permit, a permit to carry a concealed weapon, and even some heroes' status as "security guards" allows them to take their weapons anywhere in the U.S. Overseas, however, the situation changes.

In rich, industrialized countries such as Britain, Germany, or Japan, firearms may be carried only by police officers, soldiers, and a few closely regulated private citizens. Local practice varies: In the U.K., a majority of policemen don't even wear revolvers; in France, gendarmes openly carry submachine guns on the streets. However, private citizens cannot carry weapons in public, and carrying them concealed is generally a felony. Those citizens allowed to own firearms (hunters, sport marksmen, licensed bodyguards, or the Swiss national guard, for example) are expected to keep them at home under lock and key when not in use. Travelers may not bring weapons into these countries, but the Hoffmann Institute can sometimes bypass customs procedures or provide basic weaponry within these areas. The sound of gunfire, however, brings police attention much faster than it does in the United States.

In the developing countries and the former East Bloc countries, weapons are much easier to come by: Tens of thousands of cheap AK-47s have flooded the market in Asia and Africa, for instance, and guns are widely available in Latin America. Though technically illegal, in practice they are unregulated; guns are only seized by the police when they catch a perpetrator. Military-issue weapons are most common and least noticed in nations currently or recently involved in a shooting war, such as Rwanda, Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Indonesia, or Angola. In such places, heroes carrying anything less than a rocket launcher will likely be ignored unless they threaten the local armed forces. At worst, heroes can expect to be shaken down for a bribe or asked to "contribute" their weapons to a rebellion's cause.

In a few cases, strong central governments have clamped down on unregistered weapons owned by the public. Such nations include Singapore, Israel, South Korea, Turkey, and South Africa. Bringing weapons into the country is not permitted without a special military license or a sporting exemption. In these militarized but advanced nations, special forces, secret police, or even ordinary citizens with a special license frequently carry concealed weapons. Few people question anyone claiming to work for the government, if she carries a gun. On the other hand, impersonating a government official can lead to severe consequences, including confiscation of personal effects, interrogation, and deportation.

ment facility)—or release could take months (at the very least) to accomplish.

Of course, a prison term might also serve as the basis for a new adventure. Maybe the heroes find a contact who knows something interesting among the inmates—or perhaps there's something odd going on in the jail itself.

Unless the trial or long-term incarceration is actually part of a planned adventure, however, it's best not to have the heroes actually serve prison sentences, or even go to trial. If jail time does come into play for some reason, the Gamemaster should consider glossing over the periods that aren't important and advancing time to a point when the heroes can take action.

Adventure Elements

Adventures are the playground of the Gamemaster—a chance to create scenarios using themes, action style, and story elements that the group enjoys most. In most DARK•MATTER campaigns, the heroes attempt to recover ancient knowledge (often long lost in the realm of myth) about the histories of various species and artifacts, then apply it to modern problems associated with the Strangers, human conspiracies, and enemies they have made along the way. The following section discusses some tips on setting up adventures that work from the word go.

Triggers

Also called plot hooks, triggers are the bits of preliminary information that start an adventure rolling. The trigger for a scenario might be an unexpected attack on the heroes, a briefing from a supervisor at the Institute, a strange piece of email, a visit from an alien creature, a phone call from someone in trouble, or even just a strange newspaper report.

No matter what form it takes, a trigger has to motivate the heroes to investigate further and take action. Good triggers should provide several unanswered questions to pique the players' interest. Who shot at them and why? Where did the phone call come from? Why hasn't anyone else looked into this strange story about a green meteor falling near McMurdo Station in the Antarctic—and why hasn't anyone heard from the base since?

There are a thousand ways to involve players in a story. Start by picking a scene that amused or frightened you in a book or movie, or even something from a recent news report. Then imagine how your players might respond to it, and off you go.

Starting the Campaign

The most important trigger of all is the one that kicks off the whole campaign. Why have the heroes gathered together? Are they all rookie recruits for the Institute, or does something else link them? Is there a specific reason why the Institute selected them for this mission, or has mere coincidence brought these particular individuals together at the start of the game? Perhaps the Institute has manufactured an event of interest to all the heroes in hopes of recruiting the whole bunch in one fell swoop!

The Gamemaster should discuss a variety of options with the players to reach a mutually satisfactory "starting point." This helps everyone maintain a stronger personal investment in the campaign.

The Supporting Cast

There is no better vehicle for portraying the tone of the setting than the supporting cast. People the heroes meet during the course of a paranormal- or conspiracy-based campaign are often as weird as the topic of investigation.

Pepper each game session with odd characters. Eyewitnesses always relate their stories in their own unique ways. Even if multiple people experienced the same event, each person has an original perspective. Individuals knowledgeable about the illuminati or aliens are usually quite paranoid. They don't like to talk to strangers, meet in the open, or stay in the same place very long. Each conspiracy nut is different, however. One might demand to search the heroes for listening devices before conversing with them, while another may insist on talking only in vague euphemisms.

Nuts, wackos, and kooks should make up a significant percentage of the supporting characters with whom the heroes interact. Such folks often lack social skills, as most would rather write in their chicken-scratch-filled, nearly illegible, multivolume journals than talk to other people. Some may even choose to avoid human contact altogether by communicating solely online. Such people typically fill their homes from floor to ceiling with books and newspapers. The occult-minded often inscribe magical protective symbols on the inside walls of their houses to keep evil spirits at bay. Those who fear alien activity or conspiracies line their interior walls with tinfoil to reflect mind-control rays. Technologically adept characters may even have surprisingly advanced security systems to protect their possessions.

Not all the "nuts and wackos" are paranoid individuals hiding from society, however. DARK•MATTER adventures often bring the heroes into contact with people who have strong feelings about various topics. Religious fanatics, extreme patriots, racial bigots, anarchists, violence-loving fiends, nearly insane manic-depressives, and compulsive crackpots may also provide color for the campaign. The Gamemaster should be ready to play a lot of characters over the top and with great intensity.

On the other hand, some supporting cast members are low-profile. Cult leaders with the power of life and death over their fanatic followers, knowledgeable government bureaucrats who have sold out to dark forces, and powerful mindwalkers who know no fear are just some of the people who may cross the heroes' paths.

And of course, since the DARK•MATTER setting is very similar to the real world, the heroes encounter plenty of normal, everyday people. Gamemasters should try to make all of these latter individuals seem as real as possible, if for no other reason than to contrast them with the weird people and creatures the heroes encounter during investigations. Unless they've experienced a strange event or become involved in something important to the heroes, however, regular people may be no more than innocent bystanders in adventures.

The DARK•MATTER setting also features aliens and monsters with no relationship to the real world at all. Some such beings of the Dark Tide resemble supernatural creatures from Earth mythology: ghosts, angels, and demons. Others, such as ekimmu, are parasites that require human hosts. Roleplaying these beings is always a challenge, since their motivations and thoughts should be alien and difficult for heroes to guess.

Many creatures in the DARK•MATTER setting can look superficially human. The Greys, for instance, are good at clouding human minds. The cybernetically infested sandmen resemble humans on all but the closest inspection. A society of clones is human, but only technically. In a DARK•MATTER campaign, there are more things in Heaven and Earth than just about anyone could ever dream.

Research

Research represents an important part of most adventures. Even the most straightforward mission may require the heroes to do a bit of reading before diving headfirst into an investigation.

Handling the research portion of the adventure is trickier than it might seem. First of all, never treat it as "the boring part." Following a lead, tracing it to other leads, and coming to a startling conclusion can be a very rewarding experience for a player. Below are three essential rules for handling hero research.

Be Prepared

Players always want lots of details about the places their heroes visit and the topic of the current investigation. Gamemasters should always do their homework on such matters ahead of time, so that when a hero looks up "Tunisia" on the Internet, the relevant information is right at hand. Remember, too, that heroes often want to investigate the history (recent and not so recent) of their target groups and areas, so be prepared with basic backgrounds for the places and people they expect to encounter.

It is very likely, however, that at some point your heroes will delve into an unexpected topic or use an alternate method of research. If they go to the county courthouse records room or the newspaper morgue instead of to the library, just flow with it, altering the prepared information to match their research. If they poke into topics you didn't foresee and you have nothing prepared, don't just say "I don't know." Either make something up on the spot, or tell the players that you'll provide them with the details of that research a little later. (This latter response not only satisfies the players, it also serves as a clue that the line of research in question isn't crucial to the plot at this point.)

Maintain a Steady Pace

Let one clue flow into another. Don't spill the big secret to the player whose hero just cracked the FBI database. Let him or her investigate some specific aspect of the research at hand, gain a bit of valuable information, and—most important—find a lead that moves the group along to the next step.

Don't allow the heroes to perform all their research by sitting in the library or in front of a computer. Sometimes a conventional investigation reveals a person to question or a place to explore. Don't forget that heroes with Personality skills may prefer talking to people rather than looking facts up in books.

This is an adventure—so make it adventurous. Perhaps the heroes must overcome obstacles in the path of their research. For example, if the only expert on a particular topic lives in seclusion, finding that person and convincing him or her to talk can be a real challenge. If an opponent seeks the same information, the endeavor becomes a race against time.

Have an Interesting Revelation

Not every inquiry the heroes make should bear fruit, of course. As with real research, some avenues of inquiry must invariably turn out to be dead ends. However, those heroes willing to continue digging for the truth—whether they do so by interviewing experts and eyewitnesses, consulting the Internet, conducting library research, breaking into the bad guys' computer files and file cabinets, or skimming through the local papers—should always gain some valuable information.

Research results are a great way to throw the heroes for a loop. When they discover that two siblings of the missing Alberto Juarez have also disappeared in the last three years, that fact (gained through probing questions or examination of old newspapers) may change the course of the entire adventure—or at least provide new areas to investigate.

Typical Missions

While there's really no such thing as a typical mission in a DARK•MATTER campaign, some types of assignments come up more frequently than others. Here are a dozen examples of investigations that a team of heroes might undertake. For more ideas, see the "Adventure Topics" sidebar.

Artifact Chase. The heroes must recover a lost item of alien technology. Perhaps an unknown party stole the object from Institute archives. Investigation reveals that the item is being sold

but things look much better now." Insiders say the contracts will be signed within the upcoming week.

BODY FOUND IN SEERSON

SEERSON. Illinois State Police report that the body of an as-yet-unidentified woman was found last night near a road in the Seerson land development. The woman had been dead for a few days, officials said, but no cause of death has been determined.

Although the police have not yet announced that foul play was involved in the woman's demise, local residents expressed concerns over this incident in light of what they call "strange sights" and other occurrences. Authorities, however, have determined that the odd lights and other events are explainable as natural phenomenon and have nothing to do with the deceased.

Representatives of the VanGuard Development Corporation, the firm behind the future Seerson Development, were not available for comment.

"SCI-FI" FANS "BEAM DOWN"

COLINSVILLE. In what can only be called a "close encounter of the strangest kind," the

and resold along a chain of collectors, government operatives, and possibly even alien agents.

Bug Hunt. The heroes set out to hunt down a dangerous alien or mutant. Though fully capable of killing normal humans—or even protected and well-armed heroes—the creature prefers to run from any serious opposition.

New Contact. The heroes must approach a source of information and win his or her trust. This person could be a highly placed government official, a member of a conspiracy, or a researcher with access to privileged information. They must convince the source of their reliability and take care not to spook him or her with excessive demands or violence.

Data Recovery. The heroes try to recover files, documents, or evidence from a rival group. The actual items might be genetic samples, the results of a scientific experiment, blueprints for machinery, hard copies of satellite transmissions, the transcripts of a secret court proceeding, or anything else the Gamemaster dreams up. The target items are physically guarded or otherwise protected from casual discovery.

Paranormal Investigation. The heroes look into some strange happening and attempt to find the cause. The event could be a centuries-old haunting, a UFO sighting, a person with apparent paranormal abilities, or the sudden appearance of some mysterious being.

Extraction. The heroes must help a researcher or operative escape from a dangerous situation or rescue detainees held in a secured area. The people in need of aid could be political prisoners, guinea pigs in human experiments, prisoners of war, or even benevolent aliens held by hostile forces.

Infiltration. The heroes must enter a hidden complex and return with information about its strengths, weaknesses, and contents. Perhaps the building appears to be a simple chemical refinery from the outside, but it is actually a manufacturing facility producing biological weapons. Likewise, a site purported to be a U.S. military installation might in fact be one of many UN training facilities for a world police force.

Murder Investigation. The heroes must solve a murder, either as a regular assignment or because they are suspects. While they may have information, clues, and techniques not available to the police, they don't have access to the police files and manpower crucial to solving a case. In most such situations, local authorities frown on interfering amateurs, so they attempt to keep the heroes at a distance from their work.

Payoff. The heroes must bribe an official in a powerful position to help the Institute. More than just being couriers, they must first discover what the official wants (perhaps money, or perhaps something else, such as elimination of a rival, retrieval of sensitive documents, immunity from criminal charges, or a political favor). Once they know the form the bribe must take, they need to find a way to obtain and discreetly deliver it.

Quarantine. Something terrible has happened in a small town or a remote area. The Institute asks the heroes to investigate and to keep the story from spreading. The problem may be a disease, an alien infestation, a biological weapons test, a conjunction of paranormal factors, or something else entirely.

Search & Destroy. The heroes must find a lost plane, missing people or equipment, or mutants in hiding. Once they do so, the goal may become rescuing innocents or destroying all evidence and returning home alive. In any case, complications invariably ensue.

Surveillance. In these adventures, perfect for Free Agents, the heroes must keep an eye on a powerful or important figure without letting anyone realize they are doing so. Their target might be traveling by car, boat, train, or plane. He or she may enter a number of locations where the heroes can follow only with difficulty, such as military bases, private libraries, corporate laboratories, secured government buildings, private residences, ticketed concerts or other performances, or even just private rooms in restaurants or bars. Use of the Stealth–*shadow* skill is crucial, as are inventive bluffing and bribery.

Building Plot Arcs

For a DARK•MATTER game to shine, individual adventures must be part of a greater whole. Clues from early sessions should come into play during later ones. For this to work, you either have to improvise by taking opportunities to make connections as they arise, or plan out at least one (and possibly two or three) plot arcs. The following is a quick discussion of the tools necessary to make the latter concept work.

Goal

The heroes' *last* discovery during their long quest should be the first detail you decide on as a Gamemaster. It may be a traitor within the Institute, a far-reaching plot that seeks to put Strangers in positions of military power, plans for a device that opens all interdimensional gateways simultaneously, or even a medical procedure designed to alter human genetics to suit parasitical alien hosts. Make it nefarious, make it far-reaching, or make it small and insidious, but spell out the villains' goal as simply as possible.

Once you have the final discovery figured out, you can plan ways of foreshadowing that endpoint during early sessions. If you do this successfully, you'll find the players saying, "Oh, *that's* what that meant!" as they near the end of their quest. This technique helps you tie everything together nicely and reinforces the illusion of reality, since clues carried between sessions show the players that you weren't just making everything up as you went along.

Backdrop

Once you have an overarching goal, you can break down the network of supporting cast members into groups—those who support the goal, those who oppose it or suspect its existence, and those who are neutral about it. This is also the time to outline the steps that the villains will take to achieve their goal. Choose a few sites where related events happen, then pull together data about these places and plenty of maps so that you can describe them convincingly. An encyclopedia or the Internet can probably provide you with enough material, and you can get more detailed information from travel guides or the library if you need it.

Initiating the Action

Initially, reveal only a small portion of the bigger plan. Choose an underling to commit a small infraction against decency, then let the heroes follow the clues from there. The small problem—perhaps the theft of an heirloom, suburbanites monitoring the neigh-

Adventure Topics

The DARK•MATTER campaign can serve as a backdrop for hundreds of adventures. The following incomplete list provides a just few starting ideas for the Gamemaster. Consult an encyclopedia or the Internet for more information on these topics.

Abduction
Alchemy
Alien artifact
Alien captured
Alien escapes
Andean mummies
Arcane tome found
Archaeological find
Assassins
Atlantis
Automatic writing
Biowarfare
Black helicopters
Blackmail
Blessed Virgin Mary sighting
Bombing
Brainwashing
Cattle mutilation
Channeling con man
Chemical warfare
Christian cult
Circus freaks
Code breaking
Computer hackers
Concentration camps
Corporate adept
Cover up
Crop circles
Cryogenics
Crystal skulls
Dinosaurs
Drugs
Easter Island
Electronic voice phenomena
Epidemic
Face on Mars
False memory syndrome
Fatima
Files stolen
Flight 401
Frogs
Golem
Government takeover
Haunting
The Horten Brothers
Human sacrifice
Immortality treatment
Institute attacked
Interdimensional doorway
Jersey Devil
JFK
Kidnapping
Lazar, Bob
Loch Ness
Lost tribe found
Mass insanity
Martial artist
Message from the future
Mindwalking criminal
Miracle medicine
Missing corpse
Missing persons
Morrison, Jim
Mysterious fog
Mysterious suicide
Mystery objects falling from the sky
Nanotechnology
Nerve gas
New school of magic
New mutant
New species
New technology
Numerology
Obtain secret files
Occult society
Ooparts (out-of-place artifacts)
Oswald doubles
Pagan cult
Petrified man
Pollution
Possession
Prediction program
Project Mongoose
Project Phoenix
Prophesies
Psychic network
Public miracle
Quarantine
Radiation burns
Recruiting new Institute staff
Retarded mindwalker
Revelations
Satanic cult
Scandal frame up
Secret lab
Serial killer
Sinking building
Slave labor camps
Spaceship enters solar system
Spirit photography
Spontaneous human combustion
Spring-heeled Jack
Stigmata
Stock market mindwalking
Super weapon
Teleportation
Templars return
Tesla
Time traveler
Trephination
Twenty-three
UFO crash
UFO sighting
Virus
Visions
Warren Commission
Werewolf mutation

borhood with binoculars, or the disappearance of an Institute agent—slowly leads the heroes into the conspiracy's greater plot.

Clues

Dissemination of clues is the single most important element in a continuing DARK•MATTER campaign. The information heroes pick up about the true nature of whatever they're investigating propels the story forward over time. Clues can take many forms—computer files, alien artifacts, anonymous email messages, eyewitness accounts, abandoned sites full of mysterious equipment, transcripts of bugged conversations, ancient records, or even data stolen from government labs. Be sure you know the four to six most important bits of information, then spread them out over the plotline of your planned story, allowing the heroes to find no more than one or two per session.

Storytelling Tools

Avoid choke points and linear storytelling in your plot arcs by using tools such as the matrix format, the flowchart, and the inversion.

In a matrix format, the Gamemaster assigns certain clues to specific supporting cast members or sites. The heroes can visit them to gather information in any order they like. This format can be very effective, though inexperienced players may occasionally need assistance in such a "directionless" game.

To flowchart an adventure, the Gamemaster makes an educated guess as to the heroes' most likely paths of investigation, determines the possible outcomes at each step, and assembles all that information into a loose structure. For instance, based on the first set of clues, the heroes might seek to question witnesses, search for physical evidence, or consult experts. As Gamemaster, you must know in advance what information each source could reveal and have logical paths from that point to other events and sources. If the heroes fail to find their way to the next step (perhaps because they didn't make a thorough enough investigation, or they botched their skill checks), provide additional angles that they can pursue to get back on course.

A flowchart can also reveal potential problems in the storyline, such as a plot that hinges on the heroes finding a single clue. If such a crucial link is not extremely easy to find, you may want to add other options so that more than one path leads to the last scene of the adventure.

A major inversion of the story arc provides another technique



for avoiding a completely linear plot. Once the heroes acquire enough information, force them to reevaluate everything they thought they knew. In such a case, the heroes may have to work against direct orders. Superiors might assign them missions that could sabotage their overall goals or that are obvious red herrings. Their revised perception of opponents and allies may change what tasks the heroes undertake and how they choose to pursue their original goals.

Lies and Betrayals

The first rule of propaganda: Deny everything and make counteraccusations. No matter what evidence the heroes obtain, the big media and government forces are unlikely to believe it. Their case gets no attention, and many laugh at their claims. Even if their evidence is strong enough to be taken seriously, in most cases the resulting coverage only paints the heroes as cranks, allowing someone else to steal (or destroy) the proof.

The players may take this poorly, but their superiors at the Institute or friendly supporting cast members should point out that this level of attention means the heroes have succeeded in making their enemies uncomfortable. Sure, the public may view the heroes as terrorists, certifiably insane maniacs, or criminals on the run, but they themselves—and their fellow Institute members—know the truth.

At some point, of course, discrediting the heroes may not be enough to slow them down. If they move along too quickly, have someone they trust betray them—perhaps a valued contact leads them into an ambush. They may find that someone at the Institute has been playing them for fools by feeding them a cover story that isn't even close to the truth.

Layers

Finally, you can keep player interest high by revealing the plot arcs in layers, with each new revelation topping or altering the one before it. The inversion format is the clearest example of this approach, but not every new layer has to precipitate a reversal of earlier assumptions. In some cases, an additional layer of the plot may simply reveal the identity of someone in the next rank of a secret society. Layering might also reveal that a new species or conspiracy that previously seemed remote from the investigations is in fact deeply involved. Or the central character the heroes have been pursuing may suddenly disappear—murdered or kidnapped by a force or forces unknown.

This layering approach works both for and against the Gamemaster. On the plus side, it keeps the players on the edges of their seats in anticipation of the next revelation. On the minus side, it requires each session's new information to exceed the scope of whatever came before. Eventually, it's just not possible to raise the stakes any higher. What can the savvy Gamemaster do then? Either change the nature of the game (from action to politics, or vice versa), or wrap up the campaign's storyline and start again with a new set of heroes and a fresh set of mysteries.

Basic Scene Types

Once you have a plot arc worked out, you'll need to break down the Big Picture into more manageable chunks for your players. These smaller pieces are the scenes that make up each session of

play. There are three basic types: the combat scene, the encounter scene, and the challenge scene. The following text touches briefly on each of these. *Chapter 9: Running the Game* in the *Gamemaster Guide* describes all three more fully.

Combat Scenes

Fights are straightforward—the heroes must use force to succeed. To maintain a high level of challenge, the Gamemaster can bring in reinforcements when the heroes appear close to victory, or allow the villains to pull off some trick that gives them the upper hand. But be sure to add some scenery or item that the heroes can turn to their own advantage. This could be something as simple as a rope or chandelier to swing from, or a cutoff switch for the generator that powers the villains' weapons. It might even be a vehicle that smart heroes could use as a battering ram to avoid the barbed wire and attack dogs surrounding a secured facility.

Encounter Scenes

In these interaction-heavy scenes, the heroes might attempt to convince a contact or supporting cast member to help them, or they might interview someone to obtain information. The Gamemaster can use the Interaction and Deception broad skill groups to determine the outcome, or just roleplay the scene with the players and decide the results. How the heroes interact with such contacts contributes to the latter's reactions in subsequent encounters, and it may well have an direct impact on the next scene as well. (For instance, an informant whom the heroes have browbeaten or belittled tips off the villains to the team's imminent arrival.)

Challenge Scenes

These scenes require the heroes to solve a conundrum or overcome an obstacle of some kind—usually a task that can't be resolved through violence or fast talk. Perhaps they must find a way past an alarm system, solve a medical mystery arising from an autopsy, or decipher an encoded message. Whatever the task, complex skill checks and simple brainpower are the most likely avenues for resolution.

Advanced Scene Types

The three basic scene types described above provide sufficient variety for most games. However, an experienced Gamemaster with an established group may want to experiment with other kinds of scenes, including the six types presented below.

Recap Scenes

Though this event isn't truly a scene, it bears discussion nonetheless. Before every game session, recap the events of the previous one. Take every opportunity to sow suspicion among the players during this process. Pull one person aside to pass along instructions from a superior, a message from a contact, a clue gleaned through the hero's ongoing research, or just some additional character information. Just by taking one player aside, the Gamemaster can make the others suspect that something unusual is going on—as well as conceal genuine information from other players who just receive a red herring.

Of course, recaps can also become routine and predictable if they happen all the time. Use them only occasionally—when the last session ended in the middle of a scene or mission, for instance. Better yet, recap with only some of the players. Those who are left out may resent it a little, but they'll certainly watch more carefully during the session in hopes of picking up an extra detail that their heroes can use to their advantage next time.

You can also use the end of a recap scene for a moment of plot brainstorming, if desired. Simply encourage each player to guess the identities and goals of the villains. This technique gives players a chance to influence the plot of the game, and it provides the Gamemaster with an additional source of creative and diabolical inspiration.

Briefing Scenes

Most adventures begin with the heroes receiving some sort of briefing. In the most basic briefing scene, the heroes gather in a meeting room to receive an assignment from a superior at the Institute. For variety, consider delivering the briefing information via email or having a courier drop off a packet of files or computer disks at a hero's home. In a game focusing on occult or psychic events, even magical or telepathic briefings are possible. This type of scene sets the tone for the adventure to come; don't waste the opportunity by making it seem dry or routine.

If the person giving the briefing is available to answer questions, he or she can either steer the heroes in the right direction with informative responses or lead them astray by dangling a few false clues. Expect smart players to ask about any obvious items left out of the briefing. Don't be afraid to respond to such inquiries with "The Institute doesn't know. That's why we're sending you to find out." Be wary of offering too much information here; instead, provide the names of people who may know something and places where unusual events have occurred. This should be enough to start the players thinking about their own plan of action.

To jump-start a session, consider leaving out the briefing. Nothing draws the players into a game more quickly than beginning a session with, "So you're plummeting toward Earth at terminal velocity and your parachute won't open. What do you do?"

Cut-Scenes

Sometimes a group splits up to work on different aspects of a problem simultaneously. To keep everyone involved in the game when this occurs, the Gamemaster must divide his or her attention between two or more scenes. The best way to accomplish this is the cut-scene, in which the Gamemaster switches from one scene to the other at suspenseful moments.

For example, suppose one group of heroes infiltrates a military base while another tries to hack the security system so that no alarms go off. The Gamemaster switches from the sneaks to the hackers just as the former hear a bark and a guard's yell, leaving the resolution of that event for later. The right moment to switch back to the infiltrators, of course, is just when the hackers have entered a passcode and are about to find out whether it works or whether the system security begins tracing their phone line.

When switching back and forth, always take a moment to reestablish the scene and the heroes' place in it. For instance, when returning to the infiltrators, you say, "You heard a dog bark, then a gruff voice said 'Halt right there!' What do you do?" This gives the players a chance to switch gears between the two scenes and remember what they planned to do.

Forgotten Scenes

Certain individuals have the ability to make one or more heroes forget recent events. When this seems likely to happen, you may want to insert a forgotten scene into the action. The heroes can act and respond normally—usually within an encounter scene—until they encounter such a "mind wiper." At that point, don't even play out what follows—that is, those events that the mind wiper later erases. Just jump ahead to the point when the heroes can once again remember what's going on.

For example, if the heroes enter an alien ship that contains a mind wiper, ask each of them to make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check long before they ever meet the alien. Keep those results in reserve. If they all fail the check (or if their opponent spends last resort points to ensure that they do), stop the scene at the moment they enter the ship. Any player who makes a successful check is entitled to receive information about "what happened next" privately, but leave the question of sharing it up to him or her. The player can choose to say nothing, tell the others what really happened, or distort the truth in any fashion he or she desires.

Note that this technique can appear heavy-handed if overused. It forces the Gamemaster to decide what happens next, rather than allowing the heroes determine the outcome with their actions. Be especially wary of using it on players who might resent such tactics.

Flashback

Flashbacks allow heroes to relive past events. Such a scene usually takes place in a time long ago—typically well before the heroes came into play. You can simply describe these past events as part of the story, or you can put together some character sheets for roles that match the composition of the party. Thus, the players might (temporarily) play their heroes' parents, their mentors from the Institute, or even versions of themselves in past lives.

Alternatively, you can simply present a younger version of the scene's featured hero. (Flashbacks usually involve just one hero at a time.) This is more difficult, as not every player keeps copies of his or her old hero sheets. If you don't have the hero's true information from the period in question, use the closest approximation you have, or go even farther back to the hero's childhood or adolescence.

In many cases, flashbacks require no hero sheets at all. For example, such a scene might involve a pivotal event (such as an abduction, the first appearance of magical powers, or the first use of telepathy) in the development of a hero's personality. If that event has some bearing on a current concern, such as the return of an enemy from the hero's childhood or the activities of a college nemesis, so much the better.

This type of scene works particularly well if you began an adventure without a briefing. After the heroes resolve the opening scene, you can flash back (if applicable) to the briefing that got them into their current predicament.

Summation Scenes

Sometimes players want to drag out a scene that doesn't merit their attention. In such cases, a few simple words may help move the heroes into a more interesting part of the story. Summarize the action as best you can, then encourage the group to move along. For example, after a pitched battle, the heroes may decide that they need to question a witness. You could try to speed this up by requesting an Investigate–*interrogate* skill check, but a Failure result may serve to reinforce the players' erroneous conviction that the prisoner knows something. In this case, try summing up the results with a statement such as "You question the prisoner for hours, but in the end you are sure that he doesn't know anything valuable."

Cliffhanger Scenes

Finally, if you have a group that meets regularly, you can experiment with leaving the action hanging at a particularly dramatic moment. By not quite wrapping up the events, you hold the players' interest between sessions and encourage them to return for the next installment.

For example, you might choose to stop an evening of play just as the heroes enter a secret base. In this case, your cliffhanger statement might be as simple as "You cut the barbed wire and slip onto the grounds quietly, and you make it past the minefield using the map you got from your contact inside. But as you approach the second electrified fence, a spotlight comes on and catches you in its glare. And that's where we'll pick up next time."

Experience and Hero Development

Over time, heroes inevitably learn new skills and priceless secrets that improve their status. While players typically concern themselves most with the game mechanics of that advancement, other changes may prove just as important to their heroes. These include the cultivation of new contacts, the strengthening (or weakening) of personal faith, the discovery of something previously unknown in the hero's background, or the acquisition of a new outlook—particularly when the true deadliness of the opposition becomes apparent.

Chapter 8: Achievements in the *Gamemaster Guide* provides guidelines for awarding heroes achievement points, as well as other awards and penalties. This section describes a few additional rewards appropriate for DARK•MATTER heroes.

Contacts

The most valuable reward for months or years of play might well be the expansion of a hero's contact roster. Contacts may be experts in very narrow fields, or they may have sources that no one else can match. Access to the very latest information from the NSA or the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, for example, might be more valuable to a hero than any piece of technology.

However, not everyone the heroes meet during an adventure becomes a full-fledged contact—there must be some reciprocity

involved. Award bonus contacts only if the heroes perform some service that a valuable source might wish to repay, or if there is some other overriding reason why such a person would want to offer assistance. Otherwise, just require the hero to purchase the contact using achievement points.

Promotions

Heroes who succeed in several missions for the Institute may receive promotions, which usually bring with them an improved security clearance, increased access to equipment, and an enhanced ability to wrangle last-minute lab work. As they become Big Fish in the circles of power, others around them may be more likely to volunteer information or services—either out of friendship or hope of their own advancement.

Be careful not to pass out promotions too easily, or your heroes may find themselves mired in managerial duties! Of course, you can always impose the reverse of this reward on heroes who disobey orders or display gross negligence.

Trust

Once the heroes make their mark on the hidden world of behind-the-scenes maneuvering, others inevitably begin to seek them out for advice, help, and resources. Such supplicants may offer money, favors, information, special Institute privileges, secrets of the Institute's history or files, or other services in exchange for the heroes' aid.

Traps to Avoid

Unlike a standard space opera science fiction setting, near-future games are prone to a number of pitfalls that can derail campaigns. The big four include giving away too much too early, painting a campaign into a corner, confusing players with unreliable narrators, and allowing uncontrolled technology creep. Here are a few tips on how to dodge these bullets.

Too Much, Too Soon

As Gamemaster, you always know the facts behind any particular adventure. Much of the fun for the players, however, involves the process of uncovering what's really going on. In fact, players like finding out the Whole Truth so much that you may find it tempting to give away too much information in a briefing or an early scene. Resist this temptation! Once you reveal the secrets of a plot, the heroes can use their resources and inventiveness to conclude the adventure far too quickly. Make sure they work for it.

To ensure that you reveal information in a slow and stepwise manner, sketch out a quick diagram or flowchart of the adventure. Include the supporting cast members and map out the ways in which the clues they provide relate to each other. The layered approach described in an earlier section of this chapter ("DARK•MATTER Adventure Elements") is ideal for this.

For instance, the Institute might initially suspect that an angelic creature lurks in the wilds of the Aleutian Islands off the Alaskan coast. Reports from a former Institute operative who now lives there describe odd sounds, visions, and "miracles" associated with this phenomenon. When the heroes investigate, however, they discover that this former operative has, over time, become the town drunk of his area. The locals don't put much stock in what he says—until he disappears from town. Around this same time, paranormal activity increases in the vicinity of the nearby naval base at Dutch Harbor. Later, reports of "ghost signals" detected offshore come in from the navy.

Is the angel real, or is it a hoax? If it is real, what is it, exactly? An alien? A spirit? Or something else altogether? The locals certainly want to believe it's an angel, and the priest of the nearby Church of St. Cyril is eager to proclaim its appearance a miracle. But signs indicate a deliberate effort to cover up certain aspects of the "angel's" arrivals and departures. The truth should remain hard to find among the conflicting stories, and access to the "angel" itself should be even more difficult to obtain.

Uncertainty increases both the suspense and the entertainment value of any adventure. Keep the players guessing and make sure you have a rough idea how fast and in what order pieces of the truth should fall into their hands.

Too Little, Too Late

It's possible to take the above advice too far. If the heroes never learn or accomplish anything, the players quickly get fed up. Adding new layers of mystery is a good technique for maintaining player interest, but only in moderation. Likewise, the long arms of a conspiracy should sometimes be able to foil the heroes' plans, but not constantly.

The best approach to adventure management ensures a slow but steady stream of information flowing from the Gamemaster to the players. Red herrings, cover-ups, and false leads are fine, but if there are too many of these, the players may begin to feel that the Gamemaster is never going to share the really precious secrets. Then the game is no longer fun.

Trapped in a Corner

Just as in the real world, the worst place for a DARK•MATTER plot to lead is into a dead end. Be sure to leave yourself an out, or you may soon find that the heroes have destroyed your whole conspiracy.

Be ready for the day they try. Villains should have two or three contingency plans—perhaps an escape helicopter, a bribed official, an extra handful of goons, or a forged document that can get them out of trouble. A major villain could even have a contact inside the Institute who regularly provides updates on the heroes' activities—or who has the power to derail their investigation altogether. Such a villain can foil even the most "perfect" plan.

To keep such options open, always make sure you supply the adventure with plenty of loose ends, additional clues, and secondary supporting cast members—characters who can distract the heroes if they progress too quickly. Some such distractions might involve simple combat encounters; others might relate to flaws that a hero has chosen (Powerful Enemy, Alien Artifacts, and Infamy are great for this).

Finally, if all else fails, ask each player what he or she thinks will happen next. Sometimes your group can suggest an idea that puts the plot back on track and gives the mysteries a whole new dimension. If the players realize that they have just contributed a major plot point, they may be that much more excited about running games of their own.

Unreliable Narrators

One of the most insidious traps in a roleplaying environment involves unreliable narrators. In fiction, these are the characters whose word can't be trusted about the events of a story. In a DARK•MATTER campaign, many characters should routinely lie to the heroes—this technique is essential for establishing the requisite air of mystery. However, players aren't always as careful about suspect information as a Gamemaster might think, even when they know the way events usually progress in a conspiracy story. So be careful how you use deception. If an entire plot depends on the heroes seeing through a particular lie, have a backup plan ready just in case the heroes buy into it. For example, you might have another supporting cast member—perhaps a fellow Institute operative—point out to them the dubious nature of the source.

There aren't always enough clues in a Gamemaster's voice, tone, and body language to signal that a particular supporting cast member is lying to the heroes. Ham it up if you want to be sure that they see through the deception, and play it more subtly if you want to leave some uncertainty about the source's reliability. If all else fails, be sure that evidence revealing the heroes' trusted source as unreliable comes to light later. Always create reasons for doubt.

Technology Creep

Campaigns that take place in modern settings suffer a certain tendency to creep slowly up the technology ladder. No matter how slowly a Gamemaster hands out one-of-kind experimental prototypes and rare alien technology, eventually the heroes end up carrying around equipment and firepower far beyond the campaign's norm. This can make it difficult to stage challenging combat scenes. When every hero has a death ray, fighting a few thugs proves less than challenging. Three primary techniques can prevent or overcome this problem: limited tech, escalation, and lateral movement.

The limited tech solution prevents most high-tech goodies from becoming available to the heroes in the first place and ensures that any items they do find disappear from play quickly. Rare power supplies, unavailable replacement parts, or the inherent instability of new technology leads to an item's eventual breakdown. This limitation keeps any single item from dominating the game.

The next solution is escalation—every time the heroes get a new toy, the villains get one as well. This is reasonably logical, since the farther the heroes progress toward the heart of a conspiracy, the better armed and armored their opposition becomes. At some point, of course, the tech reaches so high a level that no challenge remains. That point usually signals the end of the campaign.

The remaining solution involves lateral movement. Political, information-based, and puzzle-oriented adventures can challenge even the best-outfitted heroes. High-tech weapons and surveillance gear won't help the heroes falsify an election, forge a set of papers, crack a code, solve a mindwalking mystery, or unravel the workings of an alien ship. Not everyone enjoys this style of play, but adventures centering on mysteries and intrigue can neatly sidestep technology creep.

Using Contacts & Allegiances

In any game centered on information, who-you-know politicking and occasional leaks from supposedly confidential sources are valuable assets. Most groups of heroes quickly find one or two contacts upon whom they can rely for clues, lab analyses, medical reports, and police or government records.

Since contacts and allegiances are particularly important in DARK•MATTER campaigns, this book expands on the rules for using them in play. (In addition, each hero begins with at least one contact, as noted below.) Obtaining information or resources from a contact or allegiance now requires the use of TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER SKILL EFFECTS from *Chapter 4: Skills* in the *Player's Handbook*. The result of an encounter skill check determines the general success and timeliness of favors the hero's contacts or allegiances provide.

Skills appropriate to the situation could include Administration–*bureaucracy*; Street Smart–*criminal elements*; Deception–*bluff*; Interaction–*bargain*, *charm*, or *intimidate*; or Leadership–*command* (if the hero outranks the individual from whom he or she is requesting resources).

Before the player attempts the skill check, the Gamemaster must determine the target's starting attitude. For individuals in the hero's own Institute division, it's likely to be Friendly; for persons in other divisions, it may be Friendly or Neutral, at the Gamemaster's discretion. Hostile or Charmed targets should be rare, unless the hero has done something in the past to influence the individual's reaction (for contacts) or affect his or her standing in the organization (in the case of an allegiance).

If the favor requested violates policy, involves hazardous materials, or puts the person solicited into an awkward or compromising position, penalties may apply (see Table D8, below). In all cases, the modifier before the slash refers to the use of a contact, and the one after the slash refers to the use of an allegiance.

If you are using the rules for social status (*Chapter 7: Attributes* in the *Gamemaster Guide*), apply the modifier from the hero's authority to any encounter checks involving attempts to obtain help from an allegiance.

Finally, Intelligence or Will resistance modifiers may apply to a hero's attempt to solicit assistance from a contact (but not an allegiance), as detailed in TABLE P10: SKILLS & RESISTANCE MODIFIERS in the *Player's Handbook*.

TABLE D8: USING CONTACTS AND ALLEGIANCES

Situation	Step Modifier
Involves security breach	+2/+4
Improper use of resources	+1/+2
Requires dangerous materials	+1/+2
Violates orders	+2/+4
Hero has abused contact or allegiance in past	+1/+2
Asking higher-ranking official	+1/0
Asking lower-ranking official	–1/0

Contacts in Dark•Matter

In a Dark•Matter campaign, each non-Diplomat hero begins with one free contact. Diplomat heroes start with as many contacts as their Personality scores allow, as noted on Table D9: Diplomat Contacts. (Note that this number replaces the normal "free" contact a Diplomat hero gains.) As per the standard Alternity rules, every contact falls into one of three categories—information, resource, and expert—as presented in *Chapter 7: Attributes* in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

Table D9: Diplomat Contacts

PER	# of Contacts
11–12	3
13–14	4
15+	5

Reserve Contacts

Occasionally a player may want to keep one or more contacts "in reserve" rather than establishing a complete contact roster (with names, status, and resources for each) right away. Then, during play, the hero can conveniently "remember" a contact who could be of aid when the group faces an obstacle. The Gamemaster may restrict how many such floating contacts any one hero can have; usually, a hero may begin the game with a number of floating contacts equal to or less than his or her last resort points.

Hoffmann Institute Contacts and Allegiances

Heroes affiliated with the Hoffmann Institute (as opposed to freelancers or other individuals not employed as full-time agents) should have at least one starting contact of a type listed below.

Division	Contact Type
Administrative	Resource
Analytical	Expert
Archives	Information or expert
Intelligence	Information
Special	Any

In addition, heroes working for the Hoffmann Institute—or any other large and powerful group—have access to that organization's resources and staff. Such heroes have an allegiance to their organization (see "Allegiances" in *Chapter 7: Attributes* in the *Gamemaster Guide*). But the Institute is large and Byzantine enough that not everyone wants to cooperate, even with coworkers. Many researchers are quite paranoid about their work and

Table D11: Hospitality Modifiers

Heroes Are . . .	Modifier
Secret clearance or better	–1
Wounded	–1
Carrying a body	+1
Openly carrying weapons	+1
Carrying concealed weapons	0
Being pursued	+1
Mostly Institute members	–1
Mostly freelancers	+1

Table D10: Safe House Generation

Feat Check	Result
Critical Failure	Compromised
Marginal	No safe haven
Ordinary	Loyalist/Ally
Good	Member/Expert ally
Amazing	Official/Powerful ally

Each of the entries listed above is described here briefly, but expansion and implementation are left to the Gamemaster. If an established supporting cast member provides a more amusing or more logical choice than those indicated on the table, use that option—the dice should never overrule a Gamemaster's superior judgement.

Compromised: A traitor has infiltrated the safe house most convenient for the heroes' use. If they go there, this individual promptly informs an enemy (perhaps one involved with the heroes' current mission) of their location, bringing a strike force to the site within 2d6 hours.

No Safe Haven: There's no place to take shelter anywhere near the heroes' location. They may search for another haven in the next town they reach and roll again.

Loyalist/Ally: Someone who has worked with the Institute and sympathizes with its goals offers food and shelter. This may consist of nothing more than a bunk bed in a ranch house or a guest room in a trailer park, but it is safe. At the Gamemaster's option, the individual offering support may simply be a local who sympathizes with the underdog and knows nothing about the bigger picture.

Member/Expert Ally: Someone both knowledgeable and clever runs an actual safe house in the area. This surgeon, professor, computer expert, or other professional-level supporting cast member may be able to help the heroes with a puzzle, data retrieval project, or technical problem. At the Gamemaster's option, the heroes might actually encounter another member of the Institute this way, though it should be a relatively low-ranking agent.

Official/Powerful Ally: Someone with social or political clout operates a safe house in the area. This supporting cast member may be a local official, a wealthy member of the upper crust, a mid-ranking manager of the Institute, or even a state or national official with ties to the Hoffmann operations. Here the heroes can find not only shelter but also assistance in sorting out legal problems or processing paperwork. If desired, they can even hire an expert in a specialized field from among the safe house staff.

have little or no interest in helping anyone else. Therefore, even this allegiance isn't a perfect guarantee of aid.

Using Safe Houses

Though the Institute tries to keep its agents on the move, heroes from time to time may find themselves under observation or on the run in hostile territory. In situations when finding immediate, friendly shelter is of the utmost importance, Hoffmann field agents have standing instructions to contact a local safe house. Since this represents a specific use of the Institute as an allegiance, all the above rules for allegiances apply in addition to the information here.

Safe houses take a number of forms. The most common is the underground railroad composed of former agents; however, bunkers, hidden facilities, U.S. government bases with close ties to the Institute, and even spouses of current agents can also provide shelter in a pinch. The safe house affords heroes a chance to rest and recover, not to involve the owners of the safe house in their activities.

When the heroes require a safe house, the Gamemaster must determine what type of safe house (if any) is available in the area.

To generate a safe house, make a secret Personality feat check for the hero with the best Personality score or select a result from TABLE D10: SAFE HOUSE GENERATION.

Next, the hero must make a skill check using Table P25, as noted above. The target's starting attitude should be Neutral or Friendly; only rarely will it be Hostile. The modifiers listed in TABLE D11: HOSPITALITY MODIFIERS also apply to the encounter skill check. Consult TABLE D12: HOSPITALITY OUTCOMES to determine the outcome.

Social Status

Use TABLE D13: STARTING SOCIAL STATUS to determine the social status of a beginning hero. Note that this table replaces TABLE G25 in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

TABLE D12: HOSPITALITY OUTCOMES

Result	Effect
Fanatic	Heroes obtain sanctuary. Host offers any available supplies or equipment and is even willing to join the heroes (if appropriate).
Charmed	Heroes obtain sanctuary. Host provides additional, unasked-for assistance as appropriate (supplies, a vehicle, and other common items).
Friendly	Heroes obtain sanctuary. Host provides ordinary supplies upon request.
Neutral	If any penalties from Table D11 apply, the host turns the heroes away politely but firmly. In the absence of penalties, the host grants the heroes sanctuary.
Hostile	Heroes do not obtain sanctuary. Host turns the heroes away and summons law enforcement officers if they remain in the area.
Combative	Host mounts a personal defense against the heroes or flees to summon help.

TABLE D13: STARTING SOCIAL STATUS

Authority	Wealth	Fame	Profession
+4	+2	0	Combat Spec
+3	+2	+1	Free Agent
+2	+3	+1	Tech Op
+4	+4	+4	Diplomat
Authority	**Wealth**	**Fame**	**Career**
0	0	+1	Antiquarian
+1	+2	–1	Black ops*
0	+1	0	Con artist
+1	+1	0	Corporate security specialist
0	+2	+1	Dilettante
+1	+2	+1	Doctor
0	+2	+2	Facilitator
+2	+1	0	Field agent
–1	+1	0	Field guide
+1	+2	+1	Field researcher*
+1	+1	0	Forensics expert
0	+1	0	Gadgeteer
0	+1	–1	Hacker
0	+1	+1	Journalist
0	0	+1	Martial artist
+2	0	+1	Military officer
0	0	–1	Militiaman
0	+1	0	Occultist
–1	0	0	Paranormalist
+2	0	0	Police officer
+1	0	0	Private investigator
0	+2	–1	Professional thief

Authority	Wealth	Fame	Career
+2	+1	0	Psi agent
0	0	0	Psychic
0	0	+1	Scientist
+4	+2	+1	Senior agent*
+2	0	0	Soldier
0	+1	0	Soldier of fortune
+3	+1	–1	Special forces*
0	0	–1	Street punk
0	0	+1	Visionary
0	+1	0	Xenoengineer
Authority	**Wealth**	**Fame**	**Perk**
0	+1	+3	Celebrity
0	+3	+1	Filthy Rich
0	0	+1	Good Luck
+1	+1	+1	Networked
+1	0	+1	Powerful Ally
+2	0	+1	Reputation
0	0	+2	Well Traveled
Authority	**Wealth**	**Fame**	**Flaw**
0	0	–1	Bad Luck
0	–2	–2	Dirt Poor
0	–2	0	Illiterate
–2	0	–1	Infamy
–1	0	–1	Primitive
–1	0	0	Spineless

* These advanced hero careers appear in *Chapter 10: Campaign Options*.

The Information War

Cyberpunks, cypherpunks, and the "wired" techheads of Silicon Valley often maintain that information "wants to be free." In most cases, this is nothing more than a personal justification for pirating software. But the underlying concept has one problem: It's a complete and utter lie.

Information does not want to be free. It doesn't want anything. In fact, if anything, secret and suppressed information wants to stay hidden. (After all, as Newton's First Law of Motion states, an object at rest tends to remain at rest unless an outside force acts upon it.) The people and agencies responsible for distorting, suppressing, or discrediting certain data often go to extremes to make sure that the lid stays on and the "object" remains at rest.

Of course, the heroes must be able to solve some mysteries. They have a job to do, and they should be able to succeed most of the time. The trick lies in giving away pieces of the big puzzle just once in a while, and in making sure that the information the heroes find isn't sufficient to expose every conspiracy and arrest all the perpetrators. Instead, it should be just enough to understand or stop part of the overall scheme.

Need to Know

Even though the heroes belong to a secretive organization, that doesn't mean you should provide them with all the information they need to see the big picture or even to solve the current problem. Instead, give them the resources to piece together the puzzles on their own—they are the heroes, after all.

This doesn't mean that the Institute suddenly clams up and refuses to offer briefings or background data. It means that the Institute doesn't know everything—which is why its management hired the heroes in the first place. If the heroes start asking questions about topics you would rather keep secret for the time being, just say, "You don't need to know that information." In other words, the official with whom they're conversing indicates that they should come back when they have a higher security clearance or some worthwhile information to trade.

Plausible Deniability

The easiest response to any revelation is denial. This doesn't fool everyone, of course, but often such a broad spectrum of the public believes the denial that it becomes an easy matter to marginalize or discredit those who don't.

Disinformation

Disinformation is simply a set of mutually reinforcing lies. The most effective forms of disinformation are carefully planned programs that include a grain of truth. For instance, the government wants to build a disinformation campaign around the flight-testing of a reverse-engineered alien ship. An official purposely leaks some juicy information to the aviation press about a new secret plane that the Air Force has developed. These "leaks" later serve to channel reporters' thoughts along certain lines when the inevitable accidental sightings or disclosures arise. Documents, budget entries, personnel lists, and other corroborating data created during the disinformation planning subsequently come to light as needed to support the deception.

The Gamemaster can also use disinformation during a game session to promote paranoia and confusion among the players. Pass notes to players occasionally. Make sure that some divulge real and private information, while others contain only everyday comments or clues. Ratchet up your group's paranoia level once in a while; if everyone feels relaxed and comfortable throughout a DARK•MATTER game, something has gone tragically wrong.

Threats

Threats against the heroes won't affect their resolve; if anything, it should make them that much more determined to stop The Conspiracy in its tracks. But threats against something that they hold dear generally work. Villains might promise to kill a loved one, destroy the Institute, reveal a shameful secret, report crimes to the authorities, or simply harm innocent bystanders or hostages if the heroes continue with their investigation.

Theft

If their evidence just plain disappears, there's not much the heroes can do about it except store it more securely next time. Of course, if the villains have tapped the heroes' phones and bugged their offices, any discussion of security precautions serves as a tip-off to the bad guys that the facility in question contains something valuable.

Liquidating a Hero

Sometimes, there's just no choice: A few heroes know too much and have been shooting their mouths off to all the wrong people. In that situation, their enemies may decide to make one or more heroes simply disappear. After all, some of these villains have kept their secrets for hundreds or even thousands of years. They didn't do it by playing nice.

One way to handle these scenes is to play them out as a grand finale session in which the death and sacrifice of one or more heroes prevents some greater disaster—or at least offers a clue to the next generation of operatives. When played up for maximum dramatic effect (such as the flashy demise of a hero who has been seeking death with blind fury), the end result can provide a story the group retells again and again to future operatives. To make this happen, prepare your grand finale in advance, complete with emotional or physical fireworks, and (ideally) a final plot twist relating to the hero slated for liquidation. Make every effort to make the doomed hero the star of the evening.

Alternatively, the Gamemaster may arrange for the villains to drug, kidnap, and/or beat up a particularly tenacious hero, particularly if their organization is averse to killing its foes. Or the bad guys might try to scare off the heroes by shooting one of them, mob-execution-style, in a public place. This serves as an especially appropriate fate for a hero with the Powerful Enemy flaw.

DARK•MATTER Flavor

This whole chapter (and in fact the whole book) describes the optimal feel of a DARK•MATTER campaign. Nevertheless, even experienced DARK•MATTER Gamemasters can use tips and tricks to

establish just the right mood and tone for the game. Here are a few last bits of advice.

Conspiracy Dice

Gamemasters can use "conspiracy dice" to keep the players guessing during a game. This tool makes use of the two-dice nature of the ALTERNITY core mechanic. Its use requires a little finesse, but it can be an effective technique for adding suspense to a scene. Here's how it works.

Normally, a player rolls both the control die and a situation die when making a skill check or feat check. When the Gamemaster decides that conspiracy dice are appropriate, the player rolls only the control die; the Gamemaster rolls the situation die. This might be a single die for the entire party (for speed of resolution) or a separate die for every player. Even if the situation die would normally be d0, the Gamemaster should roll something (and ignore its result) just to keep the players on their toes. The value (if any) is then added to or subtracted from the player's roll, resulting in degrees of success as normal—but only the Gamemaster knows exactly who has succeeded and who failed.

This technique is especially effective in cases where mental control, poisons, or other invisible forces (such as spirit possession) are in play. The controlled/poisoned/possessed hero may not show any symptoms for a while, but in the meantime everyone is under suspicion.

For instance, the heroes may have a chance to spot a particular alien using a psionic disguise in the midst of a crowd of people. Each hero must make an Awareness–*perception* skill check to determine success, with a +2 step penalty for the quality of the disguise and another +1 step for the confusion and distraction of being in a crowded area. The players roll the control dice for their heroes, and the Gamemaster rolls the conspiracy (situation) dice, comparing the results to each hero's Awareness–*perception* score. (It's a good idea to have a list handy with the appropriate skill ranks.) The Gamemaster then hands everyone a small note, which says either "You see the alien" or "You see nothing unusual." The heroes who perceive the threat can then react, pointing out the target or taking whatever actions they wish. During the next phase, the heroes who saw nothing might have a bonus on a second check if someone else points out the alien.

Props

Nothing enhances a game session like props. Since the DARK•MATTER campaign takes place in the modern world, prop opportunities abound.

Use an encyclopedia or other printed source to obtain photos of the locations the heroes visit during the adventure. If they go to Machu Picchu, for example, show them pictures of it from a book. Photos of places such as the World Trade Center are even easier to find.

When the heroes look for clues in the newspaper, don't just tell them what they find. Type up a real article (or a snippet of one), complete with headline and dateline! If one hero receives a piece of suspicious email, type out the message and make it look like a real email message by adding a date, time, subject field, and address.

It's a simple matter for any Gamemaster with access to a word processing program and a printer to create letterhead for any organization or company. Some fairly basic programs even enable users to generate mysterious-looking images by doctoring scanned photos.

Sometimes, a hastily scribbled note on a real-world item (such as a napkin, a theater program, an envelope, a matchbook, or hotel room stationery) can make a great clue. A page torn from a phone book (preferably an old one that's no longer needed) with one circled number can be effective as well.

Creative Gamemasters might even wish to make audio tapes of mysterious sounds or transmitted messages. Those who wish to go a step further can even use a video camera and some inventive staging to create a multimedia prop.

23

The writer William S. Burroughs once rode a ferry piloted by a Captain Clark, who claimed that he'd handled the craft for twenty-three years without incident. That day, it sank. Later

23 DEAD IN CULT SUICIDE

SAN FRANCISCO. Authorities have identified twenty-three bodies in a large house reportedly used as the headquarters for a cult known as the Novo Ordo Diana, or the "New Rite of Diana." A fire destroyed most of the Victorian home, although investigators for the fire department suspect that the blaze resulted from intentional actions taken by the cult members, most of whom were already dead before the fire started.

More than half of the cult's members ingested poison and died before the fire began, authorities believe. Ten of the cult members died later in the fire from smoke inhalation. Early reports that two were dead from gunshot wounds are now being denied by San Francisco police.

Nearly one million dollars in illegal drugs and weapons were recovered in the burned wreckage of the house. Searchers also found over two hundred thousand dollars worth of sophisticated computer equipment and electronic gear. Police investigators also found various occult paraphernalia, and an extensive library of books and videotapes dealing with the occult, the paranormal, and UFOs.

The Novo Ordo Diana's belief system still remains mostly a mystery. A secretive, almost elitist group, they kept most of their beliefs to themselves. Experts claim that the cult believed that the end of the world—the Eschaton, as they called it—approached, and their spiritual forms would have more power outside of their physical bodies at that time. Professor E.M. Bilger at the University of California states that NOD's doctrine tied back to two-thousand-year-old pagan religions found in Europe, revering nature deities such as the Roman Diana. Others claim that NOD had no formal belief system of its own, and was rather a collection of disaffected youth with a number of different ideologies.

After last year's Moontide cult suicide, experts predicted that more such tragedies would occur as various religious systems failed to meet expectations for the new Millennium. Nadine Farrow, a local psychologist and author of the book, "The Post-Millennial Let-down," says that religious fervor is likely to only increase over the next five years. "The post-millennial depression may take many forms, and unfortunately, some of it may be violent."

the same day, Burroughs learned of an airliner crash. The pilot's name was Captain Clark, and the flight number was 23.

After that coincidence, Burroughs began keeping a record of odd incidents. The number twenty-three kept popping up. Other people followed suit and began noticing "twenty-three" incidents as well. Some called it "the number of coincidence."

Twenty-three shows up in the media with surprising regularity on everything from apartment numbers to jersey numbers to racing car numbers to building floors. Coincidence? Intentional? An intentional coincidence?

Is twenty-three some cosmic number? In the I Ching, it means "Everything breaks apart." In Morse Code, it means "Break the line." Twenty-three male chromosomes match with twenty-three female chromosomes to create a human being. The sum of two and three is five, a number important to just about every occult belief system that exists. (The U.S. military doesn't maintain its headquarters in a *pent*agon for nothing.)

Of course, numerology is an easily manipulated "science"—there's always a way to add or subtract numbers to achieve whatever result you want. And it's always possible that twenty-three only appears often to those looking for it. Maybe, however, twenty-three is a code for those fighting (or at least aware of) one or more illuminati groups. Maybe its appearance isn't a coincidence—maybe it's a signal. Regardless, if you start paying attention to TV, movies, and other media, you'll notice that it appears—a lot.

Whether it's all coincidence or just a matter of consciously noticing one number and not the rest, twenty-three has become a part of conspiracy culture. As a DARK•MATTER Gamemaster, don't fight it—let yourself become a part of it. When you need a number—for an apartment, a parking space, a bus, or a random date—use twenty-three. The players might notice this eventually and wonder why, but if they don't know the secret of twenty-three, don't let on.

Them

"They" are out to get us. "They" put fluoride in the water. "They" peer into our personnel files and credit records. "They" created the AIDS virus.

The DARK•MATTER setting is all about being afraid of Them. It may be a different "Them" every time, but one can be sure that "They" are out to get us. "They" are in power (secretly or overtly), and we are not. "They" can be government officials, aliens, spiritual forces, or members of secret societies who manipulate events from the shadows.

Negativity and Cynicism

You can't research conspiracies and cover-ups for very long without acquiring a healthy sense of pessimism. It's a dark and frightening topic. For whatever reasons. our modern society runs rife with cynicism. It's no longer hard to believe that a conspiracy might have been behind the assassination of a president, or that government officials know more about UFOs than they let on. This is the world of the DARK•MATTER campaign, and the feeling that nothing is sacred or beyond suspicion comes with the territory.

Conspiracy research frequently leads to sudden realizations. It happens when a player first comprehends a secret society's plot. When he or she sees the plot within that plot, however, even greater comprehension dawns. With it comes the increasing ability to see potential plots everywhere. Suddenly, the electrical power lines above a residential area might be there for the sole purpose of inflicting cancer on the residents. Suddenly, the driver of every slow-moving car that passes one's house is a spy. Suddenly, a cordoned-off area of wilderness that supposedly surrounds a downed aircraft is just clever concealment for a crashed alien spacecraft.

Soon, what the media says isn't just suspicious, it's automatically a lie. Heroes begin to read government press releases "between the lines" for the real truth. Nothing is what it seems. Nothing.

Paranoia

Eventually, this sort of cynicism turns to paranoia. As they say, however (there's that "Them" again), you're not paranoid if they're really out to get you. The question isn't "Are you paranoid?" It's "Are you paranoid enough?"

At least, that's how some people look at it. Ultimately, paranoia is supreme egotism, with its basis in the belief that others are out to affect *one person* personally. Players in roleplaying games adopt this mind-set quite easily, which works in your favor when you run a DARK•MATTER campaign.

Don't ignore or downplay heroes who become paranoid over the course of the campaign. Capitalize on this instead. Begin slowly telling the players that their heroes have noticed someone following them, but when they look carefully, the culprit is gone. Foster their paranoia to the point where they're never really sure when caution is appropriate and when they truly are being paranoid.

This makes players in a DARK•MATTER campaign very sensitive to Gamemaster "hints." They notice that you don't ask them to make rolls to find things unless there's something to see. They realize that you don't describe supporting cast members in detail unless they have important roles. To play upon your players' paranoia, occasionally require them to make superfluous die rolls or make them suspicious of innocent bystanders just by mentioning them. In a DARK•MATTER game, paranoia keeps the heroes on their toes.

Insanity

During a typical DARK•MATTER campaign, the heroes will undoubtedly encounter a number of individuals who aren't completely stable. The twitchy informant who keeps looking over his shoulder, the raving lunatic preaching world destruction, and the murderous psychopath who hears voices in his head are all common elements of many conspiracy or horror tales, and they add to the sense of tension and weirdness.

Heroes, on the other hand, should be relatively resistant to succumbing to the friendly clutches of insanity. While it may be fun to play a hero with a quirk or two, a truly insane hero will be of limited use to his comrades (and may quickly become a liability).

However, certain events may permanently scar a hero's psyche. An abduction by aliens or government forces, painful physical or mental torture, encounters with horrific demons, or even just constant exposure to the world's evil secrets could be enough to unbalance a hero's mental state. To mimic various forms of psychological instability, the Gamemaster may assign one of the following flaws to a hero during the campaign, as appropriate: Forgetful, Oblivious, Obsessed, Phobia, Rampant Paranoia, Spineless, and Temper. Such flaws shouldn't grant the hero bonus skill points if assigned during the campaign.

As with any flaw, a hero can buy off these flaws any time after he or she attains achievement level 6. This requires an expenditure of skill points equal to the amount the flaw would have granted (or twice this number if it was selected during hero creation), as well as a period of psychiatric counseling. This calls for a complex Medical Science–*psychology* skill check requiring 4 successes plus 1 success per skill point value of the flaw. In addition, apply a modifier based on the value of the flaw: up to 2 points, no modifier; up to 4 points, +1 step penalty; up to 6 points, +2 step penalty. One roll may be made for every two weeks of counseling.

Nothing's Ever Easy

Everyone's cynical and paranoid in the DARK•MATTER world because it's a shadowy, suspicious place. In such a setting, betrayals, backstabbing, lies, and disinformation are all part of the normal course of events. It should become obvious to players (and their heroes) fairly quickly that they aren't involved in just plots, but in plots within plots. Someone they trust today might become an enemy tomorrow, and vice versa.

A certain level of aggravation arises in dealing with conspiracies and secret societies. Discovering their knowledge and goals can be very difficult—if it weren't, they wouldn't be *secret*. More so than in other roleplaying game settings, a DARK•MATTER Gamemaster should feel free to have the heroes' primary lead or main enemy turn up dead. In the world of conspiracy lore, so many people "turn up dead" that this becomes just another opportunity to build cynicism.

As an aside, individuals who know something important often wind up dead—the apparent victims of suicide. Such "coincidences" are so common, in fact, that the phrase "they suicided him" has become a euphemism for murders committed by those capable of covering up the truth. Sometimes such "suicides" are so common that the murderers don't even try to make them convincing. This leads to suspicious police reports indicating that the suicide victim made appointments for the following day or took the time to wipe up his own blood from the floor—perhaps even as he lay dying. It's also suspicious when a researcher commits suicide and his notes are coincidentally missing.

Likewise, an alien craft that the heroes found may very well have disappeared by the time they return with the authorities and the appropriate research equipment. Of course, such experiences teach heroes to carry their cameras with them at all times, but that's the point—they learn from their past mistakes. In becoming more experienced—that is, more cynical and suspicious (or paranoid)—they also become wiser, at least in terms of this setting.

Learning More

Although this book contains a wealth of information about conspiracies, the paranormal, and other interesting and useful topics, the Gamemaster may eventually want more. The vast majority of the source material in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting came from real-world sources. (That doesn't mean it's all true—or even that any of it is true—but it does mean that someone, somewhere, believes that it is or might be true.) All the strange events and UFO sightings mentioned in the timeline have been recorded as fact somewhere. The Templars, the Freemasons, the Bilderbergers, and many of the other groups mentioned in *Chapter 6: The Illuminati* did or do exist. While the DARK•MATTER game material is fiction, it's fiction based on human conjectures about certain anomalies.

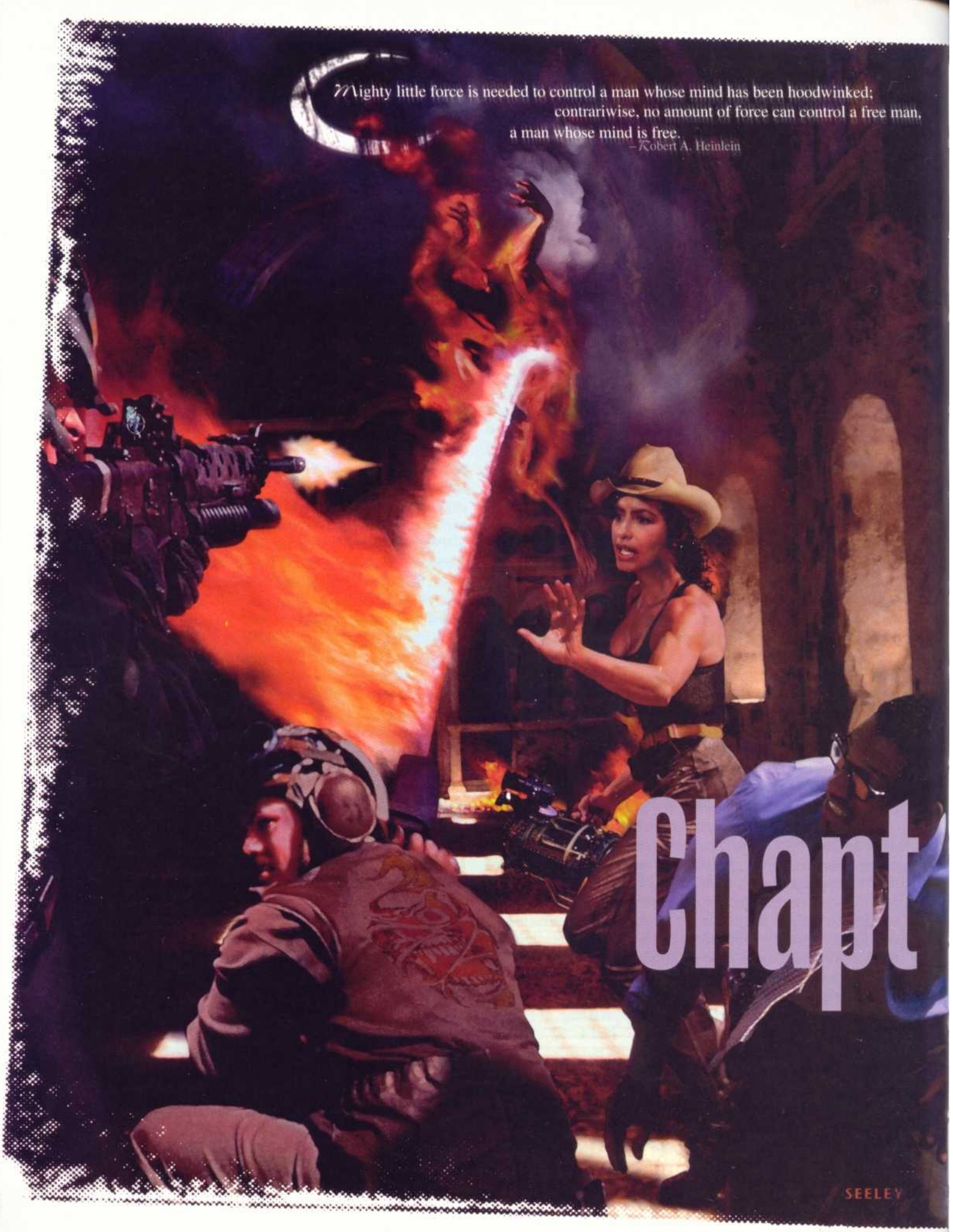
Gamemasters can and should use this same philosophy in designing their adventures. Real-world headlines (or, even better, nondescript buried articles) can become the basis for adventures. Real-world groups can become part of a conspiracy. Actual mysterious or unexplained events should become part of the campaign's paranormal backdrop.

Peruse books and magazines for ideas. The bibliography section of this book contains a great many suggestions with which you can start your search. Gamemasters who investigate the paranormal or conspiracy accounts often find that they don't need to create much material at all—the real world has done it for them. All they have to do is pull the material together. Strange murders a hundred years ago in Memphis? Mysterious lights in the sky over Memphis two weeks ago? Perhaps there's a connection. . . .

Of course, the Gamemaster is free to create all the incidents, plots, organizations, and people he or she desires, but using real-world research allows the Gamemaster to use newspaper articles, web pages, and photographs as props during play. Another advantage is the feeling of "reality" that this technique lends to the game, fostering the players' suspension of disbelief.

The Internet is a conspiracy or paranormal researcher's dream. The World Wide Web has hundreds (if not thousands) of sites dedicated to UFOs, crop circles, ghosts, psychic powers, mysterious beasts, Forteana, the occult, the Templars, the Masons, Satanism, conspiracies, and so much more.

No matter what source you use, you're bound to come upon stranger, kookier stuff during your research than you ever believed possible—guaranteed. But, in a game setting like this one, the kookier, the stranger, the more sinister—the better.


Mighty little force is needed to control a man whose mind has been hoodwinked;
contrariwise, no amount of force can control a free man,
a man whose mind is free.
– Robert A. Heinlein
Chapt
SEELEY

THOUGH THE DARK•MATTER CAMPAIGN SETTING RECOMMENDS THAT players take on roles as human heroes beginning their adventuring careers within the Hoffmann Institute, some groups may feel this is too constraining. Options for working outside the Institute, for beginning with more advanced heroes, and for playing nonhuman heroes are presented below.

Alternate Allegiances

Player characters may wish to explore an allegiance to a cause other than that of the Hoffmann Institute. Feel free to select any of the other organizations detailed in *Chapter 6: The Illuminati* or make one up yourself using those groups as examples. Obviously, some make better hero-related groups than others. The Final Church, for example, should be considered inappropriate because it's so completely evil. The Rosicrucians' secrecy and specialized activities might also label them unsuitable for an adventuring group. Heroes working as NASA operatives might not have enough to do (but could provide a good option for a short-term campaign).

Invisible College

The Invisible College provides a good example of a potential hero organization. With this option, the heroes will not be investigators into the paranormal or conspiratorial troubleshooters as they might be with the Hoffmann Institute. Instead, they become more proactive in their involvement with the campaign, striking against oppression however they see fit.

A hero group working for the Invisible College makes up its own cell of the organization. The heroes probably know precious little about the rest of the group, having at most one or maybe two contacts with them. Although they might occasionally be sent on "missions," the heroes are expected to come up with their own goals and activities within the College's frame of reference: promote freedom and free will and destroy oppression and tyranny. This, of course, is a broad framework, which is why some cells spend their time bombing government buildings like terrorists and others subtly undermine corporate influence in the media. The activities of the heroes are likely to fall somewhere in between these extremes. Gamemasters should allow the cell to concoct their own schemes, and knowing the Invisible College, the more clandestine, intricate, and obtuse the plan, the better. As the Gamemaster, you won't be handing out a new mission each week from the organization. Instead, you control the amount of funding that comes in from the College's mysterious sources (heroes probably just have money dumped mysteriously into their accounts or receive unmarked envelopes full of cash), and the amount of assistance or support (if any) the rest of the organization provides the heroes' cell.

If the heroes are at a complete loss in devising missions on their own, the Gamemaster can provide obvious enemies or targets to oppose. As the campaign develops, the heroes learn more about the setting and thus being proactive becomes easier.

Character creation options are unchanged. A psychic or an FX talent makes just as good a character in this organization as any other. The heroes still encounter the paranormal, aliens, and other conspiracies in the course of the campaign, although they might react differently to them as members of the Invisible College. For example, just about any organized group—except maybe the Rosicrucians—sees the Invisible College as a threat. Aliens, however, may look to the College as an ally, depending on their own motives.

Free Companies

Some heroes may not want to belong to any organized group. They can join the ranks of the free companies: ragtag groups of fringe thinkers, mercenaries, and conspiracy theorists who have stumbled across at least a fragment of the truth. This format is not recommended for all groups of players: The heroes have a smaller burden of responsibilities and more freedom of action, but they'll also have far fewer resources, less legal authority to act, and less support from secondary characters who work for the same goal. On the other hand, they can choose to undertake or drop whatever leads they like, and a motivated group can pursue the exact goals they want to pursue. Because they have more control, as with the Invisible College, they may initially be adrift. While the group searches for a direction early on, give them a clear-cut villain or at least a standard to measure themselves against. A more established group might temporarily employ the free company, and the mercenaries might occasionally work for more than one organization. This interesting situation allows them to see situations from a number of different perspectives and possibly play groups off one another. Certain types of free companies could eventually strike up a friendly rivalry with their opposite numbers in the Hoffmann Institute and find themselves racing for the same goal on occasion.

Having said all that, even a free company needs some infrastructure, or it simply won't be able to handle the challenges that it has to face. First, how do the characters know each other? Perhaps they are all members of the same electronic mailing list that discusses conspiracies and the nature of paranormal phenomena. Perhaps they publish a fringe newszine. Or perhaps they all belong to an informal network of UFO watchers. Whatever link ties them together, the heroes should share some common interest.

Second is the issue of money. As an easy solution, one hero can choose the Filthy Rich perk during character generation. As long as the hero continues to succeed in his Filthy Rich checks, the free company has enough money for traveling expenses, am-

er 10 campaign options

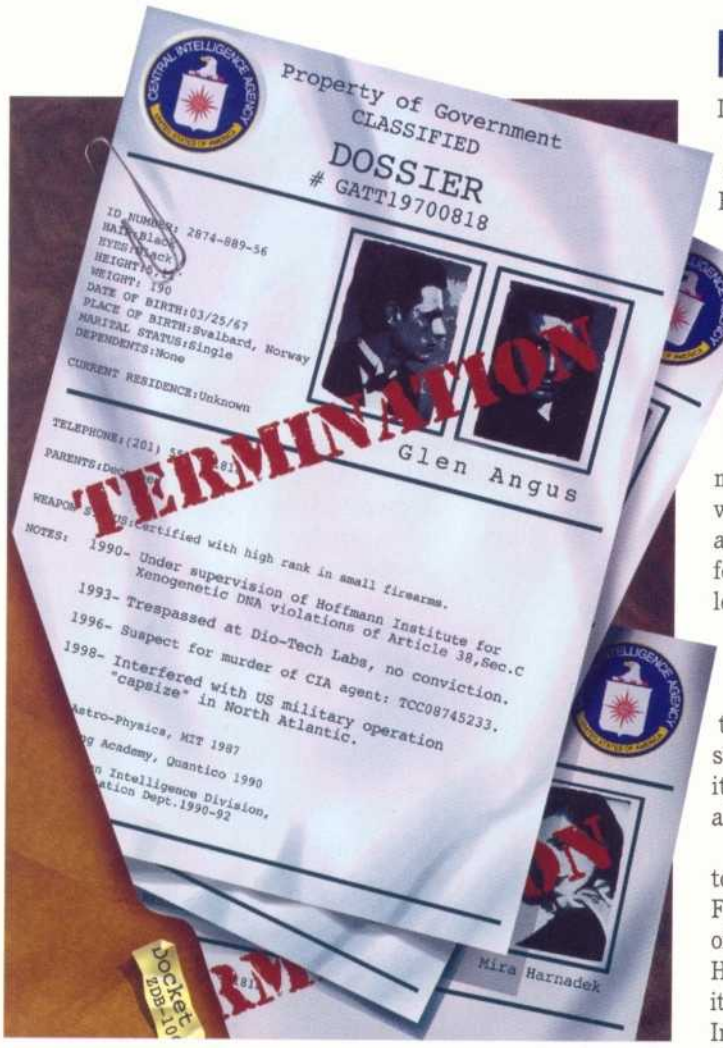
munition, new weapons, and other costs. At the Gamemaster's option, a Critical Failure on the perk check indicates that the heroes' enemies have managed to sabotage their funds; an adventure is necessary to free them up once again.

Accidental Groups

An accidental group is one that happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. A character or two, for example, might be looking for their brother who mysteriously disappeared and suddenly find themselves (and the friends who accompanied them) drawn into the web of intrigue and the paranormal that is a DARK•MATTER campaign.

These accidental groups never intended to investigate or interfere with conspiratorial secret societies or the paranormal. In fact, before they got involved, they probably never realized that such things really existed.

Accidental groups face many of the same challenges that a free company does (including funding, authority, and direction). The Gamemaster should be aware that their reason for getting involved—often unintentionally—may affect the goals they wish to pursue or the way in which they react to certain situations. For example, an accidental group probably won't spend nearly the amount of time researching or investigating the backstory of a particular group or incident that a Hoffmann Institute team might.



In an accidental group, the heroes should probably not begin the game with psionic or FX skills or abilities. A character could start out with latent abilities that develop as the game goes on, but this should be something worked out between a player and a Gamemaster. Likewise, most won't have knowledge skills pertaining to conspiracies or the paranormal.

An accidental group of this type is an excellent way to introduce new players to the setting. However, since the heroes almost certainly have short-term goals (recovering the missing brother, to use the above example), this model may not be appropriate for a long-term game unless the accidental group forms itself into what amounts to a free company or joins a group such as the Hoffmann Institute. In these cases, the heroes' discoveries—such as the simple knowledge that paranormal beings really exist, or that secret societies govern every aspect of daily life—forever change their outlook and render them physically or emotionally incapable of returning to their previous lives.

Alternately, one or more of the heroes could unknowingly work for a secret society. They might receive "missions" of one sort or another for a while before they ever become aware of the source. For example, heroes who work for a detective agency could be employed by Hoffmann (or whomever) to accomplish various tasks. Eventually, they become aware that they are actually a part of something much larger than they ever imagined, and they can decide on their own what to do next.

Multiple Group Affiliations

It would be terribly unwieldy if every hero in a group belonged to or worked for a different group. However, some small amount of mixture can be fun and challenging. For example, a team of Hoffmann heroes can work with a nonaffiliated "consultant" on the majority of their missions. Conversely, a single Hoffmann Institute employee might be accompanied on his work with his non-Hoffmann associates or friends. Unaffiliated heroes can probably fit into any group. The dichotomy of one hero saying, "You have to obey orders and I don't" while his friend claims, "I'm privy to the secrets of my group and you're not" can make for very interesting situations.

A group working for the Invisible College might accept a member of the Rosicrucians into their ranks. In fact, heroes working for the Invisible College might not even realize that they are all members of the same group. Each could believe—at least for a while—that he or she is the only actual member of the College and that the others belong to an unaffiliated free company. Imagine their surprise when they all discover that they're all working for the same secret society! Or are they? . . .

A member of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory can fit into virtually any group whose goal doesn't conflict with his own struggle against evil. In fact, a member of that order might find it very beneficial to tag along with a Hoffmann group—they always seem to come upon sources of evil to quench.

Finally, as has been suggested elsewhere, a hero might belong to or work for two or more organizations at the same time. An FBI agent, for example, could easily also be a Mason or a Knight of Malta. That same FBI agent could also be a member of the Hoffmann Institute, although the Bureau wouldn't probably like it if they found out. A Hoffmann agent might also belong to the Invisible College, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, or maybe even the Rosicrucians, with special dispensations on the part of both

sides. Some groups, however, are entirely incompatible, and a character could only work for both if she were some sort of plant or double agent, working for one and spying on the other. (Conceivably, she might really work for neither.) Keep in mind that *some* minor players or government agencies, such as the CDC or MUFON, aren't necessarily mutually exclusive with anyone.

A word of warning: If one or more members of the group belong to organizations that the rest of the heroes do not, the temptation exists to keep this a secret from those players not involved. That can be a fun and rewarding play experience, but it can also lead to feelings of paranoia and dissension between the heroes (and players). If the Gamemaster thinks the players won't mind the secrecy or the subsequent distrust, he or she should allow it. Groups aware of the flavor of the setting might actually enjoy wondering whom among their companions they can really trust. Just keep in mind that some most definitely will not.

The Institute As Enemy

Some groups of players may not want to fight against external foes all the time. Plenty of opportunities exist to meet rivals, power players, infiltrators, and spies within the Institute itself. If this is the route the Gamemaster chooses to take, he or she must at least suggest to the players that the Institute cannot be entirely trusted. This information constitutes the minimum requirement of fair warning, since the heroes have presumably been working with the Institute for some time and would have a good idea of what they're likely to face.

Putting the Institute in a "semitrustworthy" category will make games more tense, resources harder to gather, and the lists of suspects longer, but it can also create some excellent story opportunities. If the Gamemaster chooses this option, he or she should inform the players early on that their heroes hold doubts about some people at the Institute. Don't spring the "hostile Institute" atmosphere on them without warning; the players may quite rightly feel that it isn't quite fair.

In addition to innate rivalries or hostility, the heroes may draw the wrath of the Institute down on themselves if they aren't careful. The Institute isn't terribly forgiving of mistakes and loose cannons—or, at least, they aren't forgiving of those who don't produce results. If the heroes constantly ignore Institute policies on stealth and low profile, Red Section may be called in to apply extreme sanctions against the heroes. Very few people retire from the Institute; most die in the line of duty, work until they disappear, or are "retired" forcibly.

Advanced Heroes

In general, the DARK•MATTER setting assumes that starting (level 1) heroes are relatively inexperienced. Some players may prefer to play heroes who have more experience under their belts.

If this is the case, consider starting your group of heroes at level 6 or even higher to represent the additional training they have achieved.

Advanced Hero Careers

While the majority of players using advanced heroes may wish to create their heroes from scratch (or use one of the careers listed in *Chapter 3: Heroes of DARK•MATTER*), some may want a little assistance in making a higher-level hero. The four careers listed below are specifically designed for use with experienced heroes (level 6 or higher).

Special Forces (Combat Spec)

Every group in power knows that, ultimately, power does come from the barrel of a gun. When the Institute Division Supervisors or the Director himself needs a group of experts to liquidate a problem, he calls on the Institute's most reliable special forces operatives, the deadly members of Red Section. Almost all of them are blooded killers; any player creating such a hero should spend some time considering what sort of wetwork missions his hero has undertaken in the past and how they turned out.

Because special forces personnel are highly trained, mercenary companies, security teams, and other highly trained, wealthy organizations often immediately snatch them up as soon as these Combat Specs muster out. While they maintain a high level of military discipline and readiness, these professionals have more opportunities to use their skills on behalf of their employers than they usually do as part of a standing army. Examples of special forces teams include counterterrorism squads, the Green Berets, the Rangers, the Navy Seals, the UN Rapid Response Team, or the U.S. government's international Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force (MJTF).

Additional skills that a special forces veteran might consider include Heavy Weapons, Melee Weapons, Security–*security devices* and *protection protocols*, System Operation–*communications*, and Tactics–*infantry tactics*. The sabotage expert finds the specialty skills for Demolitions invaluable. For the special forces op who spends a lot of time in the wilds tracking offenders or evading pursuit, the Survival–*survival training*, Navigation–*surface navigation,* and Investigate–*track* skills are worthwhile. If the operative specializes in extracting information from prisoners, choose Interaction–*interview* or *intimidate* and Investigate–*interrogate*. The skills of Awareness–*intuition* and *perception* prove invaluable to any high-level Combat Spec.

Signature Equipment: Battle vest, assault rifle, 9mm SMG, night vision goggles.

Skill Package: Unarmed–*power martial arts;* Acrobatics–*daredevil;* Modern–*rifle, SMG 3*; Stealth–*sneak*, Movement–*swim, trailblazing;* Stamina–*endurance;* Demolitions; Knowledge–*first aid;* Awareness–*perception*; Resolve. Cost: 76 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Powerful Ally (government), Vigor.

Suggested Flaws: Powerful Enemy (enemy governments, terrorists).

Senior Agent (Diplomat-Free Agent)

The senior agent is a field agent who has been promoted to lead expeditions for the organization that employs him. Responsible for security, tactics, and command of a diverse group of talents, a senior agent is often half leader and half babysitter. In most cases, the senior agent holds personal responsibility for any failings of the team and is liable for the actions of its members. He's expected to keep his team in line and to deploy the Institute's assets in the most effective way possible.

While in many ways the senior agent serves as a motivator and officer of sorts, he's also expected to pull his weight as a fighter when the going gets rough. Consider picking up Unarmed Attack–*power martial arts* or an additional Modern Ranged Weapons specialty skill. In other situations, a firefight is the last thing any agency wants: Deception–*bluff* or Interaction–*charm* can prevent unnecessary bloodshed. A large part of the job also involves information gathering, so Security–*protection protocols* and Street Smart–*street knowledge* come in handy. Some organizations may also require their senior agents to be familiar with Business–*corporate* or Law–*court procedures*.

Signature Equipment: Cell phone, 9mm pistol, organization passcodes.

Skill Package: Unarmed Attack; Modern–*pistol 2;* Knowledge–*computer operation, deduce 2, first aid;* Law–*enforcement;* Tactics; Administration–*bureaucracy, management;* Investigate–*interrogate;* Culture; Interaction–*interview, intimidate;* Leadership–*command*. Cost: 72 points.

Suggested Perks: Powerful Ally (employer).

Suggested Flaws: Powerful Enemy (enemies of employer).

Black Ops (Free Agent)

Unlike the special forces Combat Spec, black ops know that no legitimate agency backs them up. They carry out assassinations, theft, blackmail, kidnapping, or extortion and receive no reward other than a modest salary. Why do it? Because someone has to, and it's in the interests of their supervisors, in fact in the interests of all humanity, that someone do the dirty work.

Black ops heroes recognize the need to react appropriately when situations go bad. This can include everything from Law–*court procedures* to foil an arrest, to Deception–*bribe* to buy their way out of danger, to Medical Science–*surgery* or *treatment* to stay in one piece when an operation turns into a bloodbath. The exact skills a black ops hero chooses depend on the hero's personal code and preferred methods. Snipers should maximize their Modern Ranged Weapons–*rifle* rank. Acrobatics–*daredevil,* Security–*security devices,* and Manipulation–*lockpick* can help the black ops specialist reach his target. Tactics–*infantry tactics* helps the hero plan his course of attack, and the specialty skills of Resolve allow the hero to resist torture, deprivation, and other trauma.

Signature Equipment: 9mm SMG, 9mm pistol, smoke grenade, gas mask, battle vest, boots, fatigues, night-vision goggles, surveillance gear.

Skill Package: Athletics–*climb;* Unarmed Attack; Modern–*pistol, SMG 2;* Stealth–*hide, shadow 2, sneak*, Knowledge–*computer, first aid;* Security–*protocols;* Awareness–*intuition, perception;* Investigate–*search;* Resolve. Cost: 77 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Reflexes.

Suggested Flaws: Hidden Identity, Obsessed, Powerful Enemy.

Field Researcher (Tech Op)

There are times when lab work just isn't enough to answer the questions of science. After all, the best historian or scientist in the world proves useless if the requisite knowledge hasn't yet



been discovered. In such a situation, the call goes out for the field researcher. This difficult career demands a wide range of knowledge and expertise; the hero must be prepared for just about any situation that can arise in the field (and perhaps even a few that shouldn't be able to occur).

The field researcher should focus on improving her existing skills rather than purchasing new ones. However, those who find a few extra skill points might consider picking up Modern Ranged Weapons or Primitive Ranged Weapons (for times when a gun isn't handy). Life Science specialty skills come in handy in the wilderness. Because of the varied terrain the field researcher is likely to encounter, Acrobatics–*daredevil,* Vehicle Operation–*land, water,* or *air,* and even Animal Handling–*animal riding* may also be useful. For those inevitable trips into civilization, Administration–*bureaucracy,* Street Smart–*street knowledge,* and Deception–*bribe* are a must.

Signature Equipment: Sport utility vehicle, maps, guidebooks, survival gear, machete.

Skill Package: Athletics–*climb, jump;* Movement–*swim, trailblazing;* Survival–*training;* Knowledge–*language (specific) 2;* Life Science; Navigation–*surface;* Social–*anthropology, history, linguistics;* Investigate–*research 2, track 2;* Culture–*diplomacy*. Cost: 76 points.

Suggested Perks: Fortitude, Well Traveled, Reputation.

Suggested Flaws: Infamy, Obsessed, Old Injury.

Alien Heroes

The focus of DARK•MATTER is on human heroes aware—in one way or another—of the danger to Earth from the Dark Tide. However, individuals from many other species may share humanity's desire to learn about the strangeness spreading around the planet. At the Gamemaster's option, other species—including Greys, kinori, mothmen, sandmen, or sasquatch—may be available to play as heroes.

Each alien species begins play with special abilities that may include an automatic flaw; this flaw grants no bonus skill points to the hero (and doesn't count against the three-flaw limit for starting heroes). Such flaws may be removed at any time after the hero reaches 6th level by spending double the number of skill points the flaw is "worth" (even though it actually grants no points). Note also that unless they establish false human identities, most alien heroes enjoy the free effects of the 3-point Hidden Identity perk. Remember that alien heroes do not receive the 5 bonus skill points granted to beginning human heroes. Additionally, keep in mind the potential language barriers, particularly for those species that limit their interaction with humanity. Ability score limits for nonhuman heroes are noted in TABLE D14: ALIEN HERO ABILITY SCORE LIMITS.

For an even stranger twist, a Gamemaster could center an entire campaign on the machinations of one particular group of aliens and their plots to the exclusion of most others. In this case, the heroes might all be Greys starting out on the Moon or Mars and seeking passage to Earth to make contact with the Institute or with other rogue Greys. Or, they could be a group of renegade sandmen who have experienced a "crisis of faith" in their leadership and now seek to bring the etoile's colonization efforts to an end.

Additional details on these alien species appear in *Chapter 6: The Illuminati* and *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*.

Playing a Grey

A few Greys adopt human culture and live among humans, hiding in plain sight through a combination of technology and psionics. They psionically befuddle the minds of those who see them, and they use technology to order goods and services without ever seeing a human face. These rogues, or "hesai" as the Greys call them, are appropriate for use as heroes. Most will be of the Iltan or Ziljir faction and should be familiar with at least some of the history detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Special Abilities

Unlike humans, Greys have normal access to the Mindwalker profession; Grey Mindwalkers begin with psionic energy points equal to 1.5 times their Will. Grey psionic talents or Diplomats with Mindwalker as a secondary profession begin with psionic energy points equal to their Will scores. Rogue Greys should also begin play with the automatic flaw of Divided Loyalty.

Grey heroes begin play with the free broad skills of Vehicle Operation, Knowledge, Awareness, Resolve, Interaction, and Telepathy.

Emissary (Diplomat-Mindwalker)

Emissaries are Greys specially trained and prepared to deal with the violent and unpredictable human realm and are sometimes sent to the Institute as special agents. Familiar with human speech and customs, emissaries learn psionic skills that allow them to minimize their impact on human culture. An emissary's missions range from simple industrial looting to biological surveys to long-term advisory positions in groups trusted and respected by the Grey leadership. Emissaries are expected to work to further the interests of the Greys above all other species, while maintaining the secrecy that the Greys prize more and more as humans grow more and more dangerous.

A Grey emissary needs to improve his or her knowledge of human languages as opportunities present themselves, and should pick up Culture–*etiquette* as well. If the emissary hopes to wander among humans undetected, Telepathy–*illusion* or *obscure* is a must.

Signature Equipment: Stutter pistol, Grey-human language phrasebook.

Skill Package: Knowledge–*language (specific human) 3;* Resolve–*mental;* Culture–*diplomacy, etiquette (specific) 2;* ESP–*empathy, mind reading;* Telepathy–*suggest*. Cost: 30 points.

Suggested Perks: Psionic Awareness, Willpower.

Suggested Flaws: Delicate.

TABLE D14: ALIEN HERO ABILITY SCORE LIMITS

Species	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIL	PER
Grey	4–11	4–14	4–10	9–15	9–16	4–15
Kinori	4–11	9–14	5–11	8–14	5–12	5–12
Mothman	6–12	6–14	5–11	4–11	9–15	4–11
Sandman	5–15	4–14	6–16	5–15	2–12	3–13
Sasquatch	9–16	5–11	9–15	4–12	4–14	4–12

Eraser (Free Agent)

As another incarnation of the stereotypical Men In Black, these Greys remove all memories of their presence from the minds of human beings they contact. They do this through Telepathy and the *suggestion* that an unusual event the person experienced was a dream, a natural phenomenon, or an everyday event; very few humans can resist their influence. Many erasers work in cooperation with an emissary, covering up the traces of incidents that go wrong.

Over time, erasers should acquire Interaction–*intimidate* and perhaps a weapon skill such as Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol*. Since they are also expected to pick up evidence, they need Investigate–*search* and *track*. Some erasers also learn Telepathy–*contact* in order to directly influence the minds of humans whose language they do not understand.

Signature Equipment: Battle vest, laser pistol, trench coat.

Skill Package: Modern Ranged Weapons; Knowledge–*language (specific human);* Awareness–*perception,* Investigate–*interrogate*; Telepathy–*mind shield, obscure, suggest*. Cost: 29 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Technician (Tech Op)

Among the Greys, the technicians are well respected for their prowess in understanding and operating machinery of all types. They are trusted with knowledge of many scientific advances and skilled in operating computers and shipboard systems. Some can even fly the smaller Grey spacecraft. Technicians tend to be very dedicated to their careers, though this sometimes backfires when they become convinced that they should share their knowledge with the "lesser" races (such as humans).

Grey technicians should focus on their technical and scientific skills above all others. When picking up new skills, consider Vehicle Operation–*air* or *space*, Physical Science–*astronomy*, Security–*devices*, and additional System Operation specialty skills.

Signature Equipment: Portable workshop, weight neutralizer, utility harness, jumpsuit.

Skill Package: Computer Science; Physical Science; System–*engineering;* Technical–*repair 2.* Cost: 29 points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Gearhead, Photo Memory.

Suggested Flaws: Obsessed.

Playing a Kinori

The kinori are a proud, xenophobic race. Their history tells stories of how their human allies betrayed them to the hated Greys, and that ever since they have been hunted by their mammalian foes. Despite the kinori's best efforts to expand into quiet, secluded areas, the humans never fail to uncover their hidden nests, always destroying them when they are found.

Some kinori, however, desire to learn more about the humans than what their elders tell them. A few go so far as to leave their people, seeking to interact with their so-called enemies. These kinori often become outcasts, distrusted or even hated by their former brothers and sisters. These are the most appropriate kinori to play as heroes, particularly in a human-dominated campaign.

Special Abilities

All kinori have natural armor that provides protection equivalent to d4 (LI)/d4 (HI)/d4 (En). Kinori heroes who remain loyal to their species have the automatic flaw of Divided Loyalty, while those who break away from their kind start with the 2-point flaw of Powerful Enemy (kinori).

Kinori heroes begin play with the free broad skills of Athletics, Unarmed Attack, Stamina, Knowledge, Awareness, and Interaction.

Nest Guardian (Combat Spec)

The kinori known as nest guardians serve as soldiers, defending their people from those who would destroy them. Sometimes they also act as assault troops, making preemptive strikes against their enemies. From time to time, nest guardians rebel against their responsibilities and go rogue, leaving the nest to seek knowledge among the humans.

Nest guardians must hone their *perception* skill to ensure that their charges remain safe. Of course, combat skills are always useful, including Melee Weapons–*blade* and additional ranks in *brawl* and *rifle*. Nest guardians who venture into the outside world often learn Stealth and Investigate, as well as a human language or two.

Signature Equipment: Assault rifle, combat knife, ceremonial jewelry denoting rank and nest.

Skill Package: Unarmed–*brawl 2;* Modern–*rifle;* Movement–*swim;* Stamina–*endurance;* Tactics; Awareness–*perception.* Cost: 27 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant, Tough as Nails.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Divided Loyalty.

Scout (Free Agent)

Kinori scouts search for new locations for kinori nests, niches into which their saurian brethren can expand without drawing attention to themselves. By restricting their movements to night and their bases to the sewers and undercity portions of human settlements, most scouts can avoid casual discovery and are often written off as "alligators in the sewers." Occasionally, exposure to human culture turns a scout into an outcast.

Scouts should improve their Stealth skills when possible. Movement–*trailblazing* and Survival–*survival training* can be useful if the scout engages in wilderness travel. Ranks in Awareness–*perception* and *intuition* also come in handy.

Signature Equipment: Dark clothing, infrared goggles, survival gear.

Skill Package: Unarmed–*brawl;* Stealth–*hide, sneak;* Movement–*swim;* Knowledge–*deduce;* Investigate–*search*. Cost: 31 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Divided Loyalty, Powerful Enemy (kinori, Greys).

Playing a Mothman

The mothmen might seem at first glance to be inappropriate for use as heroes. However, despite its primitive nature, the mothman culture has much to offer to a DARK•MATTER game. In a cam-

paign focusing on the mystical or paranormal, the mothmen—with their body of lore and mythology—could add an interesting dimension.

Special Abilities

Mothmen may fly or glide at the appropriate rates. Their talons inflict d4s/d6w/d6+1w (LI/O). They are sensitive to light, as noted in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*. Mothman heroes have the automatic 4-point flaw of Primitive.

A mothman hero begins play with the free broad skills of Athletics, Acrobatics, Stamina, Knowledge, Awareness, and Interaction.

Hunter (Combat Spec)

With their keen senses and silent flight, mothmen are able to track animals even in almost complete darkness and strike from above. They rank among the best nocturnal warriors ever to fight on Earth. At the same time, mothman backwardness with advanced technology means that most hunters disdain the potential of modern firearms.

Mothman hunters usually shy away from learning the skills of the modern world. Instead, they pick up Melee Weapons–*blade*, Movement–*trailblazing*, Stealth–*sneak*, and Acrobatics–*dodge* in short order.

Signature Equipment: Spear, skinning knife, flint and iron.

Skill Package: Acrobatics–*flight*; Primitive–*bow*; Stealth–*hide*; Awareness–*perception*; Investigate. Cost: 31 points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Observant.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Old Injury.

Dreamwalker (Diplomat-Tech Op)

The dreamwalkers of the mothmen are scholar/shamans who gain knowledge through the invocation and interpretation of dreams. A dreamwalker's knowledge proves correct with startling frequency, especially with respect to dangers posed by creatures of the Dark Tide.

That said, the dreamwalkers don't always enjoy a good reputation among their own kind. In many tribes they are seen as something akin to holy fools, dabbling in wisdom for the sake of drug use, degenerate coupling, and other pleasures shared with those who visit them. Though the rumors are surely overblown, mothmen dreamwalkers sometimes abuse the trust vested in them.

Dreamwalkers are entranced by human music, which they consider a trippy way to induce the meditative states they need to perform their rituals successfully.

Finally, the dreamwalkers know much about the creatures of the Dark Tide, as represented by their Life Science–*xenology* skill.

Signature Equipment: Amulets, sleeping draught, hallucinogens, herbal medicines, incense, flash powder.

Skill Package: Acrobatics–*flight;* Life–*botany*; *xenology;* Awareness–*intuition;* Faith FX (Shamanism)–*dreamwalking*. Cost: 34 points.

Suggested Perks: Photo Memory.

Suggested Flaws: Infamy (among mothmen).

Playing a Sandman

Since the sandmen are, by definition, loyal soldiers of the etoile, a sandman hero is a rare being indeed. The player and Gamemaster should work together to come up with a suitable reason for the hero's betrayal of his masters. Perhaps the sandman disagrees with the plan of planetary takeover, or perhaps his transformation didn't quite "take" and, while he enjoys the physical advantages of his new form, he has none of the innate loyalty that comes with it. In any case, the hero becomes a complete outcast and must survive without the support of the etoile and their advanced technology.

Special Abilities

Sandman heroes may begin play with cybernetic implants of up to Progress Level 6, though they must pay the one-time cost of 10 skill points. They receive a –4 step bonus to Constitution feat checks made to resist toxins. They have the normal sandman ability to fuse with inorganic objects or reshape their bodies, as noted in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*. The sandman hero also begins with the automatic 4-point flaw of Powerful Enemy (etoile and sandmen).

Sandman heroes begin play with the free broad skills of Athletics, Vehicle Operation, Stamina, Computer Science, Knowledge, Awareness, and Interaction.

Sand Warrior (Combat Spec)

The most fanatical of the sandmen are the sand warriors. Trained in the disciplines of *blood music* (see *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*), they rarely appear without cybernetic implants and the latest available weaponry. (The skill package cost below includes the one-time 10-point cost for cybernetic installation.)

Once they have advanced their Modern Ranged Weapons and Unarmed Attack specialty skills, most sandman warriors eventually pick up Computer Science–*hacking* or *programming*, Demolitions, and Stamina–*endurance*.

Signature Equipment: Assault rifle, battle vest, BattleKlaw (Ordinary), nanocomputer (Ordinary), self-repair unit (Ordinary).

Skill Package: Unarmed Attack; Modern–*rifle;* Stamina–*blood music*. Cost: 27 points.

Suggested Perks: Reflexes.

Suggested Flaws: Divided Loyalty, Temper.

Stalker (Free Agent)

The stalkers are stealthy troops trained in evasion, tracking, and sabotage. They seek out rogue Greys, wandering kinori, and any other Strangers—all the while keeping their own presence a secret. In most cases, their missions involve observation, capturing samples for their etoile masters, and erasing all trace of evidence that humans are not meant to find. In extremis, they kill to protect their master's secrets, or their own.

In most cases, stalkers pick up Stealth–*shadow*, Stamina–*endurance*, Demolitions–*set explosives*, Security–*security devices*, Investigate–*search*, and Interaction–*intimidate*. Stalkers also often buy additional ranks in Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol*, Stamina–*blood music*, and Awareness–*perception*.

Signature Equipment: 9mm pistol and laser sight, plastic explosives, night vision goggles.

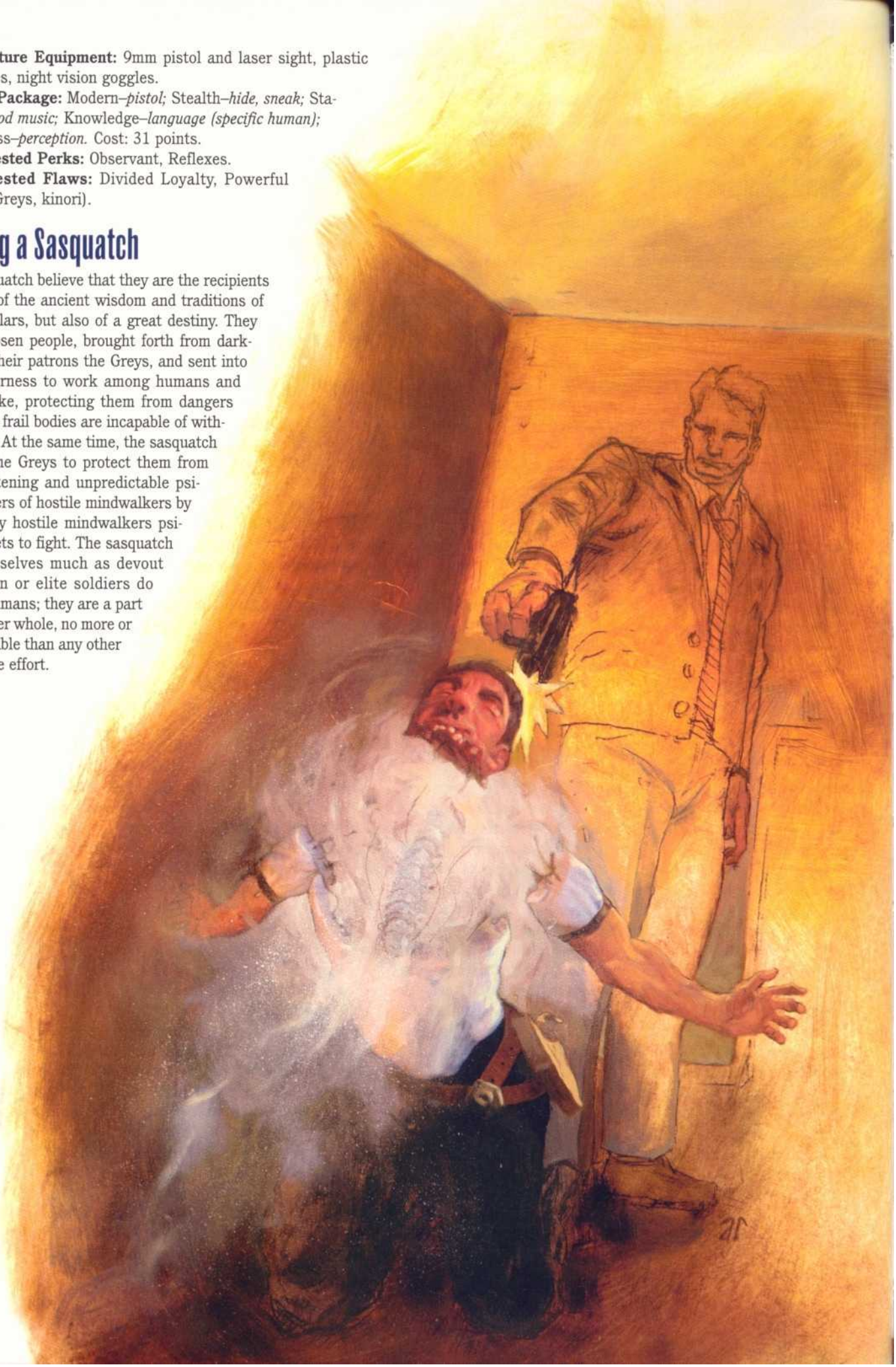
Skill Package: Modern–*pistol;* Stealth–*hide, sneak;* Stamina–*blood music;* Knowledge–*language (specific human);* Awareness–*perception.* Cost: 31 points.

Suggested Perks: Observant, Reflexes.

Suggested Flaws: Divided Loyalty, Powerful Enemy (Greys, kinori).

Playing a Sasquatch

The sasquatch believe that they are the recipients not only of the ancient wisdom and traditions of the Templars, but also of a great destiny. They are a chosen people, brought forth from darkness by their patrons the Greys, and sent into the wilderness to work among humans and Greys alike, protecting them from dangers that their frail bodies are incapable of withstanding. At the same time, the sasquatch look to the Greys to protect them from the frightening and unpredictable psionic powers of hostile mindwalkers by giving any hostile mindwalkers psionic targets to fight. The sasquatch see themselves much as devout clergymen or elite soldiers do among humans; they are a part of a greater whole, no more or less valuable than any other part of the effort.



Their pride in their ability to take punishment, remain hidden in a hostile world, and gather the necessities of life quickly and unobtrusively is evident in their enthusiasm and devotion to their work. The sacred nature of their combat role makes them just that much more dangerous in battle, but they put just as much effort into non-combat tasks.

Sasquatch remain distrustful and suspicious of science in general and high technology in particular. Taught by the Greys that such things are "things of the Greys and humans," many sasquatch believe that technology taints them and corrupts their ability to fight the Strangers. For this reason they shun it, and they consider sasquatch scholars extremely shady characters indeed. Despite the Institute's approval of their technological training, other sasquatch consider scholars somehow not quite as worthy as "true sasquatch."

Yeti and other "wild" sasquatch, on the other hand, are viewed as worthy brothers in the struggle, deserving of sympathy and support. Generally, sasquatch attempt to recruit these fallen kin back into the service of the Greys.

Special Abilities

Sasquatch heroes have a number of special abilities. Their claws inflict d4w/d4+2w/d4m (LI/O). Their fur blends with the surroundings, giving sasquatch a –1 step bonus to any attempts to *hide* and a +1 step penalty to be hit in ranged combat. Multiply a sasquatch's Constitution by 1.5 to determine a hero's durability. They also have the automatic 4-point flaw of Primitive.

Sasquatch heroes begin play with the free broad skills of Athletics, Unarmed Attack, Stamina, Knowledge, Awareness, and Interaction.

Templar (Combat Spec)

Templars are the knightly warriors of the sasquatch temples, responsible to the incantors (see below) but also members of their own hierarchy. The templars place a great value on tracing their lineages; a little like the Nordic sagas, they maintain an oral tradition that contains a list of all the sasquatch's ancestors and their brave deeds. Most templars of the order strive to live up to their lineage and expand upon it with further great deeds.

To accomplish that goal of great deeds bravely done, all templars train in the use of heavy metal armor (equivalent to PL 2 full plate), great swords (equivalent to the PL 3 katana), and crossbows. They do not use shields. Captains—referred to as marshals—lead the templars. These marshals answer to the Greys and to their followers.

Templar usually pick up additional ranks in Melee Weapons–*blade* or Primitive Ranged Weapons–*crossbow*. Most also learn Unarmed Attack–*brawl*, Awareness–*perception*, Tactics–*infantry tactics,* and Leadership.

Signature Equipment: Templar greatsword, combat knife, crossbow and arrows, templar full plate, leather coat, leather boots, signal horn.

Skill Package: Armor–*combat;* Melee–*blade;* Primitive–*crossbow*; Stamina–*endurance*. Cost: 26 points.

Suggested Perks: Fortitude, Willpower.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Divided Loyalty (applicable to those working for the Hoffmann Institute's White Section).

Incantor (Diplomat–Combat Spec)

The incantors are priests with access to a unique form of Faith FX called Incantation (see the sidebar under the "Sasquatch" entry in *Chapter 8: Xenoforms*). These incantors have great faith in an adopted religion unlike anything the Greys anticipated. The incantors represent the heart of sasquatch society; their prayers protect the faithful, and their interpretations of the pronouncements of the Grey Speaker help guide the crusade against darkness.

Needless to say, incantors should have higher Will and Personality scores than the average sasquatch. Incantors generally gain additional ranks in their Faith FX (Incantation) specialty skills or save up for additional points of FX energy rather than picking up many new skills. However, even among the sasquatch priesthood, Unarmed Combat–*brawl* and Stamina–*endurance* are popular skills. Some incantors take an ecumenical approach, learning Hindu, Latin, Hebrew, and other religious languages to examine the theology and rituals of humanity. Finally, many incantors enjoy learning about human culture and pick up Social Science–*history*.

Signature Equipment: Book of liturgical chants, pen, formal vestments.

Skill Package: Entertain–*sing*; Leadership–*inspire*; Faith FX (Incantation)–*battle spirits, calming voice.* Cost: 26 skill points.

Suggested Perks: Concentration, Willpower.

Suggested Flaws: Code of Honor, Divided Loyalty.

Wanderer (Free Agent)

Having escaped from service to the Greys, these sasquatch are wild creatures living off the land using Stone Age tools. A few of them turn to the mountain strongholds of the templars from time to time to work for fellow sasquatch, performing heavy physical labor in exchange for food and shelter, but most scratch out their livings through hunting. They avoid human or Grey contact whenever possible but retain their trust in other sasquatch. The rising Dark Tide has led some wanderers to seek out others who fight against the darkness; however, their role has remained largely restricted to rural and wilderness areas.

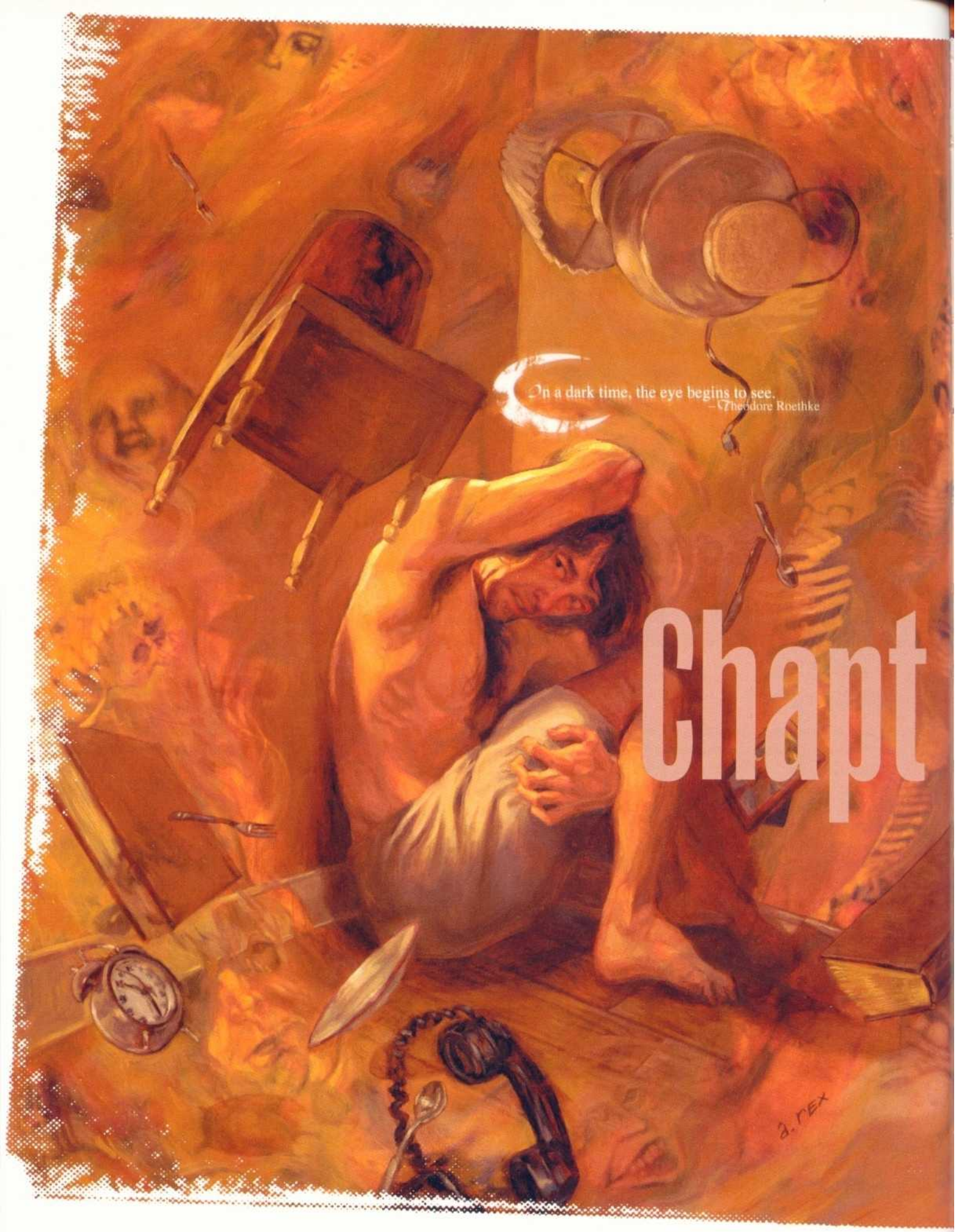
Wanderers require a wide number of skills but are primarily concerned with learning Movement–*trailblazing*, Investigate–*track,* and improving their Survival and Stealth specialty skills. Learning Primitive Ranged Weapons may also be a good idea for those with access to bows or crossbows.

Signature Equipment: None.

Skill Package: Athletics–*climb;* Unarmed–*brawl;* Movement; Stamina–*endurance;* Survival; Stealth. Cost: 27 points.

Suggested Perks: Danger Sense, Reflexes.

Suggested Flaws: Dirt Poor, Primitive (6-point version grants 2 points).


In a dark time, the eye begins to see.
–Theodore Roethke
Chapt

THIS STARTER ADVENTURE IS INTENDED FOR LOW-LEVEL DARK•MATTER heroes and is particularly appropriate for Hoffmann Institute recruits. However, heroes of nearly any level or background can play the adventure with some adjustments. *Raw Recruits* also provides the Gamemaster with a number of potential hooks for an ongoing DARK•MATTER campaign.

Adventure Background

Over the past 75 years, nearly five thousand total case files have been linked with the Midwest. The earliest files examined religious phenomena, numerous hauntings, and the spiritualist movement (with notable Hoffmann ally Ehrich Weisz providing several incident reports). During and after World War II, northern and central Wisconsin became a hotbed of UFO activity. Stories abound of a Bigfoot-like creature dubbed "the Beast of Bray Road." While unproven, rumors among those versed in conspiracy theories point to the active involvement of numerous power groups within the general area of the Great Lakes, including the Freemasons, the Invisible College, and a large contingent of rogue Greys.

The Hoffmann Institute's Chicago branch, founded in 1927, has kept a close eye on all the goings-on within the Midwest. With the creation of the Chicago Specimen Collection in 1934, the Chicago branch became dominated by the Analytical and Archive Divisions, but local documentation and investigation of the paranormal continues to the present. Based on the events' suspected danger level and sensitivity, the Hoffmann Institute frequently sends agents or even raw recruits to examine such incidents and report their findings.

Chapter 11 raw recruits

Plot Overview

Raw Recruits splits into three acts. The heroes' mission focuses on investigating and finding any and all answers to the alleged poltergeist activity within the Desmond house at 4117 Polk Road. Depending on die rolls, Gamemaster plot manipulations, and/or players' (and heroes') hunches, this adventure can be run in a single session or over multiple game sessions.

Act I, which opens on a sunny Friday in early November, provides the heroes with an initial briefing and the information that triggers the adventure. The heroes examine rumored poltergeist activity within the house of Peter Desmond in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The heroes may quickly come to the conclusion that the cause is more mortal than supernatural—Jerry Desmond, Peter's son, is a telekinetic, and he's the cause of the "hauntings." Heroes are also introduced to two significant supporting cast members: Amanda Jernigan and Coach Gary Bradley.

In Act II, the heroes investigate how and why Jerry's powers go awry and learn about other forces interested in him. After they uncover crystalline mechanisms of unknown origin hidden within the house, numerous suspects pop up, including Coach Bradley and Amanda Jernigan, Jerry's neighbor and favorite teacher. The investigation is tangled by the boy's reluctance to trust the heroes and his important role in the local football game, which closes the act. Amanda may be revealed as Jerry's biological mother, and the ubiquitous Men In Black make their appearance as they watch the activities of both Amanda and the heroes.

Act III presents more action for the heroes, as Jerry and Amanda disappear after the game. Clues lead the heroes west to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and they must race to reach Jerry before Amanda delivers him to her hidden masters.

The epilogue provides a wrap-up but also establishes launch points for possible DARK•MATTER campaigns. Many clues left in the wake of this adventure can spur further scenarios, both directly and tangentially by way of inference and Gamemaster caveats. While many of these questions should rise naturally from the heroes' inquiries and attempts to close the dossier on the Desmond case, additional mysteries that may or may not have occurred to them in the adventure can link to this one. In fact, red herrings in this adventure can become legitimate clues into totally different adventures. Entire campaigns can be launched by pursuing any of the questions left unanswered.

Non-Hoffmann Heroes

This adventure assumes your heroes are Hoffmann recruits, but that's not the only possibility. The heroes could work for another group (consult *Chapter 10: Campaign Options* for ideas), or they could be independent agents looking into the paranormal. The Gamemaster needs to construct the group's origins and motivations for working together.

The Gamemaster can use any of the following options to adapt this adventure for differing starting points and/or heroes. They do not provide full details on how to change the adventure; simply adjust some of the triggers to allow different starting points.

- Instead of the briefing (Act I, Scene I), the heroes read a newspaper/magazine story about ghosts and local hauntings in southeastern Wisconsin. It includes a brief note on suspected poltergeist activity in a Kenosha household, brought to light by comments by Jerry Desmond.
- A hero with ESP–*sensitivity* or the Psionic Awareness perk registers psionic abilities in Jerry Desmond or Amanda Jernigan. Suggestions include bumping into Jerry who uses his Telekinesis to keep from dropping something or catching Amanda as she psionically manipulates someone. This neutralizes some of the subplots but brings the heroes into the latter half of the adventure quickly.
- Mrs. Mabel Klauer, a retired nurse who lives downstairs from Amanda, reports numerous nocturnal visits of "dark-suited men in a black van." Mabel is senile and her calls to the police rarely gain attention, though the MIB factor makes this of interest to DARK•MATTER heroes.

Getting the Heroes Started

This adventure assumes that the Hoffmann Institute has had previous contact with the heroes, though the heroes need not have accomplished any missions for the Institute. In fact, the adventure serves as an excellent method of promoting the heroes from recruit to agent, research assistant, or secretarial member status (depending on their branch). It would be entirely appropriate if the heroes hadn't met one another before the briefing, though the Gamemaster can skip that interaction if desired. Review *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute* and be sure that the players are at least familiar with the Institute and its goals.

Each hero is summoned to the briefing with Facility Chief Patterson (via courier, with plane tickets if appropriate). Consult Act I: First Mission to begin the adventure.

Supporting Cast

While the heroes interact with many people during this adventure, only four require more than a few notes. Facility Chief Patterson's statistics appear as an example of someone of his rank and responsibility. He can act as the heroes' primary liaison with the Institute. Of the various individuals encountered in Kenosha, only two—Amanda Jernigan and Jerry Desmond—are fully described. Statistics for Dr. James Carad, Amanda Jernigan's hidden benefactor, are also included; this is primarily for the Gamemaster's benefit, as the heroes are unlikely to interact with him. Other significant supporting cast members, including the Desmond family, Jerry's friend Nick Peary, and football coach Gary Bradley, have brief descriptions.

R. A. Patterson, Facility Chief, Personnel Department

Level 9 Diplomat (Combat Spec)

STR	9	[0]	INT	10	[0]
DEX	10	[0]	WIL	12	[+1]
CON	8		PER	11	

Durability: 8/8/4/4 — Action Check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 — #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 — Last Resorts: 2
Perk: Observant — Flaws: None

Attacks

Unarmed	11/5/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
9mm pistol	13/6/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4m	HI/O

Skills

Athletics [9]; Unarmed [9]–*brawl [11];* Modern [10]–*pistol [13];* Stealth [10]–*shadow [11];* Vehicle Operation [10]; Stamina [8]; Knowledge [10]–*computer [11], deduce [12], first aid [11], language (English) [13];* Law [10]–*enforcement [12];* Security [10]–*devices [11];* Admin [12]–*management [13];* Awareness [12]–*intuition [13], perception [13];* Investigate [12]–*interrogate [13], research [13], search [13];* Lore [12]; Resolve [12]–*mental [15];* Teach [12]; Deception [11]; Interaction [11]–*intimidate [12];* Leadership [11].

R. A. (Robert Alan) Patterson is "Alan" to his friends, "Chief" to his agents, but "Sir" to his recruits. He is a wiry and trim sixty-two-year-old man with immediate presence. His black hair, worn in a crew cut, grays across his temples and throughout his close-trimmed full beard and mustache. While he doesn't wear glasses he squints often, usually while staring fixedly at whatever annoyance has interrupted his orderly schedule. He speaks strongly in a clipped tone, carefully enunciating every word, and when he is angered his voice drops to a chilling whisper.

Patterson works for the Hoffmann Institute's Chicago branch as its facility chief in charge of new recruits. A former police detective in Chicago, Patterson first became involved with the Hoffmann Institute when many of his cases overlapped into the unknown and he made contacts within the group's Intelligence Division. He retired from public service seven years ago and came to work full time for the Hoffmann Institute. His knowledge of police procedures and his many contacts have made him an integral part of intelligence gathering in and around the Midwest, especially the Chicago area. He showed an aptitude for mentoring younger agents as well as a broad field of knowledge that made him a perfect candidate for training potential agents before their transfers into the Institute.

If the Gamemaster wishes, Patterson can serve as mentor, sage, and confidante to the heroes. On the other hand, he can remain enigmatic, another of the mysteries that populate a DARK•MATTER campaign.

Amanda Jernigan, High School Teacher

Level 6 Free Agent

STR	7	[0]	INT	11	[+1]
DEX	9	[0]	WIL	12	[+1]
CON	9		PER	12	

Durability: 9/9/5/5 — Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4 — #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 — Last resorts: 2
Perks: Hidden (False) Identity, Powerful Ally — Flaw: Abductee
Psionic Energy Points: 6

Attacks

Unarmed	3/1/0	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
.32 revolver*	10/5/2	d4w/d6w/d4m	HI/O

* This weapon has a +1 step penalty to accuracy.

Skills

Athletics [7]; Modern [9]–*pistol [10];* Vehicle Operation [9]; Stamina [9]; Knowledge [11]–*computer [12], language (English) [14];* Social [11]–*history [12];* Awareness [12]; Lore [12]–*UFO lore [13];* Resolve [12]–*mental [13];* Teach [12]; Interaction [12].

Psionic Skills

Telepathy [12]–*possess [13], suggest [18].*

Amanda Jernigan has only existed for the past six years, but the unassuming-looking, red-haired woman knows this is her "true" identity, if only because this is the strongest person she has ever been. Amanda Jernigan was born Heidi Janet Rammock on March 9, 1964, in Rockford, Illinois. Police reports across three states list Rammock as a missing person on April 17–20, 1970 (Rock-

ford, Illinois), June 8–10, 1974 (Gary, Indiana), and September 1–5, 1978 (Madison, Wisconsin). The only linking details between the reports are eyewitness accounts of "flying saucers" and "lights in the sky" the nights she vanished. After each of these disappearances, Heidi returned with no memory of what had happened in the intervening time. After the third incident, she met and married Peter Desmond on June 17, 1982. Their only child Jerry was born on May 1, 1984.

Heidi and Jerry disappeared from a Wisconsin campsite on the night of August 4, 1987, and many other campers at Devil's Lake State Park reported fast-moving lights out over the lake and bright spotlights scanning the campgrounds. Peter Desmond was found unconscious beneath a wrecked tent and could not be revived for five hours. Other campers found Heidi and Jerry on the far side of the lake more than 8 kilometers away on foot. While Jerry seemed fine, Heidi was in shock and remained uncommunicative and unresponsive to external stimuli. Later, she began to suffer violent mood swings and incidents of extreme rage and violence at the slightest provocation. Heidi was committed to the Mendota Mental Health Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1988; a year later, Peter divorced his wife, remarrying in 1994.

Heidi remained violent and delusional, raving about alien abductions, experiments, and her alleged ability to read the minds of her "hypocritical tormentors." While she was incredibly intuitive and clever, her doctors described her as suffering from delusional paranoia and schizophrenia and treated her for such. On New Year's Eve 1990, Heidi and two other patients managed to open their rooms and slip out of the sanitarium. Despite a month-long investigation by the FBI, local police, and the hospital, no one ever found out how they opened their locks or walked past four orderlies without being seen or heard.

The answer is remarkably simple: Dr. James Carad, a psychologist working at the Mendota Mental Health Institute, had identified Heidi and two others (Shirley Laws and Gary Hahn) as having psychic talents. He engineered the escape of the three patients using his own psionic talent for illusions and delivered them to his secret masters. (The identity of the group Carad works for is not integral to the plotline, though the Gamemaster may use such information as a springboard for a campaign. See "The Truth Is Relative" at the end of this adventure for more information on expanding on the plot threads herein.)

During the years between her disappearance in 1990 and reappearance as Amanda Jernigan five years later, Heidi underwent substantial psychological testing, conditioning, cosmetic surgery, and experimentation at the hands of Carad and other doctors. By 1995, Heidi had been fully prepared for her inaugural mission: observe her son, Jerry Desmond, for evidence of psionic ability. If he proves positive (which he has), she is to deliver him to her masters via a UFO in Lake Geneva.

Today Amanda Jernigan lives alone in a second-story duplex apartment at 4103-B Wilson Road (diagonally across the intersection of Wilson and Polk from the Desmond house).

Jerry Desmond, High School Student

Nonprofessional

STR	9	[0]	INT	8	[0]
DEX	11	[+1]	WIL	8	[0]
CON	9		PER	10	

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 10+/9/4/2

Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 2
Reaction Score: Ordinary/1 Last Resorts: 1
Perks: None Flaws: Rebellious, Wild Talent
Psionic Energy Points: 4

Attacks

Unarmed	4/2/1	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/0

Skills

Athletics [9]–*jump [11], throw [13];* Vehicle Operation [11]; Stamina [9]–*endurance [10];* Knowledge [8]–*language (English) [11];* Awareness [8]; Interaction [10]–*charm [11].*

Psionic Skills

Telekinesis [9]–*kinetic shield [10], psychokinetics [10].*

Jerry is a tall seventeen-year-old boy with a large, solidly built frame and a winning smile. Gregarious and optimistic, the black-haired boy grows sullen and temperamental if overruled or dismissed by authority figures. As early as his fifteenth birthday, Jerry had a minor ability to move objects by thinking about them, but he dismissed any evidence of telekinesis as a product of his imagination. His athletic abilities are outstanding, though he doesn't realize that his ability to shrug off anyone trying to get a hand on him or hold onto the ball at all costs is aided by his telekinesis. Jerry is a typical teen, with dreams of playing college football and getting out of the town in which he grew up.

Jerry believes his birth mother died when he was five years old; Peter Desmond never told his son the truth about Heidi's incarceration and disappearance.

Other Supporting Cast Members

Of course, the heroes interact with other individuals during the adventure. The Gamemaster can use the appropriate Marginal templates from *Chapter 6: The Supporting Cast* in the *Gamemaster Guide* if game statistics are required.

The Desmond Family. Peter Desmond, his wife Susan, and their daughter (and Jerry's half sister) Betsy serve as sources of information for the heroes. Amanda can easily manipulate the Desmonds if need be, and she has set certain suggestions in place over the past few weeks to throw anyone off her trail (see the "Programmed Suggestion" rank benefit of the Telepathy–*suggest* skill in *Chapter 3: Heroes of* DARK•MATTER).

Peter, a local police officer, is a student of the paranormal (inspired by his father), but he is totally unaware of his grandfather's involvement with the Institute. Despite his interest, he becomes paralyzed with fear when the "poltergeist" trap is activated, probably leaving him in harm's way. Use the Marginal Law Enforcer template if necessary.

Susan is a secretary with a local law firm. She cannot accept the existence of the paranormal, though she does not deter her husband's or stepson's fascination in it. With the onset of weird activities, her natural fears have her overreacting to every ill that her family suffers. She's also had a rough time with her stepson over the years, and she subconsciously blames him for many ills. Amanda has programmed Susan with a suggestion to begin screaming (or lashing out, if she fails a Will feat check) irrationally at the nearest person whenever anything abnormal

occurs. Use the Marginal Administrator template if needed.

Betsy has unconsciously picked up on her mother's emotional state and becomes very bothered by intense discussions. She resents the attention her brother gets and may even throw a tantrum if ignored. Amanda has programmed her to scream and collapse if anyone touches the circuit placements within the house. As a five-year-old child, Betsy has no applicable skills; her ability scores range from 4 to 6.

Nick Peary. Jerry's best friend and next-door neighbor for more than five years is Nick Peary, a square-jawed, hulking teen with long blond hair who plays linebacker on the football team. Nick is protective of his slimmer but equally tall friend, and he's noticed an awful lot of people asking weird questions and watching the Desmond house, "including Miss Jernigan, though she lives just down the street so I guess that's okay." If necessary, use Marginal Laborer stats for Nick.

Coach Gary Bradley. On the surface, this brush-cut white-haired old man is a never-say-die style football coach. Though he may become an early candidate for suspicion, Bradley is nothing more or less than an old coach with a serious attitude toward winning. He pushes Jerry and the team constantly while they're on the field and expects nothing but the best from them. While he does favor the second-string quarterback (his nephew John), he can't deny Jerry's talent. In response, he pushes Jerry all the harder due to forcing that choice. If necessary, use the Marginal Military Officer template for Bradley.

If the coach is interrogated or investigated, he will say that he's never been to the Desmond house and rarely has anything to do with his players off the field. In fact, he never delivered Jerry's football trophy earlier this year—if asked, he recalls that Miss Jernigan wanted to deliver it. He arrives in Act I, Scene 3 because of a rumor that Jerry might not be playing tonight (false, and a complete red herring).

Any hero with the Lore broad skill may make a successful Awareness–*perception* check to notice that Bradley wears his father's Masonic ring. The adventure assumes that Bradley is nothing more than an innocent member of the local lodge, totally unaware of the conspiracies behind this organization. If the Gamemaster wants to add complexity to the adventure, Bradley could instead be an active agent, seeking to recruit Jerry into the Masons. He might even be working for another group entirely, and the ring itself is a red herring (though the Masons aren't likely to divulge membership lists). The Gamemaster can use the links at the end of the adventure to add to the coach's role in this conspiracy, pitting him as a potential high-ranking Mason locking horns with Amanda's hidden benefactor, James Carad.

Dr. James Carad. James Carad is a retired psychologist who formerly worked with the mentally ill (including Heidi Rammock during her incarceration at the Mendota Mental Health Institute). Whatever the identity of his secret group, Carad has worked for them for many years, using local sanitariums as "recruitment centers" for those with psychic potential. He may make a brief appearance in Act III of this adventure, and he could become a recurring villain in the Gamemaster's campaign.

James Carad's uncle, Vaughn, bequeathed much of his property and holdings (including Parmour Resorts) to his favorite nephew James upon his death in 1992. However, the Lake Geneva cabin (the site of the abduction in Act III), along with a trust fund, was left to Vaughn's wife, Carol (who happens to be the younger sister of Heidi Rammock's father). Heidi had visited the cabin many times as a child but never since her marriage and subsequent breakdown. James considers the deed to this land an oversight and has sought to take it from Carol for years. He's been using it of late without Carol's knowledge, since he's in Chicago on business and he needed more privacy than his resort (located just outside of Lake Geneva) could provide. He chose this site as a meeting place as it should be a safe point at which to "recruit" Jerry.

Act I: First Mission

Show the players the letter from Dr. Nakami in *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*.

You have each had contact with the private organization known as the Hoffmann Institute. Though the average person knows the Institute as merely a nonprofit think tank (as stated in its PR brochures), you know it as an organization involved in investigating paranormal activities.

A couple days ago, your association with the Institute changed from "passing familiarity" to "new recruit" when you received a summons to a briefing in the Institute's Chicago office. According to the summons, you're expected to meet with Facility Chief R. A. Patterson at 10 o'clock sharp Friday morning. Looks like your plans for a relaxing weekend are out. . . .

While the Gamemaster is free to make the heroes' trip to Chicago interesting, the adventure assumes that the heroes arrive safe and sound, ready for their first official mission.

Scene 1: The Briefing

Once the heroes assemble in the meeting room, Facility Chief Patterson enters from his attached office. His secretary hands out file folders to all characters while her boss takes his seat.

Patterson notes each hero's presence, clears his throat, and begins. "As you know, the Hoffmann Institute is interested in the investigation of unusual and paranormal incidents. We've had a report of alleged poltergeist activity not too far from here, and I felt this would be an excellent opportunity for you to undertake your first true mission for the Institute."

Pointing at the files you hold, he continues. "These briefing packets contain the details on the incident site, parties involved, and older Institute files related to them. Peruse and study them for the next three hours. Those briefings do *not* leave this room.

"As you'll be investigating an incident involving skeptical civilians, your cover will be as an Institute documentary team. The Desmonds—the owners of the home in question—have already been contacted, and they have agreed to open their home and allow interviews to be used in a cable documentary and related book on ghosts. While you're welcome to take your

own modes of transportation, a Hoffmann Institute van will be provided, as well as the necessary equipment allowing you to appear as a video documentary crew. At least two of you should arrive in the van. Of course, all reasonable expenses will be covered by the Institute, and you'll receive a full recruitment stipend of one thousand dollars upon your return."

Patterson leans forward as if to emphasize his next words. "How you perform this investigation is at your own discretion, but remember that we value our secrecy here at the Institute. Try not to break your cover."

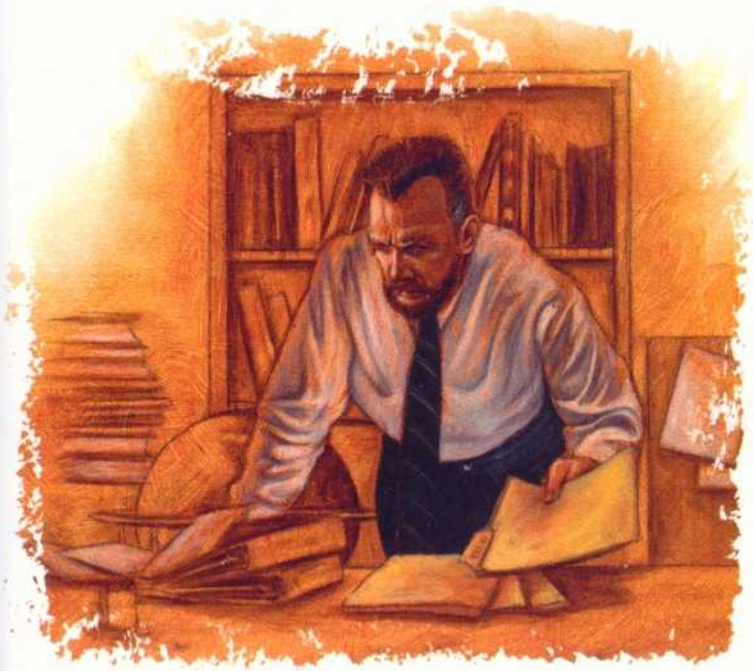
He then leans back in his chair. "You're expected to visit this site by three P.M. today; it's about an hour and a half away. Your mission is to check out the house for poltergeist activity, and to determine the probable cause of the events.

"I'm sure you have many questions, but I trust that you'll be able to determine the answers yourselves, either by examining the briefing documents or through your own deductive efforts. One measures of your success will be your ability to determine the proper answers without being told. In fact, if you complete this mission to my satisfaction, I'll put in a recommendation that you be promoted to full agent status within the Institute. Good luck."

With that dismissal, Patterson walks to the door to his office, closing it behind him. Your first mission has begun.

Briefing Packet

Each packet, stamped Case File 0I-43A28-0007453, contains the same duplicated files for each hero, all marked CONFIDENTIAL. (As noted in *Chapter 2: Welcome to the Hoffmann Institute*, recruits have access to this clearance when deemed necessary by a supervisor.) The most recent file lies on top, a summary document noting alleged poltergeist activity at the home of one Peter Desmond and family. It notes multiple addenda forms for witness reports from anonymous sources, linked incident, and personnel reports, and some older reports in grainy mimeograph copies from the earliest days of the Institute. In all, there are more than seventy-five pages within the files, some of which are handwritten.



Give the players handout RR-1 ("Site Report"). Then, for each hero-hour spent reading the briefing documents, give the players the next consecutive handout (RR-2, RR-3, and through to RR–9). Thus, if four heroes each spend two hours reading, they receive eight of the nine handouts.

Note that Handout RR-6 has a different case file number noted on it. This piece of information was put into the heroes' briefing packet accidentally; it was meant for the packet given to the Green Section investigators who show up in Act II.

Equipment

The Institute provides the heroes with a six-passenger van for transport to Kenosha. The van holds the following equipment: two microcassette recorders and six cassettes, video recorder with sensor boom and six videotapes, cellular phones (one per hero), 13" color TV with VCR, portable generator, first aid kit, and toolkit. Any additional equipment desired by the heroes must be requisitioned through normal channels (using resource contacts or allegiances as appropriate). Based on the result of the skill check (Amazing, Good, or Ordinary), delivery of requisitioned equipment takes 1, 2, or 3 hours.

Scene 2: The House

You arrive at the Desmond house about ninety minutes after leaving Chicago. The house itself is unassuming, a roaming ranch house with a dark-stained wood exterior that faces south onto Polk Road. It rests on the corner of Polk and Wilson Roads, often-patched two-lane roads. Older wooden poles support both the streetlights and the power and phone lines. As you gather your cameras, tape recorders, and briefcases, you notice numerous cars parked on both sides of the house, including one police vehicle. Peter Desmond greets you at the door with a cautious smile and leads you into the front room of the house.

On the street, two clues that come into play later in the act should go unnoticed now. First, one of the cars parked on Wilson Road facing north (with a clear view of the Desmonds' south-facing picture window) is a brand-new black sport utility vehicle with tinted windows. Two figures sit inside. (These MIBs leave the area with Amanda Jernigan at the end of Scene 3.) Second, the wooden light poles 8 meters north and 20 meters east of the Desmonds' house hold small boxes that appear similar to cable TV boxes, but no wires lead out of them other than those tapping the power lines. (These boxes act as points of triangulation for Amanda's psionic scrambler and may come into play early in the next act.)

This scene should be brief, as it serves primarily as an introduction to many of the active players in the adventure. The heroes can set up cameras for interviews in the living room. Peter introduces the heroes to his family, apologizing for Jerry's absence, "though he's due back from school soon and didn't want to miss this for the world. He's got a big game tonight, but he shares my interest in the paranormal and wanted to talk to you all, since he discovered your

Handout RR-1

Site Report—4117 Polk Road

The site of the alleged poltergeist activity is 4117 Polk Road, Kenosha, Wisconsin. Kenosha is a relatively quiet, clean city of approximately 90,000. All apparent poltergeist activity (which reportedly began about one year ago) occurred only when all occupants were at home, with floating object activity in full view of at least two or more witnesses.

The house is a single-story ranch-style home built in 1957. The house that previously occupied that location burned down due to an electrical fire in 1956. No deaths were reported in that fire.

The house is currently owned by the Desmond family, who purchased it in the fall of 1995. Daniel and Sara Moorhouse, who lived there from 1978 until 1995, previously owned it. During that time they made fourteen separate reports of broken heirlooms and valuables to their insurance company, though investigations were inconclusive as to the cause of damage.

Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-2

Desmond Family Report

The father, Peter Desmond (born 2/7/59), is a Kenosha police officer with a spotless record. Peter Desmond and his first wife, Heidi Rammock (born 3/9/64), were married in 1982 and divorced in 1989; this marriage resulted in a son, Jerry (born 5/1/84), who lives with his father. Mr. Desmond was remarried in 1994 to Susan Romero (born 8/13/62). They moved into their current home in 1995. They have a daughter named Elizabeth (born 8/30/96).

Peter Desmond's father, Brian Desmond (1934–1998), wrote a book on paranormal phenomena of the late nineteenth century that remains one of the best works of research from that time period.

Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-3

From a Wisconsin State Patrol incident report dated August 4, 1987

Heidi Desmond attempted to abduct her son Jerry while the family was camping at Devil's Lake State Park. When Mr. Desmond was discovered under his wrecked tent, he appeared comatose and could not be revived for several hours. Mrs. Desmond and three-year-old Jerry Desmond were located a few hours after their disappearance on the far side of the lake, several miles from the campsite. Jerry appeared unharmed, but Mrs. Desmond was uncommunicative and unresponsive to stimuli when found. She was designated into the care of the Mendota Mental Health Institute.

Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-4

Medical Report—Heidi Rammock-Desmond

Ms. Heidi Rammock was committed to the Mendota Mental Health Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, on January 17, 1988 (after brief stays over the previous six months), with a diagnosis of delusional paranoia and schizophrenia. At that time, Ms. Rammock was married to Mr. Peter Desmond of Madison, Wisconsin. Ms. Rammock suffered from violent mood swings and incidents of extreme rage. When lucid, Ms. Rammock demonstrated cleverness and intuitive capabilities. Her treatment was never completed, as she escaped from the hospital on 12/31/90 under unknown circumstances. It appears that Ms. Rammock has a habit of disappearing, as police files note that she has been reported as a missing person no less than three times: April 17–20, 1970, in Rockford, Illinois, June 8–10, 1974, in Aurora, Illinois, and September 1–5, 1978, in Madison, Wisconsin.

Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-5

Article from The Capital Times *dated January 2, 1991*

Madison's Mendota Mental Health Institute reported yesterday that three patients had escaped from the facility. The patients, whose full names have not been released to the press, apparently escaped from locked rooms. According to police reports, the nurse on duty claimed that the patients' doors remained locked at all times, and that no one could have passed his station without being seen. Police warn Madison residents to be on the lookout for these individuals and have released descriptions of the three escapees:

"Shirley," Caucasian female, age 44, 5′ 6″, 133 lbs., short black hair

"Heidi," Caucasian female, age 27, 5′ 7″, 130 lbs., medium-length brown hair

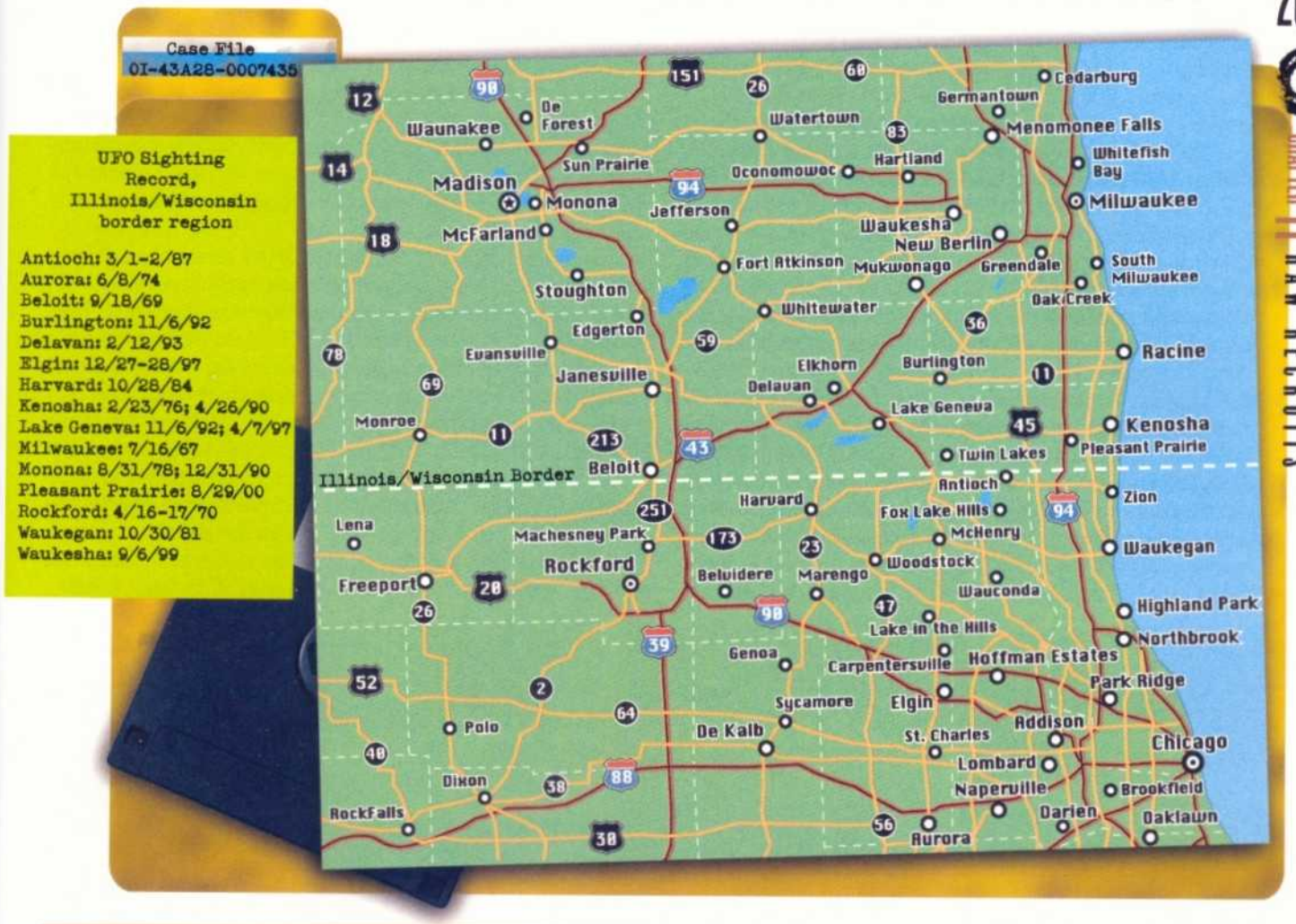
"Gary," Asian male, age 29, 5′ 8″, 145 lbs., short black hair

The escapees are not believed to be armed, though they are considered dangerous as they suffer from various forms of delusional paranoia or schizophrenia.

Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-6 Case File 01-43A28-0007435
UFO Sighting Record, Illinois/Wisconsin border region

Photocopy the map that appears below and hand it to the players.



Handout RR-7
Hoffmann Institute Personnel File (excerpts) [CLASSIFIED]
Asset No. 29–DES713–M
Albert Desmond (1904–1967) was a leading spiritualist in New York and New England from the 1920s through the late 1950s. His methods included automatic writing and spirit rapping, and he worked as one of the first "ghost-hunters" for the nascent Hoffmann Institute.

At least seven of Albert Desmond's files within the Institute remain open cases, as neither his own reports nor those of eyewitnesses fully explain the phenomena that occurred during different seances in New York, Boston, and Lexington, Ky., in 1933, 1936, 1940, and 1942. This document also has conclusive findings showing him to have actual psychic abilities, the most prominent being telepathy and postcognition.

When he died in 1967, Albert was survived by his wife Sarah, son Brian, daughter-in-law Marilyn, and grandson Peter.
Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-8
From a Wisconsin State Patrol report dated September 22, 2001
An eyewitness reported spotting a black sport utility vehicle cruising through the neighborhood on the last three nights. The vehicle allegedly made repeated brief stops in front of various houses, as if the occupants were looking for something. The witness, Mrs. Mabel Klauer (aged 79) of 4103-A Wilson Road, suspected possible drug activity. A squad car was assigned to the neighborhood for the next ten days, but no further sightings were made.
Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

Handout RR-9
From a Wisconsin State Patrol incident report dated June 22, 1995
Mr. Daniel Moorhouse, 47, of 4117 Polk Road was found dead of a gunshot wound. Mr. Moorhouse was discovered at 7:39 A.M. by a coworker who regularly carpooled with Mr. Moorhouse. The wound appeared self-inflicted, although foul play was not ruled out, particularly since the victim's wife, Sara Moorhouse, was never found. The case remains unsolved.
Case File 0I-43A28-0007453

website. I admit I was surprised that you cared about our problem, but we're happy to help with your documentary."

Consult the map for interior layout details of the house and use it for a brief tour, which Susan Desmond provides. It is very much a typical middle-class home, but none of the rooms contains anything out of the ordinary.

Consult the the supporting cast section for roleplaying notes on the Desmonds. Susan seems nervous about the taping and the subject matter, but she's polite. Betsy latches onto one of the heroes, following him or her at all times, and incessantly asks questions about TV. Peter strikes up a conversation with the "head correspondent" (the hero with the most knowledge of occult phenomena), relating sites and happenings in the house over the past year or so. Details learned during this interaction include the following:

- The earliest manifestations—merely floating objects—happened in Jerry's room and in the hallway around it. That was about 11 months ago.
- The manifestations became more uncontrolled and violent 3 months ago (though no one can point to any dramatic change in the family or their environment that might have triggered this). The most violent outburst occurred in the dining room, and it smashed everything not nailed down in that room. It also smashed a heavy oak table by levitating it to the ceiling and dropping it, breaking its legs.
- Susan, who occasionally suffers from insomnia, was the primary witness to the early phenomena. The more recent, violent outbursts awakened and alerted the whole family. In the past month, incidents have even occurred in the daytime.
- Jerry avoids coming home except for meals and sleep; Peter sees it as "bonding with friends and being popular," while Susan admits there's stress lately between them and that all the activity started around him.
- A hero who makes a successful Lore–*occult lore* skill check knows that most incidents of hauntings include reports of temperature shifts, unexplained noises, or spectral visions. The Desmonds don't recall experiencing any of those elements.

Heroes who use Deception–*bluff* or Interaction–*charm* or *interview* on the Desmonds in support of their cover story enjoy a –2 step bonus, as the family is quite willing to believe them. Even others in the town are more than willing to believe (–1 step bonus). Only Amanda Jernigan (who arrives in the next scene) has any suspicions that the heroes are anything other than they seem—she's heard rumors that make her question the public image of the Hoffmann Institute—though she keeps her misgivings to herself, as she has her own secrets to hide. If a hero encounters Amanda alone, she does not automatically question everything said; she's merely wary and on her guard.

Aside from other chitchat and setting up the equipment, this scene ends with Jerry's arrival, which kicks off Scene 3.



Scene 3: The Poltergeist

As you continue your discussions and interviews with the Desmonds, the front door opens and three people enter: a tall, athletic, black-haired young man, a broad-shouldered hulk of a baby-faced teenager with long, stringy, blond hair, and a primly dressed woman in her mid-30s with auburn hair. The two boys are excited and smiling as they approach. "Hey, Mister D—these the ghost film guys?" the larger one says with a wide grin. Peter sighs with a smirk. "Yes, Nick, these are the folks from the Hoffmann Institute. Like their website says, they're interested in esoteric and exotic research, not 'ghost films.' Now, don't you have somewhere to be?" Nick shrugs and begins making faces at Betsy, who giggles but looks a bit pale and shies away from her brother Jerry.

Shoving Nick out of the way playfully, Jerry introduces himself to you. "You guys are the documentary crew from the Hoffmann Institute, right? This is too cool. I found you guys on the net, but it sure didn't seem like this would be the sort of thing a private think tank would study. . . . Hey, how long are you guys gonna be here? I don't want to miss nothing, but Nick and I have the big game against Bradford tonight, and Coach'd kill us if we're late. . . ." Jerry is genuinely excited, though it's impossible to tell whether it's about the documentary or the game. He then introduces the woman as "Miss Jernigan, our neighbor and the best teacher we've got at McKinley!"

She replies, "Jerry overstates. I wish he had a passion for American history like he does for ghosts and goblins. And it's Amanda." She shakes everyone's hand firmly, a polite smile on her face. "Well, it was nice meeting everyone, but I have errands to run before I go to cheer these boys on to victory tonight. I just wanted to drop off this award that Jerry left in class today. If you will excuse me?"

Amanda sets a small plaque on top of Jerry's schoolbooks resting on a side table, then opens the screen door, nodding to Peter and Susan as she exits. Beyond her, storming up the front walk, is an older man in a blue baseball cap, letter jacket, and jeans. Nick gasps, "Oh, man, the coach is really mad about somethin'." Just as Amanda passes the coach on the walk, the heavy front door slams shut resoundingly without anyone touching it. Everyone in the living room hears Susan scream behind them, as a pot filled with boiling water and potatoes rises up off the stove!

Ghostly Effects

Make the poltergeist scene as chaotic and wild as possible, rarely allowing anyone more than an instant's reaction to the situation. This is a rapid-fire combat and hazard challenge, and numerous events happen within the course of 4 frenzied rounds of activity. All damage inflicted is considered LI/O. The psionic scramblers activate any hero's psionic skills as if the hero had the Wild Talent flaw, which could further add to the chaos. (See "Answers or More Questions?")

Round One: On the Good phase, the pot flings itself through the doorway between the kitchen and the living room. The spray of boiling water and hot potatoes "attack" anyone within 2 meters of the doorway (effective score 10/5/2, damage d4–1s/d4+2s/d4w). Alternatively, a hero with an action in this phase may help another person (such as Betsy, who stands in the doorway, screaming) avoid damage. In this case, the "attack" gains a –2 step bonus to hit the hero and a +4 step penalty to hit the protected individual.

Round Two: On the Ordinary phase, random objects fly off the shelves of the curio cabinet on the far wall of the living room and zip around the room at incredible speeds. (A hero who makes a successful Awareness–*perception* check with a +3 step penalty notes that Jerry is facing the curio cabinet when this happens.) Each individual in the living room suffers one attack (effective score 10/5/2, damage d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s). On the Marginal phase, the coach begins pounding on the door, which locked when it slammed shut. At the end of the round, all the objects crash to the floor.

Round Three: On the Ordinary phase, one hero (select randomly) is thrown against the wall; treat this as a short fall (see "Impact Damage" in *Chapter 3: Heroes in Action* in the *Player's Handbook*). (Again, a hero who makes a successful Awareness–*perception* check with a +2 step penalty, notes that Jerry is facing the affected individuals.) On the Marginal phase, Coach Bradley moves around to the picture window and peers through the glass.

Any hero outside the house during this round may make an Awareness–*perception* skill check to notice Amanda Jernigan entering through the back door of a black sport utility vehicle, which then drives west down Polk away from the Desmond house. On a Good or better result, the hero can also note the Wisconsin license number: UGH 150. (This plate is invalid and expired over five months ago. When legal, it belonged to a black minivan used as a shuttle by Parmour Resorts out of Lake Geneva. The van was reported stolen six months ago, but never found.)

Round Four: On the Amazing phase, the coffee table launches from its resting place and flies through the plate glass window.

Psionic or FX-Wielding Heroes

The Gamemaster may have to adapt the adventure to allow for the informational leaps available through psychic or magical abilities (particularly the ESP specialty skills). Options include the following:

- Shorten Act II by allowing the heroes to discover information psionically or magically and cut to the chase of the final act (since the villains react equally swiftly and kidnap Jerry).
- The psionic scramblers in the Desmond house react to all psionic abilities. When inactive, they add a +3 step penalty to any psionic skill checks. When activated (in Scene 3), any psionic power possessed by a hero in the house activates as if the hero had the Wild Talent flaw.
- Add difficulties to the plot once Amanda realizes a hero has psionic or magical powers, such as exposing the hero's secrets to those around them, or (as a more long-term obstacle) reveal the person to the MIBs (and James Carad) as another potential psi agent to recruit into their group.

In any case, the indiscriminate use of psionic or magical abilities could very easily blow the heroes' cover, so they should limit themselves to more subtle activities of this nature.

Anyone between it and the window is automatically attacked (score 10/5/2, damage d6s/d6+2s/d4w). As soon as it breaches the window, it crashes to the ground, but the shards of glass fly outward at tremendous velocity. Anyone standing outside the window (including Coach Bradley, who automatically suffers at least Ordinary damage) may sustain injuries (score 10/5/2, –2 step bonus to accuracy, damage d4w/d6w/d6+2w). On the Good phase, Betsy stops screaming and Jerry collapses, drenched in sweat.

After the Storm

With the abatement of the poltergeist activity, the heroes can assess the damage (and administer first aid, if necessary). They might pick up on a few of the following clues (require successful Awareness–*perception* checks if the players don't specifically ask about them).

- Jerry's stack of schoolbooks remained undisturbed—perhaps the only lightweight items in the room that stayed put.
- Jerry suffered no damage in the "storm" of activity. However, he seems physically exhausted; a successful Lore–*psychic lore* skill check allows a hero to note that such a reaction is not unusual in uncontrolled psychics.
- Amanda Jernigan is nowhere to be found. Coach Bradley remembers seeing her walk past him as he approached the house, but doesn't know where she went.
- Any hero with the Lore broad skill may make an Awareness–*perception* check to notice Coach Bradley's Masonic ring. As explained in his description earlier, this may or may not have any significance to the adventure.
- Betsy stopped screaming only a moment after the coffee table crashed through the window.
- The front door slammed shut precisely when Coach Bradley saw Jerry.

Peter Desmond immediately calls for an ambulance (assuming he is still conscious; if not, remind one of the players that it would be a good idea to do so). Susan remains near hysterics until calmed by her husband (or by a successful Interaction–*charm* or Medical Science–*psychology* skill check by one of the heroes). Within moments, several neighbors begin to gather, drawn by the sound of the breaking window. However, none of them saw anything useful (including Amanda Jernigan's timely exit).

The heroes have a limited time to question the witnesses, as the ambulance arrives within a few minutes of the call. It takes anyone who has suffered any wound damage (or those knocked unconscious from stun damage) to the local hospital. The coach insists (despite his wounds) that Jerry and Nick must play in the game tonight, no matter what. The scene closes as the ambulance pulls away, taking the injured individuals to the hospital.

Act II: Watching Eyes

This second act contains the purely investigative phase of the adventure. However, while they act on their hunches and try to deduce the patterns from the clues, other agents, including Amanda, watch them and make plans of their own. While the heroes could visit a number of places during this act, none are mapped, as the clues noted below comprise the only physical details that matter for the sites.

Scene 1: Puzzle Pieces

Many clues hide among the descriptions and backgrounds in the previous act, and these can be uncovered in numerous ways. Most physical clues emerge with a successful Investigate–*search* skill check, though Awareness–*perception* might do the same for those clues in plain sight. Investigate–*interrogate* or Interaction–*interview* can elicit clues from family members. Lore–*psychic lore* may aid in deducing Jerry's abilities. If the heroes locate the clues but have difficulty putting them together, consider allowing a Knowledge–*deduce* skill check by one or more of the heroes; a success grants the hero insight in putting some of the pieces in order.

Clues from the Desmond House

The heroes will no doubt wish to investigate the house for evidence. For each hour spent, allow one Investigate–*search* skill check for each hero searching. Any success locates one of the clues noted below.

- As noted earlier, the award and schoolbooks remained unmoved during the poltergeist outbursts, despite being in the line of fire like any other items in the front rooms of the house. The award plaque—an award of excellence given by the school board to the highest academically ranked athlete in the district—has scratches on the screws for the bracket on its back (noticed with a successful Awareness–*perception* or Investigate–*search* skill check). Removing the bracket reveals tiny bits of circuitry on the backside of the bracket and partly embedded in the wooden plaque.
- A trophy in Jerry's room is only loosely attached to its base. If the trophy is unscrewed, the heroes see circuits within the trophy with wires snaking up along the inside edges of the trophy cup.
- Jerry's bedside bookshelf holds a hardbound book on the American Revolution (which stands out among all the other books on football) given to him by Amanda. Wedged into the cover binding is a thin metallic strip of circuitry that matches the others.
- More minute pieces of circuitry are found along the seams of lampshades in the living room, in the light fixture hanging in the dining room, and inside every electrical outlet cover.
- A false (but functioning) fuse inside the fuse box (located in the basement) contains the same odd crystal circuits and has a wire leading from it up through the roof to the TV antenna.
- External investigations of the house and immediate environs uncover the largest pieces of circuitry on the TV antenna. Agents may also spot the "cable boxes" on the street poles, which reveal their crystal circuits when examined. Unlike the others, however, the crystals in the cable boxes glow slightly until the wires linking them to the power lines are severed.

With a successful Lore–*fringe science* or *psychic lore* skill check, a hero can tentatively identify the circuitry as possibly being useful for interfering with psionic powers.

If anyone thinks to dust for fingerprints, Peter provides dusting powder and aids in checking for prints. This requires a successful Investigate–*search* check; a hero with the Law–*law enforcement* skill gains a –1 step bonus. In order to run checks on fingerprints, the heroes have two options. If he isn't already on his way to the hospital, Officer Desmond offers to run them through the police database. This requires 2 hours. Alterna-

tively, the heroes can fax them to the Institute to run them through its files. This requires a successful encounter skill check, treating the Institute as an allegiance; see the rules on using contacts and allegiances in *Chapter 9: Running a* DARK•MATTER *Campaign*. (Of course, any hero with a specific, appropriate contact in the Institute, the FBI, or the police can use that contact.) Based on the success of the check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing), the check takes 3 hours, 2 hours, or a single hour. In either case, the check brings up prints for Heidi Rammock on all objects containing the strange circuitry—but no prints for Amanda Jernigan anywhere.

Clues from Jerry Desmond

The heroes may question Jerry Desmond about potential telekinetic abilities, particularly if they believe him responsible for the poltergeist activities. Allow a hero to make either an Investigate–*interrogate* or Interaction–*interview* skill check (remember the –2 step bonus to *interview* skill checks with the Desmonds); success indicates that Jerry admits that he's probably to blame. In truth, he has suspected it for some time. He didn't want to believe it, fearing his mother would see him as a freak.

If they ask whether anything else odd has happened lately, allow another *interrogate* or *interview* skill check. On any success, Jerry recollects that he often has forgotten things in Miss Jernigan's room (his last class of the day), and she returns them to him either that night after practice or the following day.

Regardless of the questioning, Jerry and Nick leave by 5:00 P.M. since they need to get to the game "because the coach'd want us to." As he leaves, Jerry reminds his parents that he'll see them again tomorrow night. If the heroes press, they find that Jerry's throwing a postgame party at Susan Desmond's cabin on Lake Geneva, though those questioned may find it odd that the heroes need to know that. Unless Amanda's secret has been revealed, Officer Desmond grows more suspicious of the heroes and seeks to hide the cabin's location from the heroes.

Video Clues

Even if the heroes didn't turn on their video equipment before the poltergeist incident, it mysteriously recorded the whole event (perhaps having been accidentally activated by Jerry's psychokinetic outburst). Unfortunately, the tapes are choppy and blurred due to the shaking camera and interference by the hidden circuitry. A few noteworthy images help reveal other clues that might have been missed. Allow each hero viewing the tape an Awareness–*perception* skill check; if they go frame by frame, grant a –3 step bonus to the check.

- On a Marginal or better success, the hero witnesses a clear shot of Jerry with a crystal vase flying directly for his head. (This occurs about 20 seconds into the tape.) Unlike all other objects, the vase changes its trajectory to zoom smoothly right around Jerry (even though he's looking the other way) and continue along the original trajectory to the right of the camera. (This is the most conclusive evidence pointing to Jerry's powers, if the heroes haven't deduced it yet. It becomes evidence for his file.)
- With an Ordinary or better result, the hero notices a shot of a black SUV with a remote laser microphone held out the passenger window. The image is shot through the intact living room window; Coach Bradley is not visible through the window. The license plate is not visible in the shot. This image occurs about 24 seconds into the tape.
- With a Good or better success, the hero notes the blurry image of someone with red hair entering the SUV. Again, this shot is through the intact living room window, but Coach Bradley is now visible (which means the shot occurred during the third round). It's not clear enough to count as direct evidence, but it could add to any suspicion of the red-haired Amanda Jernigan. This image occurs about 30 seconds into the tape.
- On an Amazing result, heroes can spot the individual holding the microphone. Though the person's gender can't be determined, he or she wears dark shades and a black hat—the classic Man In Black.

Clues from Nick Peary

If Nick is asked about the black SUV, he remembers seeing it around the neighborhood. However, he won't be able to connect Amanda Jernigan with the vehicle.

If questioned about Jernigan or her likely whereabouts, he mentions that "Miss Jernigan always shows up at our games. . . . She hasn't missed one since Jerry became the quarterback last year."

Clues from Amanda Jernigan

Since Heidi Rammock's fingerprints appear on items that had been handled by Amanda Jernigan (such as the award plaque) and prints belonging to Amanda are nowhere to be found, the heroes should quickly realize that the two are the same person. Even barring that discovery, other clues (such as the video shot of her entering the black SUV) may raise suspicion of Miss Jernigan.

Should the heroes investigate Amanda Jernigan's background, the following information can be deduced through the appropriate actions and/or skill checks.

- Amanda Jernigan has taught history in at McKinley High School since the fall of 1995. (True.)
- Her teaching degree is from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, dated 1990. (False. Her masters planted the degree and other appropriate records. No one at the university remembers Amanda, though they don't see that as reason for suspicion. "We see a lot of students every year. . . .")
- She has glowing previous teaching references from her previous job at the Gateway Military Academy in central Wisconsin. (False. A secretary in personnel was bribed to forge the letter of recommendation. That secretary has since moved on, and no one at the academy remembers Amanda Jernigan.)
- Her DMV record indicates that she lives at 4103-B Wilson Road in Kenosha (true) and lists her date of birth as September 3, 1966. (False.)
- She has been filing regular and unremarkable tax forms since 1982. (Partially false. All records before 1995 were planted by her superiors.)
- She has a passing interest in UFO conspiracies (known by all her students and co-workers). (True.)
- She was involved in a minor car accident in 1998 that necessitated a trip to St. Catherine's Hospital. However, a fire later that year destroyed many hospital records, including hers. (True, and purely coincidental.)

If the heroes express an interest in talking to Amanda, then Nick or any of the Desmonds volunteers that she lives only diagonally across the intersection from the Desmond house. Of course, they may be a bit suspicious of the heroes' sudden shift from documentary reporters to investigators. It may require a timely Deception–*bluff* or similar skill check for the heroes to avoid blowing their cover. Unfortunately for the heroes, Amanda Jernigan isn't home, and her landlady Mrs. Klauer won't let the heroes in without a warrant (or a successful Deception–*bluff* or Interaction–*charm* skill check with a +3 step penalty). If the fingerprint connection has been made, Officer Desmond (or any hero with a contact in law enforcement) can arrange for a warrant; this requires 1 hour of work.

Barring either of these options, heroes who want to search Amanda's apartment have to resort to a less legal method. Officer Desmond, if present, will not allow the heroes to enter the apartment illegally, threatening to arrest them if they persist. Assuming they can dodge that problem, a simple Manipulation–*lockpick* skill check gets them inside the apartment.

Inside Amanda's second-floor apartment are the following clues, which can be discovered with successful Investigate–*search* skill checks.

- A small fan clamped to the front windowsill of her bedroom (facing Polk Road) has a particularly large motor casing. Inside the casing is the same type of crystal circuitry as found in the "cable boxes" outside the Desmonds' house.
- Inside her closet is a small box with a camera, a telephoto lens, and over fifty candid photographs of Jerry in various locations and activities. At the bottom of that box lies a single baby picture of Jerry, which has been missing from Peter's personal photo albums since before Heidi's breakdown.
- In a jewelry box on Amanda's dresser is a locket that Peter recognizes if it is shown to him. It is an antique locket given by his grandfather to his grandmother and passed down to Peter, who gave it to his first wife Heidi. The inscription ("To Sarah, all my heart, Albert") clinches it as the real locket, and this is the most solid piece of evidence (other than the fingerprints) that reveals Amanda as Heidi.
- Shoved inside her bed's box spring beneath the fabric is a box made for holding a pistol and bullets. One bullet remains, wedged between the casing and the support padding. Anyone with even a single rank in Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol* or Law–*law enforcement* can easily identify the missing gun as a .32 revolver (and Officer Desmond can, if the heroes cannot). This gun is not seen until the final scene of the last act. If they bother to check (using law enforcement contacts), the heroes discover that Amanda Jernigan legally owns the gun, and she has all the proper permits.
- On her desk is a letter addressed to Principal McGowan of McKinley High; the letter details an unspecified family emergency that will call Amanda away for the next month. This clue suggests that she was expecting to be gone for a while after her mission was completed.

Deductions and Conclusions

The two primary conclusions revealed by the facts that the heroes (and players) should arrive at are listed first. The remaining conclusions are extrapolations based on some clues discovered here and in Scenes 2 and 3 of this act, which will be supported in the final act.

- The poltergeist of the Desmond house is actually Jerry, who has a psychokinetic talent. They probably should also suspect the crystal circuitry of having some effect on his powers.
- Amanda Jernigan is really Heidi Rammock (Desmond), Jerry's biological mother.
- The circuitry placement on the two light poles and in Amanda's apartment creates a triangle that completely surrounds the Desmond house.
- Amanda has something to do with the mysterious black SUV, its occupants, and whatever they're up to with the circuitry.
- Jerry's forgetfulness might be linked to Amanda, who may have used it to implant the circuitry in his awards.
- Amanda knows about Jerry's abilities and may have some ability of her own to induce forgetfulness. At the least, she is in league with people taking an interest in the Desmonds.
- Amanda can be found for questioning at tonight's football game, which starts at 7:00 P.M.

Scene 2: Crossing Paths

In this scene, the heroes cross paths with another group of Hoffmann agents (who work in the Green Section of Hoffmann's Special Division) investigating the rash of UFO sightings in the area. Unfortunately, due to a lack of communication between divisions, neither group has any knowledge of the other's existence. By pure coincidence, the four-agent Institute team also drives a black SUV, and the agents wear dark suits. With the heroes likely jumping at the sight of any potential Man In Black, the sight of this group is likely to spark a conflict.

As the heroes drive to the football game, allow each to make an Awareness–*perception* check (with a –2 step bonus for anyone who has specifically said he or she is looking for suspicious vehicles). If anyone succeeds, read the following text:

> While on your way to the game, you notice a black van pull out of a side street a few cars behind you. Though you can't be sure, it looks like the driver wears a dark suit and hat.

If the heroes are true to form, they'll probably do something rash such as pulling their guns or confronting the other agents. If so, move directly to "Friendly Fire," below. Should the heroes play it cool, the van "follows" for only a kilometer before turning off on another side street. By the time the heroes turn around, it's long gone (though they may see it again in Act III).

Friendly Fire

If the heroes confront the occupants of the van, the other agents are very terse about their activities. In fact, unless the heroes identify themselves as Hoffmann recruits (extremely unlikely, given the heroes' need for a cover story), the second team of agents assumes that the heroes are either nosy independents or a hit squad from one of the other secret societies. (They've been on this mission for quite a while and are growing very paranoid.)

If any of the heroes pack firearms, make an Awareness–*perception* skill check for each agent on the second team to see if they notice. If they spot a gun, the agents immediately draw their weapons and order the heroes to surrender theirs. With any luck, the heroes might be able to talk the agents out of a fight.

Apply a +1 step penalty to any skill checks made toward this effort, due to the agents' distrust. If successful, the agents only demand that the heroes get back in their vehicle and move on. As Special Division agents, they feel superior to the heroes, and this attitude becomes particularly clear if the heroes reveal their recruit status.

If any of the heroes draws a gun or makes a threatening move, the agents open fire (remember, they're *extremely* paranoid). Use the following supporting cast templates for the agents (all have at least rank 1 in Modern Ranged Weapons–*pistol*, even if not included in the template): Frank C. Jones, team leader (Good Spy); Sharon Hill (Ordinary Brawler); Matt Ford (Ordinary Reporter); and Robert Smith (Ordinary Scientist). All are armed with 9mm pistols.

Assuming any of the Special Division team survives, they may encounter the heroes again in Act III. If the heroes have an opportunity to search any of the agents, they discover Hoffmann ID cards, which may lead to a round of apologies. Even if the heroes and agents remain on peaceful terms, the agents won't reveal anything of their mission.

Scene 3: Gridiron Showdown

The football game kicks off at 7:00 P.M. and ends at around 9:15. The text below assumes that the heroes arrive late in the game's second half, though depending on the heroes' timing (and the events of the previous scenes), they may arrive before, during, or just after the game. If the heroes are early and the Gamemaster wishes to avoid adapting the information below, delay the heroes by having them suffer a flat tire or lose their way. If, on the other hand, the heroes are running late, you can have them arrive just in time to see Jerry driving away in Peter Desmond's green Jeep.

After hours of investigation and delays of one sort or another, you finally make it to the high school and the football stadium behind it—the place you're most likely to find Amanda. The game is winding down; only a few minutes stand between McKinley High and a 13-point victory.



Many students have moved to the parking lot, where celebrations have already begun. Loud music blares out of dozens of car stereos, and over a hundred teenagers howl and cheer (or jeer at the opposing team's fans filing out to their cars). A few scuffles happen in various places, and the lot is almost impassable with people and cars all trying to exit the parking lot. Despite the speed at which many students drive their cars out of the lot, there seems to be a near-endless stream of headlights as fans head out for postgame parties.

Navigating the parking lot is difficult, but not impossible. If a driver has to travel at more than 10 kph, she must make a successful Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle* skill check to avoid hitting pedestrians or another car. More than two hundred people wander in and out of the parked cars, and over forty cars are trying to leave at this point.

If heroes look for the black SUV, they spot four of them here, two parked in the lot and two in the queue to leave. The two leaving both have tinted windows. If heroes look at license plates, all of the black SUVs here have Wisconsin plates (none of which, if checked, has any connection to anyone involved in this adventure). A pair of students in dark clothing and sunglasses drives one of the black SUVs, which may further confuse the heroes. Spotting anyone in this crowd is difficult at best (+2 step penalty on *perception* checks), though the penalty is negated if the heroes gain higher ground, such as the bleachers. Two identical black SUVs sit in the teachers' parking lot on the other side of the school. One of these is the true MIBs' vehicle (see below).

More Men In Black

Should the heroes look around a bit, a successful Awareness–*perception* or Investigate–*search* skill check allows them to spot a pair of the dark-suited Men In Black wandering around the concession stands near the gate. If the heroes try to nab the MIBs, they find them to be only high-school kids dressed up for a prank.

A second *perception* or *search* skill check locates a second pair in the stands, watching Jerry (and Amanda, when she arrives) intently. If the heroes approach them or even start paying special attention to them, they disappear as the crowd leaps to its feet to cheer a touchdown. Each hero with his or her eye on the MIBs can make an Awareness–*perception* check with a +3 step penalty to find them beneath the bleachers. They quickly move into the crowd, attempting to disappear as they work toward their vehicle. Heroes who attempt to follow discreetly may make Stealth–*shadow* skill checks; Failure indicates that the MIBs run for their vehicle. Once inside, the MIBs race out of the parking lot and head west. Use the Good Spy template in *Chapter 6: The Supporting Cast* in the *Gamemaster Guide* for the MIBs; they are armed with 9mm pistols and wear battle vests.

Confronting Amanda

If any heroes remained with Jerry and Nick, they've been at the game for its entirety. There's been no sign of Amanda during the first three quarters of the game, and heroes investigating the school find all doors locked and no lights on. Those who break into the school won't find any valuable information, but they do set off alarms that summon the police in 2d4+2 minutes.

Amanda appears at the game in the last 5 minutes of the final quarter (just before the heroes), sits down in the fourth row of bleachers near the center, and begins talking with another teacher. If a hero confronts Amanda here, she feigns shock and utter confusion over any accusations a hero makes of her, speaking just loudly enough to draw attention to her situation. She then leans forward, whispering loud enough to be heard over the din of the excited crowd but not to be overheard, and says, "I don't know whom you work for, nor do I care. However, if you insist on interfering with me, I shall protest loudly. All around me are colleagues and students, all of whom know and trust me. Believe me when I say you don't want to force my hand here and now."

She leans back and calmly resumes talking to the person next to her. If confronted with her true name and identity or any other disturbing news, she'll be startled but quickly recover, explaining to those around her, "These people were filming a documentary on that alleged ghost over at Jerry's house. I guess they find conspiracies under every bed. . . ." She begins to laugh, her eyes coldly locking on a hero, warning the character to not push her further. If the heroes insist on harassing Amanda, the people around her complain at the heroes for spoiling the game.

If Officer Desmond is with the heroes (or if one of them is a law enforcement official), they may try to arrest Amanda. In this case, she resists, throwing herself into the crowd and screaming, "They're trying to kidnap me! Stop them!" She continues this until she has enough people between her and the heroes, and she does her best to keep things that way. Numerous patrons start yelling for security to come and deal with the heroes; within a minute, two uniformed police officers arrive to remove the heroes from school property. If he's present, Amanda *suggests* to Peter Desmond that "this whole situation could be handled tomorrow." As the game ends, the roaring crowd rushes the field, and unless a hero makes an Awareness–*perception* check with a +4 step penalty, they lose Amanda in the crowd as she makes her way to Jerry's Jeep (see below). After a half hour of chaos and noise (which includes the teams leaving the field to hit the showers), the crowd abates and heads for the parking lot.

Quarterback Sneak

Should one or more heroes follow Jerry after the game, he convinces some of his teammates to distract them outside the locker room so he can leave. They aim simply to block the heroes' way, talking excitedly about the game and keeping the heroes overwhelmed by noise and activity. This allows Jerry to sneak out a window and make his way to his Jeep. None of the three boys keeping the heroes occupied are skilled in deception, so they confess quickly if asked questions (–1 resistance modifier vs. encounter skills), even admitting that Jerry's probably on his way to the party at his mom's cabin. If the heroes look for Nick Peary, they discover that he ducked out of the locker room early to steal some beer from his parents' refrigerator for the party.

Though the heroes probably didn't pay attention to this earlier, Jerry borrowed his father's emerald-green Jeep (Wisconsin license GPR 564) to go to the party. Unless the heroes learned from the Desmonds what Jerry is driving, they have to ask around among the students to find out. Use the statistics for a sport utility vehicle from *Chapter 12: Vehicles* in the *Player's Handbook*.

Amanda will be waiting for Jerry, crouched in the back seat, when he reaches the Jeep. As soon as he's within sight, she uses

Telepathy–*suggest* to have him take her to the cabin. Preferring to stick to less-populated areas, she orders Jerry to take an overland route across some farmland abutting the high school property. Heroes who pursue the Jeep across the rough, recently plowed field must make a complex Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle* skill check (4 successes required, +2 step penalty to checks including the van's handling penalty). Failure results in their vehicle becoming mired in a deep, muddy furrow, allowing Jerry and Amanda to escape.

Catching the Bad Guys

Should the heroes manage to overcome the obstacles presented and actually apprehend Amanda or the pair of MIBs, the adventure isn't over. Amanda uses Telepathy–*possess* to control one of the heroes, at which point she attempts to split up the group. This allows the possessed hero to escape with her inert body, driving to Lake Geneva to catch up with Jerry.

The MIBs prefer to shoot it out with the heroes. If captured they go along quietly, but their connections have them out of police custody within an hour. If the heroes hold on to them, they'll have to guard the MIBs carefully to avoid an escape attempt.

Act III: Chasing Shadows

The action-packed final act involves the heroes' pursuit of Amanda and Jerry (and/or the MIBs) west toward Lake Geneva, the obstacles along that 70-kilometer chase, and the climax of the adventure at an abduction site. The initial scene opens with the heroes in pursuit of Jerry's green Jeep or the black vehicle of the MIBs. The final two scenes occur on a dark stretch of road south of the lake, where the heroes have their final chances to thwart Amanda's plans and their first chance to learn of the greater mysteries ahead of them.

Scene 1: The Race

This scene immediately follows the events in the previous act, as the heroes pursue either the green Jeep or black SUV out of the school parking lot and along Highway 50. Because of the chaotic nature of a chase scene, the events below aren't set in any particular order. Instead, the Gamemaster should include any or all of them as needed. Many of these obstacles require a Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle* skill check by the driver of the heroes' vehicle; remember that the van's handling adds a +1 step penalty to such skill checks. Others can be cleared up through roleplaying and encounter skills. Though some of the incidents have the potential to cause serious injury, both Amanda and the MIBs would prefer simply to delay the heroes, rather than draw unwanted attention to their activities through a traffic fatality. If necessary, refer to the vehicle operation and combat rules in *Chapter 10: Vehicles* in the *Gamemaster Guide* and *Chapter 12: Vehicles* in the *Player's Handbook*, particularly the "Vehicle Operation Modifiers" sidebar.

Remember also that the Jeep carrying Amanda and Jerry is Officer Desmond's and has a police siren that allows them to speed without being stopped by the Wisconsin State Patrol. If Peter Desmond is with the heroes, or if for some reason they're using his squad car, they can do the same. Also, the Jeep has a police radio, so Amanda can monitor police communications.

- Amanda uses Telepathy–*suggest* to implant the thought in a passing driver's mind that he or she should swerve in front of the heroes' vehicle. She'll be careful not to *suggest* that the driver actually endanger him or herself, since that would apply a penalty to her skill check.
- Amanda possesses the driver of an 18-wheeler and forces him to jackknife the truck, blocking all lanes. Assuming the heroes don't have a vehicle capable of off-road travel, this forces them to take back roads and adds 30 minutes to their travel time.
- One of the MIBs in the black SUV tries to shoot out the tires of the heroes' vehicle. This incurs a +2 step penalty to the skill check. As noted in *Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action* in the *Gamemaster Guide*, tires have a durability of 4, Ordinary toughness, and light armor (d4). Inflicting 8 wounds or 4 mortals to a single tire causes it to blow out; this forces an immediate Vehicle Operation–*land vehicle* skill check to avoid a crash (with penalties depending on the vehicle's speed). Changing the tire requires a complex Technical Science–*repair* check (4 successes required, one roll per minute).
- The State Patrol responds to reports of a high-speed chase. Depending on the vehicles involved (particularly those with flashing police lights), they may aid or hinder Amanda, the heroes, or the MIBs. If necessary, Amanda can *suggest* to one of the pursuing officers that the heroes are driving a stolen vehicle.
- The Special Division agents encountered in Act II reappear, responding to reports of a UFO sighting at Lake Geneva. Depending on their previous interaction with the heroes, the agents may be friendly, neutral, or even hostile toward them. In addition, they may draw fire from the MIBs, who see them as an additional threat.

Scene 2: Slumber Party

This scene takes place at Susan Desmond's lakefront cabin, located on Oriole Drive in Williams Bay. It is possible, despite the numerous clues that lead here, that the heroes may have realized that the real site of importance is the Carad cabin farther down the road. If so, you can skip this scene and move directly to Scene 3. Also, if the heroes fall too far behind Amanda and Jerry, you could allow Awareness–*perception* checks to notice the green and white lights of a UFO hanging in the night sky over the Carad house.

> Despite the obstacles placed in your path, you find your way to the Desmond cabin, hopefully in time to track down Amanda and Jerry. However, as you approach the cabin, numerous details seem wrong at the scene. Though the gravel driveway leading to the cabin is backed up with haphazardly parked cars all the way to the highway, you hear no sounds normally associated with a party. As you reach the end of the driveway, you find a young man and two young women unconscious on the ground, the grass matted down around them. As you move closer, you are suddenly struck by a bright light!

The heroes have simply triggered the outdoor security floodlights of the cabin, which now brightly illuminate the lawn and the area around the cabin.

More than a dozen randomly parked cars line and block the drive, all with parking stickers for McKinley High in their back windows. While none are still running, many of them have warm hoods from the drive from the football game. Inside five of the cars, couples lie unconscious in the front seats.

Seventeen unconscious teenagers lie around the cabin. The eight girls and nine boys all have steady, strong pulses and are easily awakened by shaking them slightly, though they remain groggy for several minutes. All of them relate the same story: They were waiting for Jerry and Nick to arrive, since Nick's bringing the beer and Jerry has the keys to the cabin. Other than the few couples who went to their cars to wait, they waited and watched the stars. Then, one person spotted the UFO flying out over the lake with its green and white lights in a diamond pattern. As it is a clear but moonless night, they easily saw the silent maneuvers and knew it wasn't a plane. As they watched, the lights zoomed directly over the cabin, and that's the last thing they remember. None of them remembers if the matted grass was there before the UFO passed overhead.

An Awareness–*perception* check notes that the matted grass is a perfect circle. Any hero with the Lore–*UFO lore* skill immediately identifies it as a crop circle, centered directly on the cabin! The shape of it is uniformly circular and measures almost 30 meters across. One straight line within this pattern points northwest from the cabin to join a 2-meter-wide secondary circle about 10 meters from the outer edge of the main circle.

The cabin—a boxlike structure almost exactly 15 meters on a side—appears well kept and snug, though a number of dead rose bushes are dried and crumbling on the trellises. The locked building has only five small rooms: kitchen, bathroom, main room, and two bedrooms. All are empty, and an Awareness–*perception* or Investigate–*search* check tells the heroes that nothing has disturbed the dust or the sheets over the furniture for quite a few months.

The property is thickly wooded except around the cabin, which sits almost exactly 100 meters from the water's edge. On the northeastern corner of the property, a stairwell leads down a severe slope to a small beach with a dock and a moored motorboat and a rowboat (both securely covered). The motorboat's name is *Opar,* and it is painted white with gold trim. A partly clad unconscious student lies on the beach; it appears he was getting ready to go swimming. Allow any hero viewing the beach an Awareness–*perception* check. With any success, the hero notes that the ground has recently been shaped in a series of tiny furrows, as if someone had cleanly raked the sand. A Good or Amazing success lets the hero realize that the pattern in the sand traces around the unconscious student, suggesting that whatever furrowed the sand did so after the student was knocked out.

Final Hooks

If the heroes did not turn up any connections to the Carad house during their investigation or haven't put the pieces together to draw them there, insert one of these two vignettes to lead them to the final scene.

As you investigate the cabin looking for clues, a loud cheer comes up from the students now conscious and milling about. Nick comes lumbering out of the darkness along the driveway carrying two cases of beer, a celebratory grin on his face. "What're ya all starin' at? Why ain't ya inside? Did ya have trouble with your cars too? Mine died about a half mile back there, like I saw Jerry's did. Where's he at? The bum ditched me at the game after promising me a lift!" He drops the cases on the back stoop of the cabin, and looks around, trying to spot Jerry.

Once he notices you, he looks puzzled, then smiles broadly. "Hey—spookshow guys! What're you doin' here? Didja see them UFOs flying around on the way out here? They were cool!" Nick continues with mindless chitchat for a moment, then asks, "Hey, you seen Jerry? Is he hiding somewhere, worried about what his dad's gonna do?"

If pressed, Nick adds, "Yeah, he smashed that Jeep into somebody's gate about a quarter-mile down the road. He just ditched it there, with the keys in the ignition and everything! I grabbed the keys, so nobody'd steal it, but man is Officer D gonna be mad. . . . "

Nick can easily point them back down the road and guesses it's "a few" driveways west of the Desmonds' cabin. It's actually four driveways down, distinguishable from the previous pair of drives by its smashed gate. If the heroes try to take their car, they find its battery dead, and any electronic devices they carry (including watches and cell phones) are also dead. They have to walk or run the 400 meters to the Jeep.

If you choose not to use Nick's arrival to spur the story, have the UFO appear above the cabin.

As you investigate the cabin looking for more clues, a loud cheer comes up from the students now conscious and milling about. You look up in the direction the students are pointing and see a diamond-shaped pattern of shifting green and white lights. The pattern cycles from green to white to green again, all within a few seconds. After circling a bit around the cabin and the general area of the lake, the lights zoom a bit to the west and the sky explodes with a blinding beam of light!

The UFO hovers over the wooded area west of the Desmond property, projecting a very intense spotlight down on another cabin (which could either be empty or holding the MIBs). After about a minute, the light beam shuts off, but the UFO remains hovering in that spot. The heroes can head through the woods to catch up to the UFO and investigate what it was just illuminating. To keep the heroes in the adventure, the UFO hovers as long as possible before descending a bit and illuminating the Carad house.

Regardless of how long the UFO hangs in midair, no one can get a clear and detailed look at it due to the orientation and the lack of moonlight. Of course, numerous photographs of lights in the sky appear in tomorrow's newspapers, and officials will claim it was a helicopter helping search for dangerous fugitives who caused a number of accidents along Highway 50.

Scene 3: Lights in the Sky

Of their potential arrival methods from the preceding scene, the heroes can arrive through the woods, along the road or the beach, or by using the rowboat or motorboat to travel along the lakeshore. Regardless of the method used, the UFO arrives only a few moments before the lead hero.



The UFO looms overhead, its blinking lights seemingly urging you to hurry. As you approach the property, the craft descends slightly. Almost more by the strong lights of the ship overhead than starlight, you can see the large cabin on this property—a two-story house on a perfectly manicured lawn with scattered autumn leaves. On the front porch stands Jerry, and in his arms lies the inert form of Amanda.

Amanda has *possessed* Jerry in order to guarantee that she can deliver him into the hands of her masters. Beneath Amanda's jacket and in Jerry's right hand is a .32 caliber pistol, which Amanda brought from her apartment. She prefers to fire it at point-blank range to ensure a successful hit. In Jerry's left hand is a transceiver, which Amanda presses immediately upon seeing anyone else on the property. Once pressed, the transceiver's green light blinks in unison with the UFO above, causing the craft to descend. Heroes attempting to estimate the size of the diamond-shaped UFO place it at about 25 meters on a side, slightly longer (30 meters) than it is wide (20 meters).

As the heroes watch, Jerry sets down the transceiver and walks off the porch onto the western lawn about 10 meters from the house, carrying Amanda's body. Amanda can easily control Jerry's body to walk the pair of them to the UFO, but if she forces him to shoot someone, he can make an immediate Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check to break her control. She intends to be at the "abduction site" to speed things up and to prevent Jerry from escaping, even if he breaks free.

The various avenues of approach each afford different benefits for this final combat/hazard challenge. Coming from the lake dock or the beach provides the shortest dash to the duo's position only 30 meters away. If the heroes arrived through the woods, 50 meters of open area lie between them and Jerry. The driveway from the road leads to a winding path lined by high holly bushes and rosebushes, forcing a roundabout path of 70 meters.

Three rounds after Amanda/Jerry presses the transceiver and walks into the west yard, the following scene occurs.

The bright spotlight once again cleaves the darkness, a solid pillar of light in a 2-meter-radius around Jerry and Amanda. Jerry stares directly upward into it, a smile spreading across his face. "I have brought him for you!" he yells up into the craft hovering no more than 10 meters above them.

Any hero within 40 meters of the abduction site takes stun damage from the intense light, based on the result of a Stamina–*endurance* check. On a Failure or Critical Failure, the hero suffers d8+4 points of stun damage. With an Ordinary success, the damage is reduced to d6+2, to d6 on a Good result, and to d4–1 on an Amazing result. Those within 30 meters suffer a +1 step penalty to the endurance check, those within 20 meters have a +2 step penalty, at 10 meters they suffer a +3 penalty, and those within the pillar of light itself suffer a +4 step penalty. Those who physically turn away from the light gain a –1 step bonus. Jerry and Amanda are immune to the effect, as it is specially attuned to their genetic structure. At the Gamemaster's discretion, any hero with the Abductee flaw might receive a –1 step bonus (perhaps they've experienced such an effect before . . .).

Amanda uses Jerry's telekinetic talent to erect a *kinetic shield* around them, and she counts on that to prevent any interference during the abduction. In addition, the beam itself acts as a *kinetic shield* of Amazing strength, adding its modifiers to those of Jerry's.

During the first round underneath the center of the light, Jerry

and Amanda's bodies rise at a rate of 1.25 meters per phase (or 5 meters per round). This localized levitation field trained on the two target individuals affects no one else within or near the beam. Attempts to damage the source of the beam itself come to no avail, but hanging onto Jerry or Amanda as they rise can slow them down to a pace of 3 meters per round.

If Amanda suffers any damage, she must make a successful Resolve–*physical resolve* skill check or lose the concentration necessary to maintain Jerry's kinetic shield. In addition, this allows Jerry to make a Resolve–*mental resolve* check to break the possession. However, even if he breaks free of her mental control, Jerry and Amanda continue to rise. He must make a Strength feat check to break free of the beam's grip. Any hero physically grabbing or holding on to Jerry can make a Strength feat check to assist him; this grants a –1, –2, or –3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success). Success means that Jerry (and anyone holding on to him) falls to the ground, possibly suffering damage.

Regardless of Jerry's success in breaking free, the beam doesn't relinquish its grip on Amanda. At the end of the second round, anyone still held by the beam is pulled into the craft and the beam ceases. At the beginning of the following round, the UFO rises 50 meters into the sky and speeds off into the night. The craft's armor protects it from any weapons the heroes are likely to possess.

A Little Help

If the heroes seem particularly inept (and the Gamemaster feels merciful), the Special Division agents can make another appearance, drawn by the UFO's flashing lights. Again depending on previous interactions, these agents may or may not be friendly to the heroes. However, they will be very interested in the abduction and may assist the heroes in rescuing Jerry. Of course, if the Gamemaster feels particularly perverse, the agents might just stand and watch, recording the scene for analysis later on.

Early Arrivals

The heroes may jump a step ahead of Amanda by guessing (or determining through psionics or magic) her final destination. If so, they arrive just in time to see a pale blue Jaguar speeding out of the driveway of the Carad house. Allow each hero an Awareness–*perception* check. With an Ordinary success, the hero notes the driver is a well-dressed man. A Good success also catches the license plate (GOTBUX), while an Amazing success notes a small red parking sticker on the rear window (unidentifiable now, but with some research the heroes can learn it's from Parmour Resorts).

James Carad proceeds into Lake Geneva and eventually winds his way out to the Parmour Resort just northeast of the town. The heroes can follow him up to the gate of his private bungalow on the resort, but thereafter the security guards keep the heroes away from Dr. Carad. He himself does not pay the heroes one whit of attention unless physically assaulted (which should not occur, given the nature of the heroes' cover).

While many security systems protect the cabin property, only those on the house itself are active. Amanda and James know the keypad combination to cancel the alarm, which must be input before entering the house; if this is not done, d4 police patrol cars respond within 2d4 minutes. A complex Security–*security devices* skill check (4 successes, one check per round) disables the system.

The cabin has recently had occupants (James Carad and Amanda Jernigan), but it is now sealed up for the winter, with all furniture covered with sheets and the windows sealed with insulating plastic. James left the tranceiver behind for Amanda to handle the abduction on her own, and it rests inside the house on the butler's table in the front foyer. No matter how detailed a search of the cabin they heroes make, they find no evidence linking Dr. Carad to Amanda.

If the heroes remain to confront Amanda, they can watch as the Jeep arrives at the Carad place, crashing into the light wrought-iron gates at the end of the drive (Jerry's last attempt to knock her out so he could escape). The attempt failed, but it causes Amanda to *possess* Jerry to end any further escape attempts. If the heroes watch and listen, they hear an eerie conversation as Amanda speaks her thoughts out loud through Jerry, explaining herself as his "real mother, the one who can show you a world where our allies' power will keep anyone from harming us or keep us apart ever again. . . ." Jerry's body picks up the immobile Amanda from the Jeep's passenger seat and heads for the house.

Given this scenario, the heroes may be able to capture Amanda, particularly if she has expended her psionic strength points. Her escape plan relies on retrieving the transceiver from the house to signal the UFO; if she can't signal it, the craft leaves (the short-range transceiver only works with a prearranged site). However, after the local police haul her away for questioning, the heroes later find the empty police car at the side of the road, with a pair of dark glasses fallen partly beneath the driver's seat.

The Truth Is Relative

Though the adventure technically ends here, the heroes may feel that they need more answers. The barest of explanations, which reaches the newspapers by morning, reveals Amanda's true identity as Heidi Rammock and paints her as a crazy woman who tried to (or did) abduct her teenage son from his father and family. It doesn't touch on the weird goings-on at the Desmond house, though it does have a buried mention of green and white lights spotted over Lake Geneva.

The hidden truths of the situation (which the heroes may or may not ever fully understand) are almost as straightforward. As with the heroes, this was Amanda's first assignment, and how she performed here determines her role in the future with the organization that trained her. Once his psychic talent had been confirmed, she hoped to alienate Jerry from his family (by triggering the poltergeist effects), then recruit him as a psi agent. Unfortunately, the appearance of the Hoffmann "documentary team" panicked her, as she feared her carefully built cover had been broken. The MIBs in the black sport utility vehicle were agents sent by James Carad to evaluate Amanda's performance, run interference if necessary, and eliminate her if the mission failed.

Debriefing

Facility Chief Patterson will want to meet with the heroes upon their return to Chicago and receive a full report on their activities. This scene is not scripted, as it relies heavily on the heroes' success (or lack thereof). In general, Patterson deems the mission a success if the heroes a) determined the truth behind the alleged poltergeist incidents, and b) maintained their cover. Anything else accomplished by the heroes—such as preventing the abduction of Jerry Desmond—is a bonus and probably shouldn't be counted against the heroes if they fail to accomplish it.

Patterson won't care if the heroes bent or broke a few laws during their investigations, particularly if they were successful. On the other hand, if the heroes resorted to unnecessary violence, endangered civilians, or destroyed Institute property, he may be less satisfied with their performance.

Ultimately, the Gamemaster must decide whether or not the heroes are promoted to agent status. If you think they've done well and deserve the promotion, give it to them. If they blundered about or displayed conduct unbecoming Institute agents, feel free to withhold that reward. Of course, the Institute is always in need of agents, so (barring complete and utter incompetence), it's likely that the heroes get a second chance before too long.

Answers or More Questions?

Many clues left in the wake of this adventure can spur more adventures. The prominent points of interest are noted below, with explanations that the Gamemaster may use to her liking.

The strange crystal circuit devices planted in and around the Desmond house are prototype psionic scramblers (and may be tentatively identified as such with a Lore–*fringe science* or *psychic lore* skill check). When activated, they create a field of "psychic chaos" in which all psionic powers act as though the psionic individual possessed the Wild Talent flaw. As the devices must be specifically attuned to range, environment, and other factors, they are useless once removed. However, the Institute's Analytical Division happily collects the circuitry for research and may eventually be able to reverse-engineer the components.

Amanda's psionic talent is a result of psychic and genetic surgery experienced during her abductions by unknown beings (possibly Greys). She later honed these powers under the tutelage of Dr. Carad. Jerry, on the other hand, was born with such abilities, which were activated by the rising Dark Tide.

The crop circles around the lakefront cabins (and the furrowed sand on the beach) were created by the UFO's anti-gravity propulsion system. The ship, an example of reverse-engineered Grey spacecraft created by Amanda's secret masters, is used to abduct targets for experimentation or recruitment. It is the cause of many sightings in this region over the years.

Achievements

Suggested rewards for heroes for the activities and potential outcomes of the adventure include the following:

- 1 achievement point for refuting the poltergeist theory surrounding Jerry Desmond and realizing his psi potential;
- 1 achievement point for revealing Amanda Jernigan as Heidi Rammock and uncovering her psionic abilities; and
- 1 achievement point for preventing Jerry's abduction.

As a bonus, award 1 achievement point if the heroes manage to complete the adventure without blowing their cover as documentary reporters and filmmakers. In addition, *Chapter 8: Achievements* in the *Gamemaster Guide* gives some guidelines on distributing rewards to individual heroes based on roleplaying or heroic actions.

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Recommended Reading & Viewing

Rather than a comprehensive list of all applicable titles (which would no doubt fill this entire book), the list below is a selection of titles that inspired and informed the designers in writing DARK•MATTER. Enjoy!

Books, Nonfiction

Addison, Charles G. *The History of the Knights Templars*
Baigent, Michael. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*
Baigent, Michael. *The Temple and the Lodge*
Bamford, James. *The Puzzle Palace*
Brookesmith, Peter. *UFO The Complete Sightings*
Castleden, Rodney. *Minoans: Life in Bronze Age Crete*
Coe, Michael; Dean Snow; and Elizabeth Benson. *Atlas of Ancient America*
Daraul, Arkon. *A History of Secret Societies*
Douglas, John. *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit*
Fort, Charles. *The Book of the Damned*
Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*
Goldman, Jane. *The X-Files Book of the Unexplained (Vols. 1 & 2)*
Grun, Bernard. *Timetables of History*
Guiley, Rosemary Ellen. *Harper's Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience*
Hancock, Graham. *Fingerprints of the Gods*
Howard, Michael. *The Occult Conspiracy : Secret Societies—Their Influence and Power in World History*
Keel, John. *The Mothman Prophesies*
Keith, Jim. *Black Helicopters Over America: Strikeforce for the New World Order*
Keith, Jim. *Black Helicopters II: Endgame Strategies*
Keith, Jim. *Mind Control, World Control*
Kovach, Sue. *Hidden Files: Law Enforcement's True Case Stories of the Unexplained and Paranormal*
LaVey, Anton Szander. *The Satanic Bible*
Lyne, William R. *Space Aliens From the Pentagon*
MacKey, Albert G. *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*
Manning, Jeane and Dr. Nick Begich. *Angels Don't Play this HAARP*
Mannix, Daniel P. *Freaks: We Who Are Not As Others*
Moench, Doug. *Big Book of Conspiracies*
Moench, Doug. *Big Book of the Unexplained*
National Insecurity Council, The. *It's A Conspiracy!*
Partner, Peter. *The Knights Templar and their Myth*
Posey, Carl & Gahan Wilson. *Big Book of Weirdoes*
Rodman, Selden & Carole Cleaver. *Spirits of the Night: The Vaudun Gods of Haiti*
Segel, Binjamin W. *A Lie and a Libel: History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*
Spence, Lewis. *An Encyclopedia of Occultism*
Temple, Robert K. G. *The Sirius Mystery*
Thomas, Kenn and Lincoln Lawrence. *Mind Control, Oswald, and JFK*
Vankin, Jonathan and John Whalen. *The 60 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time*
Von Daniken, Erich. *Chariots of the Gods?*
Wilgus, Neal. *The Illuminoids*
Wilson, Robert Anton. *Everything Is Under Control*

Books, Fiction

Bear, Greg. *Blood Music*
Cobb, James H. *Choosers of the Slain*
Crichton, Michael. *The Andromeda Strain*
Crichton, Michael. *Sphere*
Crowley, Aleister. *The Book of Thoth*
Crowley, Aleister. *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings*
Eco, Umberto. *Foucault's Pendulum*
Finney, Jack. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*
Gaiman, Neil. *Neverwhere*
Garrett, Laurie. *The Coming Plague*
MacAvoy, R.A. *Tea with the Black Dragon*
Newman, Kim. *The Bloody Red Baron*
Reaves, Michael. *Voodoo Child*
Rushkoff, Douglass. *Ecstasy Club*
Stephenson, Neal. *Snow Crash*
Stephenson, Neal. *Cryptonomicon*
Wilson, Colin. *The Mind Parasites*
Wilson, Colin. *The Philosopher's Stone*
Wilson, Colin. *The God of the Labyrinth*
Wilson, Robert Anton & Robert Shea. The *Illuminatus!* Trilogy
Wilson, Robert Anton. The *Historical Illuminatus Chronicles* Trilogy

Comics

Ellis, Warren. *Planetary*
Ennis, Garth. *Hellblazer*
Ennis, Garth. *Preacher*
Ennis, Garth. *The Unknown Soldier*
Gaiman, Neil. *Sandman*
Grant, Alan. *Batman: The Abduction*
Moore, Alan. *Swamp Thing*
Moore, Alan. *Watchmen*
Morrison, Grant. *The Invisibles*

Magazines

Fortean Times
Probe
Strange
Steamshovel Press
Uncensored UFO Reports
The Unopened Files

Movies

The Abyss
Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension
All the President's Men
The Arrival
Boys from Brazil
Chain Reaction
Close Encounters of the Third Kind
Communion
Conspiracy Theory
The Conversation
Dark City
Enemy of the State
The Entity
The Exorcist
Fallen
Fire in the Sky
The Haunting
Invasion of the Body Snatchers
JFK
The Keep
La Femme Nikita
The Manchurian Candidate
Manhunter
The Matrix
Men In Black
Mercury Rising
Odessa Files
Omen 1, 2, and 3
The Philadelphia Experiment
Pi
Prophesy
Repo Man
The Serpent and the Rainbow
Silence of the Lambs
The Specialist
Species
Them
The Thing
The Thing From Another Planet
Village of the Damned

TV Series

Brimstone
Buffy the Vampire Slayer
Dark Skies
Millennium
The X-Files

Websites

Alien Chaser (www.geocities.com/Area51/Hollow/8827)
Blather (www.blather.net)
CIA Electronic Document Release Center (www.foia.ucia.gov)
Conspire.com (www.conspire.com)
Disinformation (www.disinfo.com)
Dreams of the Great Earth Changes (www.greatdreams.com)
Ethnologue Language Index (www.sil.org/ethnologue)
Forbidden Science (www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/2271)
Forensics and Crime Scene Investigations (www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/1035/formain.html)
History of Egypt (interoz.com/egypt/ehistory.htm)
Impropaganda (www.impropaganda.com)
Mysterious Places (www.mysteriousplaces.com/index.html)
Parascope (www.parascope.com)

▶ DARK-MATTER Science Fiction Roleplaying Game Hero Sheet ◀

HERO'S NAME _____ Player's Name _____

Species _____ Gender ☐ Profession _____ Career _____

Attributes _____ Last Resorts ☐ ☐☐☐☐☐

Setting _____ Gamemaster _____ Last Resort Cost ☐

ABILITY	Score	Untrained	Res. Mod.
Strength	☐	◯	_____
Dexterity	☐	◯	_____
Constitution	☐	◯	_____
Intelligence	☐	◯	_____
Will	☐	◯	_____
Personality	☐	◯	_____

ACTION CHECK SCORE

Marginal	Ordinary	Good	Amazing
+ ☐	☐	☐	☐

DIE ◯ ACTIONS PER ROUND ◯

COMBAT MOVEMENT RATES

Sprint____ Run____ Walk____

Easy Swim____ Swim____ Glide____ Fly____

DURABILITY

Stun ◯ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Fatigue ◯ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Wound ◯ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Mortal ◯ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

ARMOR

	(LI)	(HI)	(En)

GAME DATA

Special Abilities _____

_____

_____

Perks _____ Flaws _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Other _____

_____

_____

BACKGROUND

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PERSONAL DATA

Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____

Appearance _____

_____

_____

Allegiance _____

_____

Social Status _____

Contacts _____

_____

_____

_____

Enemies _____

_____

_____

Wealth _____

SITUATION DIE STEPS SCALE

BONUS												PENALTY
–d20	–d12	–d8	–d6	–d4	+d0	+d4	+d6	+d8	+d12	+d20	+2d20	+3d20

ACHIEVEMENT TRACK Skill Points Spent _____ Stored _____

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hero's Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	

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DARK•MATTER Skill Sheet

STR Skills	Rank	Score
Armor Operation		[__/__/__]
Combat Armor	__	[__/__/__]
Athletics		[__/__/__]
Climb	__	[__/__/__]
Jump	__	[__/__/__]
Throw	__	[__/__/__]
_____	__	[__/__/__]
Heavy Weapons		[__/__/__]
Direct fire	__	[__/__/__]
Indirect fire	__	[__/__/__]
Melee Weapons		[__/__/__]
Blade	__	[__/__/__]
Bludgeon	__	[__/__/__]
Powered	__	[__/__/__]
Unarmed Attack		[__/__/__]
Brawl	__	[__/__/__]
Power mar. arts	__	[__/__/__]

DEX Skills	Rank	Score
Acrobatics		[__/__/__]
Daredevil	__	[__/__/__]
Def. martial arts	__	[__/__/__]
Dodge	__	[__/__/__]
Fall	__	[__/__/__]
Manipulation		[__/__/__]
Lockpick	__	[__/__/__]
Pickpocket	__	[__/__/__]
Prestidigitation	__	[__/__/__]
Modern Ranged Weapons		[__/__/__]
Pistol	__	[__/__/__]
Rifle	__	[__/__/__]
SMG	__	[__/__/__]
Primitive Ranged Weapons		[__/__/__]
Bow	__	[__/__/__]
Crossbow	__	[__/__/__]
Flintlock	__	[__/__/__]
Sling	__	[__/__/__]
Stealth		[__/__/__]
Hide	__	[__/__/__]
Shadow	__	[__/__/__]
Sneak	__	[__/__/__]
Vehicle Operation		[__/__/__]
Air	__	[__/__/__]
Land	__	[__/__/__]
Space	__	[__/__/__]
Water	__	[__/__/__]

CON Skills	Rank	Score
Movement		[__/__/__]
Race	__	[__/__/__]
Swim	__	[__/__/__]
Trailblazing	__	[__/__/__]
Stamina		[__/__/__]
Endurance	__	[__/__/__]
Resist pain	__	[__/__/__]
Survival		[__/__/__]
Survival training	__	[__/__/__]

INT Skills	Rank	Score
Business		[__/__/__]
Corporate	__	[__/__/__]
Illicit Business	__	[__/__/__]
Small Business	__	[__/__/__]
Computer Science		[__/__/__]
Hacking	__	[__/__/__]
Hardware	__	[__/__/__]
Programming	__	[__/__/__]
Demolitions		[__/__/__]
Disarm	__	[__/__/__]
Scratch-built	__	[__/__/__]
Set explosives	__	[__/__/__]
Knowledge		[__/__/__]
Computer op.	__	[__/__/__]
Deduce	__	[__/__/__]
First aid	__	[__/__/__]
Language (specific)	__	[__/__/__]
_____	__	[__/__/__]
_____	__	[__/__/__]
Law		[__/__/__]
Court procedures	__	[__/__/__]
Law enforcement	__	[__/__/__]
Life Science		[__/__/__]
Biology	__	[__/__/__]
Botany	__	[__/__/__]
Genetics	__	[__/__/__]
Xenology	__	[__/__/__]
Zoology	__	[__/__/__]
Medical Science		[__/__/__]
Forensics	__	[__/__/__]
Medical knowledge	__	[__/__/__]
Psychology	__	[__/__/__]
Surgery	__	[__/__/__]
Treatment	__	[__/__/__]
Xenomedicine	__	[__/__/__]
Navigation		[__/__/__]
Surface	__	[__/__/__]
Physical Science		[__/__/__]
Astronomy	__	[__/__/__]
Chemistry	__	[__/__/__]
Physics	__	[__/__/__]
Security		[__/__/__]
Protection	__	[__/__/__]
Security devices	__	[__/__/__]
Social Science		[__/__/__]
Anthropology	__	[__/__/__]
History	__	[__/__/__]
Linguistics	__	[__/__/__]
System Operation		[__/__/__]
Communications	__	[__/__/__]
Defenses	__	[__/__/__]
Engineering	__	[__/__/__]
Sensors	__	[__/__/__]
Weapons	__	[__/__/__]
Tactics		[__/__/__]
Infantry	__	[__/__/__]
Vehicle	__	[__/__/__]
Technical Science		[__/__/__]
Invention	__	[__/__/__]
Juryrig	__	[__/__/__]
Repair	__	[__/__/__]
Technical knowledge	__	[__/__/__]
Xenoengineering	__	[__/__/__]

WIL Skills	Rank	Score
Administration		[__/__/__]
Bureaucracy	__	[__/__/__]
Management	__	[__/__/__]
Animal Handling		[__/__/__]
Animal riding	__	[__/__/__]
Animal training	__	[__/__/__]
Awareness		[__/__/__]
Intuition	__	[__/__/__]
Perception	__	[__/__/__]
Creativity		[__/__/__]
Forgery	__	[__/__/__]
_____	__	[__/__/__]
Investigate		[__/__/__]
Cryptography	__	[__/__/__]
Interrogate	__	[__/__/__]
Research	__	[__/__/__]
Search	__	[__/__/__]
Track	__	[__/__/__]
Lore		[__/__/__]
Consp. theories	__	[__/__/__]
Fringe science	__	[__/__/__]
Occult lore	__	[__/__/__]
Psychic lore	__	[__/__/__]
UFO lore	__	[__/__/__]
Resolve		[__/__/__]
Mental	__	[__/__/__]
Physical	__	[__/__/__]
Street Smart		[__/__/__]
Criminal elements	__	[__/__/__]
Net savvy	__	[__/__/__]
Street knowledge	__	[__/__/__]
Teach		[__/__/__]
_____ *(specific)*	__	[__/__/__]

PER Skills	Rank	Score
Culture		[__/__/__]
Diplomacy	__	[__/__/__]
Etiquette (spec.)	__	[__/__/__]
First encounter	__	[__/__/__]
Deception		[__/__/__]
Bluff	__	[__/__/__]
Bribe	__	[__/__/__]
Gamble	__	[__/__/__]
Entertainment		[__/__/__]
Act	__	[__/__/__]
Dance	__	[__/__/__]
Musical instrument	__	[__/__/__]
Sing	__	[__/__/__]
Interaction		[__/__/__]
Bargain	__	[__/__/__]
Charm	__	[__/__/__]
Interview	__	[__/__/__]
Intimidate	__	[__/__/__]
Seduce	__	[__/__/__]
Taunt	__	[__/__/__]
Leadership		[__/__/__]
Command	__	[__/__/__]
Inspire	__	[__/__/__]

Note: Skills printed in underlined type can't be used untrained.

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Dark•Matter Mindwalking & FX Skill Sheet

Psionic Energy Points: _____

CON Skills	Rank	Score
Biokinesis		[__/__/__]
Bioweapon	__	[__/__/__]
Control metabolism	__	[__/__/__]
Heal	__	[__/__/__]
Morph	__	[__/__/__]
Rejuvenate	__	[__/__/__]
Transfer damage	__	[__/__/__]

INT Skills	Rank	Score
ESP		[__/__/__]
Battle mind	__	[__/__/__]
Clairaudience	__	[__/__/__]
Clairvoyance	__	[__/__/__]
Empathy	__	[__/__/__]
Mind reading	__	[__/__/__]
Navcognition	__	[__/__/__]
Postcognition	__	[__/__/__]
Precognition	__	[__/__/__]
Psycholocation	__	[__/__/__]
Psychometry	__	[__/__/__]
Sensitivity	__	[__/__/__]

WIL Skills	Rank	Score
Telekinesis		[__/__/__]
Electrokinetics	__	[__/__/__]
Kinetic shield	__	[__/__/__]
Levitation	__	[__/__/__]
Photokinetics	__	[__/__/__]
Psychokinetics	__	[__/__/__]
Pyrokinetics	__	[__/__/__]

PER Skills	Rank	Score
Telepathy		[__/__/__]
Contact	__	[__/__/__]
Datalink	__	[__/__/__]
Illusion	__	[__/__/__]
Mind blast	__	[__/__/__]
Mind shield	__	[__/__/__]
Obscure	__	[__/__/__]
Possess	__	[__/__/__]
Suggest	__	[__/__/__]
Tire	__	[__/__/__]

Note: Skills printed in underlined type can't be used untrained.

FX Energy Points: _____

Arcane Magic FX Skills

Diabolism Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Binding (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Black Warding (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Command (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Hellfire (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Rend the Weave (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Spiritwrack (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Summoning (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Tongue of the Damned (PER)	__	[__/__/__]

Enochian Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Eye of Fate (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Grace (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Halo (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Lumen (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Peaceful Shroud (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Unravel Enchantment (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
White Salamander (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]

Hermetic Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Daedalus Improved (INT)	__	[__/__/__]
Glamour (INT)	__	[__/__/__]
Homunculus (INT)	__	[__/__/__]
Ligature (INT)	__	[__/__/__]
Shapechanging (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Sleep of Morpheus (INT)	__	[__/__/__]
Transmutation (INT)	__	[__/__/__]

Faith FX Skills

Monotheism Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Aura (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Blessing (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Cure (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Demon Ward (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Exorcism (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Guidance (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Signs and Portents (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Vision (PER)	__	[__/__/__]

Shamanism Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Animal Voice (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Dreamwalking (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Ghost Dance (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Guide My Hand (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Hunter's Stare (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Spirit of the Beast (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Trance Visions (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Venom Spirit (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]

Voodoo Spells (Ability)	Rank	Score
Ayza's Juju (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Erzuli's Fetish (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Gris-gris (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Helpful Possession (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Legba Rides (PER)	__	[__/__/__]
Loa of Healing (WIL)	__	[__/__/__]
Negate the Spirit	__	[__/__/__]



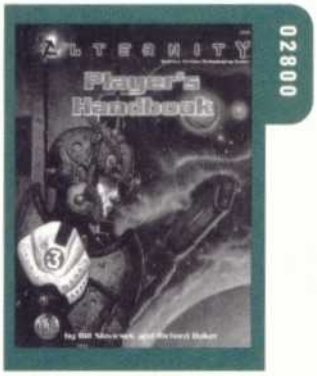
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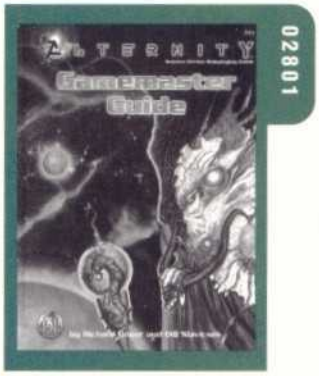
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